

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



FROM THE PRESIDENT...

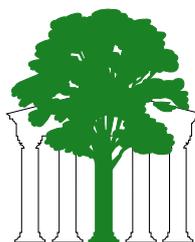
This month marks the first anniversary of *Strobos*, our newsletter written by students from Katoomba High School with the assistance of our Education Officer Chris Yates. The students discuss the benefits of vegetarianism, investigate the carbon neutral claims of V8 supercar races, promote the *Drink Tap Water Campaign* and much more. *Strobos* is at www.bluemountains.org.au – great reading!

On the subject of education, the Society is pleased to sponsor one of the School Environmental Education Awards organised by Blue Mountains City Council. We think that giving \$500 towards a local school-based environmental project is well worth it.

Thanks to those people who attended our monthly meeting about Tourism in the Greater Blue Mountains. With the *Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks* due to release their report in October, it is good to know that we are ready to work positively with our local tourism industry to support businesses in towns and keep parks protected for nature! See the review on Page 6.

Our Society is tackling a big range of issues and is keen for more members on our committees. See Pages 3 and 7 of this issue. I know that you are all busy so I am committed to breaking down our work into smaller tasks. I find working for the environment very rewarding and I would encourage anyone who wants to get involved to contact me on the phone at 4751 1130 or email dontara@ozemail.com.au.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Picnic. *Tara Cameron*



Conservation Foot Soldiers

A Mulgoa Group is endeavoring to stop a large and inappropriate housing development at the foot of the Mountains. The proposal has bypassed Penrith Council and gone direct to the NSW Planning Minister for approval.

A Hawkesbury Group has been working on Threatened Species and Conservation on the very edge of the Sydney Suburban Sprawl.

The details have yet to be finalised but both have been invited to speak and share the night at the October Monthly Meeting to talk about their work.

**MONTHLY MEETING 7:30PM
FRIDAY October 31, 2008
Conservation Hut, Fletcher St.
Wentworth Falls (far western end)**

New Brochure on GreenPower

Our State still lags behind other States in the number of households that have signed up for **GreenPower**. Katoomba-Leura Climate Action Now, in conjunction with Elizabeth Evatt Legal Centre and BMCC, has released a leaflet highlighting that **GreenPower** is a simple, effective way for individuals to help fight climate change, along with reducing household electricity usage.

However, it is important to do some basic research before you sign up. Many people (including myself!) have been caught out thinking they are paying for 100% renewable energy when only a portion is accredited under the government's **GreenPower** program as new renewable energy (the rest is usually pre-existing hydro). See www.greenpower.gov.au for more info about where **GreenPower** comes from and how the scheme is audited.

If you really want to make a dent in Australia's dependence on dirty coal you need to buy a product with the highest star rating according to an independent survey – see www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au. Origin, Integral, AGL and Jackgreen all offer three or four star products in the Blue Mountains.

Depending on the option you choose and your electricity usage, the extra weekly cost is generally less than the price of a cup of coffee – a very small amount compared to the cost of a solar photovoltaic system!

Switching to **GreenPower** (or increasing the percentage you already purchase) can be done easily on the internet or via a five-minute phone call. Do it today – it sends a powerful message to government and industry that Australians want real action on climate change!

Look for the new brochure at Council offices and libraries. For more info about Katoomba-Leura Climate Action Now email:

climateactionnow.kl@gmail.com

Sue Morrison



BMCS Summer Family Picnic

**Join us for a Day of Fun and Games
on
Sunday 9 November
at
Sun Valley Reserve
Commencing at 10.30 am
BYO meat and Drinks
for a BBQ and picnic lunch
Tea and Coffee provided
Bring picnic table, chair and sun shade**

**Turn off the GWH heading east
between Warrimoo and Valley Heights
and follow the signs**

Special General Meeting of Members, 7:30pm, Thursday 16 October 2008 at the Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls
The meeting will discuss proposed changes to the Constitution as advised in the mail out to all members on 23 September 2008.

Enquiries: Heather Hull, Meetings Secretary, hhull001@bigpond.net.au, 4739 1493

HUT NEWS

Hut News is the newsletter of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
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SUBMISSIONS TO:

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GPO Box 7050, Sydney NSW 2001
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COPIES TO:

The Premier Nathan Rees, Level 40 Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney, NSW 2000 OR email: thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au

Ms Carmel Tebbutt, Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Level 30 Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000 OR email: Marrickville@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Ms Jodi McKay, Minister for Tourism, Level 37 Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000 OR email: newcastle@parliament.nsw.gov.au

PLUS Phil Koperberg & Bob Debus, whose contact details are in Hut News No. 251 page 3.

PARKS, TOURISM AND PROFIT:

Has your voice been heard? Is another submission needed?

Thankyou! Many members made submissions to the *Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks*, as commissioned by the Minister for Climate Change & the Environment (now Carmel Tebbutt), and the Minister for Tourism (now Jodi McKay).

