



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Off with their heads! Time to prune agapanthus!

The blue and white agapanthus flowers have become a common sight in upper Blue Mountains streets and gardens. Every year there seem to be more of them. The agapanthus is easy to grow and difficult to kill – and it is listed by Blue Mountains City Council as an environmental weed.

At this time of year, when the flowers die back, seeds form and the plant has the potential to spread and threaten our diverse bushland, wetlands and other natural areas.

You can help to stop this happening.

Blue Mountains residents are urged to take to their gardens and remove the seed heads of agapanthus before they open to release their seeds. TELL YOUR NEIGHBOURS AND ASK THEM TO DO THE SAME.

Once the seed heads are removed dispose of them properly in the bin.

If you choose to remove an entire plant, it is vital that only the leaves be used for composting. Agapanthus are a tough species and can grow a new plant from just a tiny section of the rootball or, in some cases, from an underground rhizome segment. So, if you want to be completely rid of the plant, it's important not to throw the whole lot into the compost.

'Blue Mountains Botanicals'

Watercolours by pioneering conservationist Isobel Bowden will be exhibited at Woodford Academy on 16 April, 21 May and 18 June 2016. The launch will be on 16 April at the Academy from 1-2 pm at which curator Brian Kirkby and local historian Ken Goodlet will speak. More details next month.

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at the Conservation Hut on Thursday 31 March 2016, 7.30 pm (See Notice of AGM on page 2)

THE AGM WILL BE FOLLOWED BY (at approx. 8.15 pm)

General Meeting and Slideshow *The Gardens of Stone: In Focus*

A preview of some of the photos from the Gardens of Stone: In Focus photograph competition, and others supplied by Karen McLaughlin, which reveal the scenic grandeur and biodiversity of spectacular places in the Gardens of Stone.

Come along and support those taking the responsibility for running the Society. You might have a question, or comments about the progress of our campaigns. Enjoy the slideshow and meet other members over supper. Visitors are very welcome.

New Management Committee to be elected

At our AGM on Thursday 31st March we will elect a management committee for the year from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. All positions will fall vacant, and there are lots of other jobs to be done, on sub committees, helping with administration, campaigns, events and special projects. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to help the Blue Mountains environment.

With this newsletter, members will receive details of the duties and responsibilities of all management positions. Whilst our constitution allows for nominations to be received on the night of the AGM, we really need to be organised beforehand to ensure that there will be at least one nomination for each position.

Please contact Don Morison or Tara Cameron (contact details on page 2) if you want to discuss any of the positions or wish to be nominated. Or you can download a nomination form at http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/MC_Nomination_Form_2016-17.pdf and send to Blue Mountains Conservation Society, bmcs@bluemountains.org.au or PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 to arrive before 25 March 2016.

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Our nursery offers the home gardener, landscaper or large contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Lawson Nursery, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 9am to noon. The nursery is located in Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets - map on our website www.bluemountains.org.au

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$3. Larger pots available.

Discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887, nursery@bluemountains.org.au

"Hut News", the newsletter of
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Come to THE BLUE MOUNTAINS BAT NIGHT and discover The Incredible World of Bats

Meet a flying fox; Bat cave for kids; Bat talks;
 Bat Walks (**bring torches**); Dress up as a bat.

FREE EVENT

Sausage sizzle provided by Blackheath/Mt Vic RFS

WHEN: **Friday 11 March at 6.30 