There is nothing wrong with parks, tourism, or profit, but when the three come together, watch out! Exposing parks to high-impact tourism-related development, in turn motivated by profit, is a recipe for saying goodbye to the 'natural' environment and its biodiversity. Partnerships between government and industry are particularly favoured, but can these deliver benefits for the 'natural' environment without making environmentally detrimental concessions? Logic suggests no! A significant return on investment at the lower end of the market needs the economies of scale that stem from rapid throughput and 'bussing' of visitors. The trade-off usually involves sacrificing portions of the park to mass visitation along special purpose roads with suitably spaced facilities, in order to save more remote portions. At the upper end, it necessitates luxury accommodation and value-added 'experiences' with specialised transport. For example, how about a helicopter-supported lunch at the Wollemi Pine-type locality with the option of landing at two indigenous culture sites? No matter which end of the market one considers, industry needs a realistic return for its shareholders. This will not be possible without changing the acts and plans of management that control the protection of conservation and biodiversity values in our parks.

The Society was party to a substantial submission by the Nature Conservation Council, National Parks Association and several other Sydney-based groups. It also made representation to appropriate ministers and the State and Federal local members. However, that was the start of an ongoing campaign. The terms of reference of the *Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks*, together with changes already implemented in DECC's Parks and Wildlife Group, effectively ensure that modifications to the status quo (over and above aiming to increase visitation) are recommended by the end of September in the Taskforce's interim report. You may anticipate that various aspects of your submissions have 'missed the cut', or are answered by a liberal sprinkling of 'sustainable', or appear but are heavily circumscribed.

When the interim report is released, the Society will attempt to provide guidance about particularly contentious aspects. In the meantime, the following points emphasise matters that the Taskforce will have absorbed from the many 'pro-parks' submissions. These are likely to be the things most threatened by the Taskforce's findings!

- The primary function of national parks is nature conservation, so this should be the focus of government funding – diverting funds from existing to new facilities detracts from the conservation objective and is deprecated.
- National parks currently promote a healthy quality of life at a time when the State's expanding population focuses into major urban and suburban centres – they also contribute to clear air, clean water, intact water tables, carbon capture, refuges against climate change, and maintenance of cultural heritage.
- Government investment in nature-focused park management benefits local economies by enhancing a sustainable tourist industry, encouraging private investment in regional centres outside parks – the latter protects parks from commercial abuse and thereby ensures the primacy of the conservation objective.
- National parks are for low-impact recreation – high-impact recreation should be accommodated and commercially exploited in State Forests, other public lands and private lands.

• National parks should remain public land and should continue to be regulated by plans of management and transparent community consultation processes – privatisation for commercial purposes is unacceptable.

• Wilderness areas must remain undisturbed and be places reserved for natural conservation processes.

Is another submission needed? Yes! You are again asked to express concern about the impending 'sale' of your parks, either by email or letter to the Taskforce indicating your dismay at its findings, its failure to 'hear your voice' and its apparent inability to address the generally recognised concerns of environmental groups. The email/letter should be copied to the politicians listed at left, and be accompanied with a copy of any previous submission as some faces have changed!

The Society recognises that increases in **appropriate** visitation to national parks are an inevitable consequence of population increases in NSW, Australia and globally. But big changes will occur over the coming decade in response to peak oil, population shifts, and climate change. Aspirational visitation targets will no doubt be affected.

A government that compromises the value of natural public assets for short-term commercial 'benefits' should be held accountable. *Brian Marshall*

Council Watch & Elections

Can we take any credit for the general swing away in the BMCC elections from those candidates and parties who have had a record of not voting to protect the environment on developments although they had legally-justified reasons to do so? Anecdotal evidence suggests that our advertisements in the BMG (see September *Hut News*) did have an impact!

Taskforce on Tourism

See the report, Page 2, at left, and the review of the meeting with Wendy Dollin on Page 6.

Visit to Newnes – Trail Bikes

The visit to Newnes Plateau with political figures, Karyn Paluzzano, Gerard Martin and Phil Koperberg is confirmed for 1 October. The aim is to promote the Gardens of Stone 2 Campaign through a slide show, 4WD tour and walks.

In addition we will be calling on these guests to help us curtail the threat to the fragile ecosystems and the scenic attributes of the Plateau, and indeed the safety of visitors, caused by illegal trail biking. We have been making representations to Forests NSW without success, and are now looking towards a round-table meeting with Forests, the Lithgow Police, possibly NPWS, and Consoc representatives.

Mt Victoria Bypass

See the letter on Page 5, which is a reaction to a recent RTA public consultation meeting

Springvale Colliery

National Parks Officer, Brian Marshall, has prepared BMCS submission commenting on the Springvale Colliery Subsidence Management Status Reports, reflecting specific dissatisfaction with the approach to monitoring of subsidence, surface water loss, and ground-water levels by the company and its consultants.

Consoc Subcommittees

We need more members to volunteer for our subcommittees. How about checking our list of Objectives for 2008-09 as set out on page 7, and the issues addressed on this page, choose where you feel you can provide assistance and give Tara a call.

Land Use Objection

The Land Use Subcommittee is objecting to the Land Use Application for 15 Rock Wallaby Way, Blaxland. Our objections are that the proposal to cut one lot into six increases the density beyond what is appropriate to the location and the zone RES-BC LEP 1991. The site is zoned for only four lots per hectare, and the application seeks to almost double this density. In addition, the site is Designated Bushfire

Prone Property Bushfire Buffer, and is in a cul-de-sac. Hence managing for bushfire could impact on the Buffer to significant vegetation, and an increase in density could threaten the egress of residents in the case of fire.

Climate Change Cogitations

This par is not so much a report on actions taken as a pragmatic call to sort out our approach — from Helen Deane, our CCS Officer:

“I do think there is a perception out there that ‘Climate Change’ is an autonomous monster that is somehow different to conservation action. It might be important for Consoc to not only define ‘Climate Change’ but define what taking Climate Change action really means!

“If we say for example that ‘we need to take action on Climate Change as a top priority’ (as many of our pollies and others say), what are we really saying? It doesn’t mean anything to prioritise Climate Change if no one has decided what the best action is. This is, of course, a complex question in some ways — do you take action on coal, landclearing, water security, home energy auditing etc etc?”

“The danger of lumping all these issues under the banner of ‘Climate Change’ is that it masks the importance and relevance of what groups like BMCS have been doing for years. Climate Change isn’t anything more than the result of not conserving nature and not checking our balance on the planet.”

Shooting ban on Flying Foxes

Following our letter to the DECC calling for a ban on the shooting of the vulnerable Grey-Headed Flying Fox, the Black Flying Fox and the Little Red Flying Fox, we agreed to a request from Dr Carol Booth of the Queensland Conservation Council for us to formally endorse an excellent paper headed by the Humane Society International calling for the cessation of the licensed shooting of the Flying Fox in NSW. Dr Booth has an upcoming meeting with the NSW Minister for DECC.

Threatened Species Adviser, Consoc member Ian Baird, made the following observation: “The killing of Grey-Headed Flying Foxes (and perhaps other species) in orchards of the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney makes this an issue of total relevance to the Society. Apart from all other issues related to obvious cruelty of the practice of shooting, the possible commercial unsustainability of orchards not already netted, the disregard by DECC of its statutory obligations to protect and recover threatened species, and the waste of resources involved in administering



this licensing system, we have no way of knowing what ecosystem impacts will result from the potential loss of this keystone species and its essential pollination services as a result of climate change, and the ongoing landscape-scale habitat loss and fragmentation.”

Safeguarding Murray-Darling

Craig Linn was the Consoc representative at the Mining and Water Forum held in Orange on 25 August. More than 50 participants, including about 30 farmers, were at the Forum which was organised by the Greens to highlight the need for the NSW Government to place the water security of rural NSW ahead of the short-term profits of mining companies.

The Forum called on the NSW government to place a moratorium on the granting of new water licences to mines in the Murray-Darling Basin until an independent study is conducted on the cumulative impact of mining on water resources in the basin.

The motion passed by the Forum also called on Premier Nathan Rees to uphold the commitment he made as Water Minister on 2 July 2008 to put an immediate statewide embargo on new groundwater licences to protect water in the Basin.

There are over 100 existing mines, excluding coal, currently operating in western and central NSW and many more set to open. The Department of Mineral Resources website indicates that applications are in for 83 new exploration licences! The Forum is thus most timely.

No one at the Forum was saying that irrigation for agriculture is not the dominant water extractor, rather that this is all that ever seems to get significant government and press coverage, and the mining influence urgently needs to be exposed.

The Forum offered opportunities for mining communities to develop strategies for collaboration and unified campaigns working to restore balance in how mining is managed in NSW.

RW

My article (*Hut News*, Issue No 247, April 2008) took members beyond their comfort zones by presenting the major difficulties facing attempts to mitigate greenhouse-gas emissions. Although controversial, I suggested that successful emissions mitigation must concurrently involve shrinking the world's population to a realistic carrying capacity, rejecting 'growth is good', and redistributing the world's wealth. I emphasized that emissions reduction is fundamental to an environmentally sustainable future, and that this necessitates moving beyond the short-term political mentality driven by an unashamedly selfish and fickle electorate. Because 'pollies' must pander to growth and greed or get chucked out, spin and short-term expediency inevitably supplant truth and commitment.

Responses to the article ranged from comprehensive endorsement, through to unhappiness at perceived pessimism or negativism (though not disputing the data), to annoyance that the article should be in *Hut News*, the aim of which should be to 'inform, educate, uplift and entertain'. The article certainly met informational and educational criteria, but whether it entertained or stimulated thought is for individuals to judge. As for being uplifting, that was never the intention. **Far too much of what is promoted nationally and internationally as a response to climate change is a recipe for procrastination. It is time to move beyond the rhetoric.**



What has happened since March 2008?

In April, IAASTD reported that unequal distribution of food and conflict over control of the world's dwindling natural resources will reach crisis status as climate change advances and world population expands. Yet Australia, the US, Canada and the UK refused to endorse the report because it said that GM technology was not the solution to feeding the world's poor, and growing biofuel crops would exacerbate worldwide malnutrition. **So much for the spirit of global cooperation!**

On July 4, Garnaut's Draft Report advocated an emissions trading scheme for Australia. He warned that doing nothing would lead to dangerous climate change and that, of the developed countries, Australia would be most hurt. The Federal Government's Green Paper (16 July) responded to his advice and introduced the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. But other than committing to a 60% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂-e) by 2050, Australian targets and their implications for business were not detailed.

On 5 September, Garnaut released his Kyoto-period transition proposals² and recommended emissions targets and trajectories for CO₂-e. They are couched in terms of what **should** be done versus what is politically, economically and internationally practicable. Garnaut indicates that a cooperative global agreement (CGA) to stabilize emissions at a CO₂-e of 450ppm, would involve Australia reducing emissions by 25%⁴ by 2020 and 90% by 2050. He sees negligible likelihood of a 450ppm CGA being adopted at the Copenhagen negotiations in late 2009, by either developing countries or first-world countries such as the US, Canada and Australia, and advocates a less rigorous CGA based on a CO₂-e of 550ppm.⁵ Australia would then need to achieve a 10% reduction by 2020 and 80% by 2050. Irrespective of this, Garnaut is less than optimistic about achieving any CGA at Copenhagen, or even in the immediately following years before cessation of the Kyoto agreement in 2012. He therefore suggests that, in an *ad hoc* world (i.e. no CGA), Australia should commit to a 5% reduction (~25% per capita) by 2020, thereby placing it on track to achieve the Federal Government's current target of 60% by 2050.

'Big Business' and pressure groups of varying persuasions have 'monstered' Garnaut and the Government for much of the year. Garnaut's Draft Report (4 July) demonstrated a determination to make Australia lead by example in global emissions mitigation. In doing so, he created high ex-

pectations. Conversely, although the Green Paper (16 July) emphasized the need for a comprehensive 'cap and trade' scheme, there are indications that the Federal Opposition's approach to emissions reduction (viz: short-sighted expediency) and the intense 'special case' pleading by business sectors are weakening the Government's resolve. And now Garnaut (5 September), in attempting to be realistic, has produced recommendations more tailored to political and economic imperatives than to minimizing the impending environmental, social and economic disaster. He has given the Government an 'easy' option.

Many argue that Australia should make no commitment to emissions reduction targets until all other countries adopt comparable initiatives. This nonsensical '*I will if you will*' approach ensures that no country takes the initiative as the world heads towards unmitigated disaster. But in reality, parts of the world are far ahead of Australia in commitments to renewable energy, emissions reduction schemes, and meeting the 'Kyoto' requirements. Australia should be striving to catch those that are ahead, not milking the situation for economic advantage while waiting for others to catch up.

Garnaut's final report, due at the end of September, will be followed (probably in November) by the Government's *White Paper*. Should the *White Paper* adopt the recommended emissions-reduction targets of 5 or 10% by 2020 as a basic commitment, Australia will forfeit credibility at the global negotiations in Copenhagen. In so doing, Australia will join the countries that preach greenhouse-gas mitigation but will increasingly practise adaptation⁶ while preserving and extending their economic advantage. Less fortunate countries and their food-basins will progressively founder (in some cases literally beneath the sea!), and their economic decline and collapse will follow.

Should Garnaut's ad hoc world eventuate, politicians and nations will have effectively accepted irreversible climate change

1. The International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development – <http://www.agassessment.org/> - <http://www.greenfacts.org/en/agriculture-iaastd/index.htm>
2. Not discussed because, although important for Australia, the principal concern is whether a meaningful comprehensive global agreement can be reached.
3. Should this CGA be achieved and enacted, Garnaut recommends targeting a transition to a desirable 400ppm; current CO₂-e is 455ppm, so the existing overshoot would mean 450ppm would not be reached until 2020-2025.
4. Relative to 2000 levels – all percentages express the country's reduction rather than the per capita reduction based on anticipated population increases.
5. Unfortunately, as Garnaut concedes, this would not preclude major damage to the Great Barrier Reef, enormous loss of the world's agricultural capacity, loss of biodiversity and probably irreversible damage to major ice sheets.
6. Adaptation involves engineering and technical innovations that combat the consequences of climate change, whereas mitigation involves reducing the greenhouse-gas emissions that induce anthropomorphic climate change.

and its disastrous social and environmental consequences. 'Dog-eat-dog' policies and widening 'have-have not' divisions between and within nations will supersede humanitarian approaches to mitigation.

What should you do?

The Rudd Government was elected to take the hard decisions about climate change, not adopt an expedient approach. If the Government finds it too hard to move now, when it has a significant majority, an Opposition in disarray, and a clear and on-going mandate to combat climate change

through emissions mitigation, its remaining resolve will progressively crumble under the weight of political pragmatism. Do not let this happen!

Send letters (post to Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600) or email messages to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (go to <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/member.asp?id=83T> and select email the Prime Minister) **and Senator Penny Wong** (go to <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/index.asp> select Wong and activate the online contact

form). **Tell them that:**

- Garnaut's 'realistic' assessment of what is politically achievable (as opposed to what the world must achieve) is a recipe for global disaster and totally unacceptable.
- Labor was elected to combat climate change, not prevaricate.
- Australia must go to Copenhagen with a voice empowered through leading by example.
- Unambitious emissions targets involve leading from behind!

BM

"WHY IS THIS ROAD NEEDED?"

This week the RTA organised a public consultation on the road upgrade of the Great Western Highway at Mt Victoria. It was dominated by proponents of the Bells Line of Road Expressway and the vocal community of Hartley. The few, poor residents of Bell, Dargan, Clarence and Tunnel Hill who will cop the 'preferred option' going through their country retreats didn't stand a chance. "This is democracy, mate, bad luck!"

The proposed new road winds prominently through the issues discussed by candidates who stood for council elections. Despite some "seriously major hurdles" of the Newnes Plateau option it is 'the obvious choice' and the 'future of the entire Mid West' seems to depend on it. Isn't it amazing how a road can unite a community?

There was one lone voice from the Blue Mountains who asked the question: "Why is this road needed?" (It was our National Parks Officer, Brian Marshall. Ed.) The RTA's reasoning is 'safety'. The existing "windy and steep track" is not what the modern driver expects. "No, we want to go fast and safe." I wonder, whatever happened to that notion of driving according to local conditions? I wonder how many accidents have happened on this stretch of road that were not due to speeding, drunk driving or poorly maintained cars and brake failure?

Another argument is that 'B-Doubles' can't use Victoria Pass. These massive new movers of goods require big roads. Of course, we don't know (yet) which road they will use once they come off the proposed upgrade. Why don't people and government remember that there is a largely unused rail yard at Bathurst where the produce from the Mid West used to get loaded on to rail?

I suppose it's all part of 'progress'. We don't want inconvenience. We want to keep on going quicker and safer in our modern cars (and trucks). But to me it looks like the cart is pulling the horse. We invent a new truck – so we have to build new roads. We invent a new safety gadget – so my old car becomes unsafe. We want to get there a few minutes quicker so that hill has to be levelled. And I wonder what we'll do when they bring out that 'C-Triple'?

All indications are that we can't go on forever developing more and bigger on our finite globe. Unless we learn and learn quickly to tread more lightly on our planet, we face a bleak future on a wrecked planet. Now, that will be inconvenient indeed. And to me, this new road is just another small part of that process.

*A letter to BMCS, to be published in Lithgow region,
Thomas Ebersoll/Helen Drury,
Newnes Hotel Cabins*

Nursery News – this one's out of the box!

Looking for an alternative to Jasmine? If so, why not consider the local Wonga-wonga vine? Its scent is far less overpowering, it grows rapidly, adapts to sun or shade and will reward you with prolific, beautiful clusters of creamy-white tubular flowers with red spots in the throat in Spring. Look for it in the bush now.

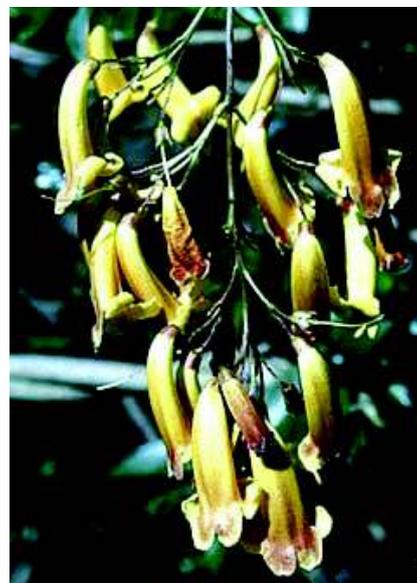
The scientific name of *Pandorea pandorana* derives from the box-like seed capsules which open to liberate numerous winged seeds, just as Pandora's box set free all human ills in Greek mythology. But, unlike the latter, the Wonga vine will only bring pleasure. There is a painting by Edward Minchin in *The Flowering Plants and Ferns of NSW Part 3 (1895)* by J. H. Maiden which depicts the plant magnificently.

Wonga-wonga vine occurs all down the Eastern seaboard and further north into New Guinea and Indonesia. A different subspecies is found in Central Australia.

We have this lovely plant in standard tubes for just \$2 or at a more advanced stage in pots for \$3.50 to members.

Get one soon as we are sure to sell the remainder at the next Lawson Magpie Markets on Sunday 19 October. At the September markets we raised \$513.50, almost matching the \$515 gained the previous month. Come and say hullo to us there.

Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager, 4787 6436 khbell@eftel.net.au



BM Bushcare has Sixty Sites!

The BMCS Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon.

Ring Karen Hising: 4757 1929

Tools and gloves are provided and a Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare Officer provides instruction.

You bring a drink, a snack and deep determination!

But if you can't make it to our site please consider finding a Group nearer to your home.

Check the website:

www.weedsbluemountains.org.au/bushcare_groups.asp or phone Lyndal Sullivan at: BMCC 4780 5528

BLUE MOUNTAINS TOURISM PERSPECTIVE

Blue Mountains Tourism Ltd is a public company established in 1998 to promote tourism in the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon LGAs with assistance from Tourism NSW and Tourism Australia. It now represents 338 members from industry, hospitality, retail and adventure groupings, has a 12-member board and no staff. Its operations are contracted to BMCC people with headquarters in Katoomba and Visitor Centres at Blackheath and Echo Point. It is funded by members, and the three Councils. **Wendy Dollin** is Deputy CEO and has been with the organisation for 14 years. Her presentation was fresh and stimulating, enhanced rather than dulled by her heavy schedule of national and international trade fairs and other promotional engagements.



Wendy told us what we most wanted to hear at this time of siege of our World Heritage Area by the dreaded *Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks*. "How could it," she said, "ever be in the interest of our members with so much investment in 'gateway' businesses to seek to establish inside National Parks?" Only camping facilities and tracks should be added or upgraded, she said. While I took some comfort from this

expressed attitude among local business, I could not help reflecting on the potential for State Government to do deals with the larger national and international developers to permit invasion of our parks. That is not unprecedented under **current** legislation.

Anyway the job of BMT is to promote the region as a longer-term destination (41% of members offer accommodation) and

it has by dint of hard work managed to have the Greater Blue Mountains included in *Tourism Australia's* list of **National Landscapes**, for the widest possible promotion by that Federal body, both in Australia and overseas. The launch is timed to take place in conjunction with the upcoming release of the long-delayed Nicole Kidman/Hugh Jackman film, *Australia*.

Of course we wanted to know which other landscapes are on the list, and it turns out that we squeaked in at number eight behind Red Centre, Kakadu, Flinders Ranges, Australian Alps, Great Ocean Road, Mt Warning (!) and the Coastal SE Wilderness. Incredibly Tasmania is not represented!

Wendy said that the strategic focus of BMT is on Nature, Heritage, Arts & Culture, and Indulgence & Rejuvenation (spas and massage!), and to highlight these aspects it has proposed and developed the **Greater Blue Mountains Drive** with the support of AusIndustry, Tourism NSW and the NSW Department of Environment & Climate Change. The regions that 'host' the encircling Drive are Lithgow, Mudgee, Upper Hunter, Hawkesbury, Penrith Valley, Macarthur, Wollondilly Southern Highlands, Goulburn and Oberon, with Blue Mountains supplying the vital touching point for the figure-of-eight bitumen arterials. Off highway, there are 18 'Discovery Trails' covering the heartland of the World Heritage Area and its surrounds, but not opening up new development. A Touring Guide to rival *Michelin* is available (at cost) together with superior maps, and incisive information sheets for each of the Discovery Trails which tell you all you need to know. Signage is being upgraded to accord with these documents.

The upshot of these endeavours, hopefully for the long-term commercial health of our community, will be a marked increase in the number of visitors, but this will impose a greater load on Councils and National Parks to maintain tracks and recreation areas and increase the need for Consoc vigilance in respect of any threat of encroachment on our protected areas. **Ron Withington**

LETTER OF THE MONTH

More Money for 'Clean' Coal

The PM has unveiled plans for a \$100m research centre dedicated to developing "clean" coal technology – the **Global Carbon and Capture Institute** based in Australia. In this year's Budget the Government promised \$500m to develop "clean" coal technology. Prior to his election, Mr Rudd promised \$500m for a Renewable Energy Fund (REF). Labor also promised an expansion of the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET).

On the 7.30 Report on 25 August, Mr Rudd said that ALL election promises would be fulfilled. However, Dr Mark Diesendorf told a recent forum in Katoomba that the Government has delayed implementation of all its excellent election promises for renewable energy.

In the May 2008 Budget, no money was allocated from the promised \$500m REF for development and deployment. Furthermore, renewable energy received no research funding from the promised \$150m Energy Innovation Fund. Labor's promised expansion of the MRET was delayed until 2009. Meanwhile the government set up the Wilkins Inquiry to pronounce on whether such 'complementary measures' will be necessary

once the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is operational. **So please send a message to PM making some or all of the following points:**

All carbon capture and storage projects around the world have so far failed due to massive budget overshoots. There is no evidence yet that the technology will ever be viable on a commercial scale, certainly not in the time frame needed to avoid the worst consequences of climate change.

The research on solar thermal and geothermal suggests that vast quantities of base-load power can be generated using these technologies well before a single coal-powered plant using carbon capture and storage could be built.

Call upon the Government to:

- Make good its election promises to allocate funds from the promised \$500m REF for development and deployment of renewable energy projects.

- Immediately expand the MRET as promised.

- Fund renewable energy technology by at least as much as it is funding coal research. Contact details:

The Hon Kevin Rudd, Parliament House Canberra 2600. To email: Fill in a form on PM website www.pm.gov.au/contact/index.cfm?p=3

Robin Mosman & Rosemary Lathouris

TAPPING INTO BMCS MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES

So just how does your Society go about planning its business? Each year, the Management Committee (MC) of the Society sets out to establish a series of Objectives to be achieved in respect of the range of issues that confront us.

Some of these Objectives will be short and sweet, others may

carry over from month to month or even into the next Committee year. All must necessarily contain an element of idealism.

As with all "the best-laid plans", of course some Objectives are discarded, some subsumed by events and some simply, in this volunteer organisation, under resourced or not able to be resourced at

EXPLORING THE CENTRE

In August 2008 the BMCS Interpretive Bushwalkers went on an adventure to Broken Hill with its wide streets and stately old buildings, and into the semi-arid country of the Centre.

We crossed dry creeks and watercourses, lined by lovely River Red Gums, the desert green after recent rains. Emus, in groups of two to seven, running on long legs with feather skirts flapping; Red Kangaroos, able to bound along at 60kph, seeming hardly to touch the ground; Wedge-tailed Eagles, magnificent birds with a wingspan of up to 2.5m, the size of a man with arms outstretched. Kites (Black and Whistling varieties) riding the thermals, ravens, corellas nesting in hollows of River Red Gums, an Echidna.

In Sturt National Park and the Sturt Stony Desert we travelled across the gibber plains, stopping to admire tiny wildflowers hidden among the gibbers, dry creeks lined with trees, remnant mesas "The Jump Ups". Tibooburra, with its red granite outcrops, over 410m years old. The granite boulders or "tors" gave Tibooburra its Aboriginal name and help to make it the hottest town in the State. Through the dingo fence; to Cameron's Corner on the borders of NSW, Queensland and South Australia.

In South Australia we traveled over flood plains and sand dunes. Unlike the shifting dunes of the Sahara these dunes are vegetated and stable. Then along the original Strzelecki Track, through the oil and gas fields to Innamincka.

We camped beside Coopers Creek, wide and deep, an oasis for birdlife, and visited Coongie Lakes, listed as a Ramsar Wetland of international importance, a birdwatcher's paradise. We thought of explorers, Charles Sturt in 1844-1845; the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition in 1861; the gold seekers who came soon after.

To Noccundra in the Channel Country: an area of extensive stream systems with very wide flood plains which extends across

all! Nevertheless we do try to meet them and we certainly set out to monitor and record progress against them.

It would be appreciated by all, especially those who have been attending our recent meetings, that the sudden need to respond to the Taskforce on Tourism and National Parks and the RTA Mt Victoria Bypass threat to Newnes Plateau have created a significant diversion of our resources!

However, in 2008 your new Committee spent a day preparing its updated Objectives Schedule, the officer responsible for each individual Objective taking the lead, but requesting contributions in discussion from other members.

The MC has this year settled on eleven Objectives:

1. Sustainability and Climate Change
2. Water Conservation
3. Protection for the Western Blue Mountains Escarpment
4. Local Environmental Planning
5. Environmental Education
6. Threatened Species and Plant Conservation
7. Plant Nurseries
8. Administration and Finance
9. Membership
10. Communication
11. Promotion of BMCS in the Wider Community

Rather than burden you, the member, with a mesmerising spreadsheet covering all eleven Objectives, we have chosen to set out just one or two at a time, probably in random order, in successive issues of Hut News and to post this article and the reviews, in numerical order on the BMCS website.

This month we will deal with tasks and progress on:

2. Water Conservation

This is a strategic project to protect water resources in the Blue Mountains and the Greater Sydney region. There are a number of specific tasks:

a. Use the BMCS *Groundwater* booklet to gain publicity on critical issues. This is being done effectively and is ongoing, the booklet is on our website and is into its third printing.



An inquisitive Corella watching a trio of Galahs climbing the dingo fence, either in or out, was not explained. With apologies to Ron Hyslop, Christine Davies and Helen Lambert!

the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and western NSW. Many river channels criss-cross the landscape, surrounded by gibber plains, stony rises and dunes. After heavy rain in the catchment of the Bulloo, Cooper and others, flood waters work their way through the channels, spreading out across an enormous plain. In no time the arid landscape changes to a vivid green.

Back across the dingo fence into NSW, to Theldarpa, a 120,000 acre working sheep station, Depot Glen, where Sturt spent six months waiting for the drought to break, historic Milparinka, being restored by local volunteers.

Water, its importance, how it has shaped and is still shaping this land. Vast distances, blue skies, red earth. A living desert, wildflowers, flora and fauna adapted to live in an extreme environment. Walking in the footsteps of the explorers and beginning to understand their hardships. Sitting by the campfire sharing experiences with a group of wonderful people. **Christine Davies**

b. Conduct a moratorium campaign opposing water bores, promoting metering and charging through the Independent Regulatory and Pricing Tribunal (IPART). We have seen an embargo placed on bores, a catalogue of bores developed and bore proposals successfully challenged. No IPART yet.

c. Promote BMCC Groundwater Community Forum and ongoing consultation with BMCC and State Government. Discussions are ongoing with BMCC, DNR and DWE.

d. Investigate swamp damage and remediation practices. We have engaged with BMCC and their *Save the Swamps* Campaign. Sydney is remediating Marmian Swamp. We have hosted David Keith in August to give a lecture on Swamps, formation and remediation, at our Monthly Meeting.

e. Oppose Sydney Metropolitan Water Plan (SMWP) on groundwater extraction at Kangaloon, Leonay and Wallacia. Our submission with the *Save Water Alliance* was successful in that the Minister has announced a halt to construction of groundwater bores in all three locations!

f. Pursue the declaration of hanging swamps as vulnerable under NSW State Legislation. This Objective is complete. BM Swamps are now vulnerable under State Law.

g. Launch the *Drink Tapwater Campaign* through all Blue Mountains schools. As at September 2008 all schools from Wentworth Falls to Mt Victoria have effectively been visited. Expansion to the Lower Mountains schools is in train.

h. Expand the *Drink Tapwater Campaign* to Councils and the broader community. This work involves approaches to Councils beyond the BM and interacting with NCC and the NSW Teachers Federation Environment Network. It is ongoing.

i. Evaluate modified SMWP, Macro Water and Macro Groundwater plans in the context of the Blue Mountains. Also ongoing.

Next Month: 3. The BM Western Escarpment RW

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 walk, 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

- Oct-18 Jinki & Dalpura Ridges (3)** Hugh 0423 309 854 Map: Mt Wilson Meet: Mt Vic Station CP 9.00am
8km, two ridges. Approx. half off track, scratchy & sooty, some scrambling. Great Grose views. SMS if no reply.
- Oct-25 Hazelbrook & Lawson W/falls (2)** Bob 4757 2694 Map: Katoomba Meet: Lawson War Memorial 8.30am
11km. South side.
- Nov-01 Pierces Pass (3)** Meredith 4782 4823 Map: Mt Wilson Meet: Blackheath Stn CP 8.15am
4 to 15km. Lunch at Grose as short option – at Blue Gum for hardy. For both, option to view evening sky from Rigby Hill.
- Nov-08 Carne Creek (2)** Meredith 4782 4823 Map: Cull/Bullen Meet: Blackheath Stn CP 8.15am
Short walks on Newnes Plateau. A visit to canyon country with time to look at rare plants.
- Nov-15 Empire Pass & Dantes Glen (3)** Bill 4758 8545 Map: Katoomba Meet: Lawson Bowling CP 9.45am
6km. Lawson on the north side.

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 Group Co-ordinator is Maurice Kerkham, 4739 4942, or email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

- Oct-20 Darks Cave (3)** Ros 4733 3880 Meet: Leura Station CP 9.00am
Dr Dark's "weekender"
- Oct-27 Birdwood Gully, Madoline Glen** Maurice 0402 402 783 Meet: Springwood Civic Centre CP 10.00am
Grade 2. Springwood area. Walk through rain forest to secluded glen.
- Nov-03 Manly Dam, Manly (2)** Norm 4784 1554 Meet: Top of escalator, Central Station 9.30am
Manly's old water supply
- Nov-10 Panther Track, Hassans's Walls** Judith 4758 6310 Meet: Lithgow Station 9.30am
Grade 3. Lithgow area. Long walk, mainly on fire trail, expansive views
- Nov-17 Glow Worm Tunnel (2)** Tera 4751 3303 Meet: Katoomba Council Depot 9.30am
Bus Trip within Wollemi NP. Fare \$12. Book and pay Birgitta, 4784 3191. Bring torch

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS

The walks are of 2-3 hours length conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. The Group Co-ordinator is Simone Bowskill, 4757 3416, email simbow@tpg.com.au

- Oct-16 Walls Cave (2)** Maurice 4739 4942 Meet: On GWH at Medlow Bath 9.35am
Off Evans Lookout Road in Blackheath. Some scrambling involved.
- Oct-23 Govetts Leap to Evans Lookout (2)** Simone 4757 3416 Meet: Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am
Cliff-top walk, there and back. Joint walk with Historical Society with John Low.
- Oct-30 Govetts Leap to Pulpit Rock (2)** David 4757 3416 Meet: Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am
Cliff-top walk with spectacular views.
- Nov-06 Jenolan Caves (2)** David 4757 3416 Meet: Katoomba Council Depot 8.30am
Bus trip. Fare \$12. Booking essential. Call Simone on 4757 3416.
- Nov-13 Darwin's Walk (2)** John 4757 1558 Meet: Wentworth Falls Station CP, near the clock 9.45am
Start at the south end of Falls Road and walk to Wilson Park. Car shuffle.

MEMBERS' MEMORANDA

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Margaret Beal Leura
Paul Garde Kensington
Peter Larcombe W/worth Falls
Glen Lewis Bathurst
Paul Lin W/worth Falls
Peter Miller Faulconbridge
Richard Noonan Springwood
Linda Thomas Katoomba

Many thanks to Diana Rich who does the *Hut News* mailout.

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

INTERPRETIVE BUSHWALKS ARE ANOTHER OPTION!

Do you have Thursdays free and would like to join the interpretive bushwalks? The walks are not just about getting from A to B, though usually B is a lovely place. We often stop to look, listen and discuss. We look for birds, bugs, butterflies, flowers, ferns, fungi, patterned tree trunks, rocks, lyrebird scratchings, mammal scats. We listen for birdsong, frog calls, water trickling in a creek. Oftimes we invite experts along to help us learn more.

Most of the walks are Grade 2, around three hours duration, including a stop for morning tea, and are followed by a leisurely lunch in a café or a BBQ. Sometimes we have full-day walks and take our lunch.

Most walks are somewhere between Penrith and Lithgow and we meet to pool cars. Sometimes we go further afield, for instance to the Harbour foreshores.

The first walk in the next series will be on 16 October at Blackheath. Walks start at 9.15am. There will be 11 walks before Christmas, mostly in the Upper mountains as the weather gets warmer. If interested, please contact Christine on 4787 7246.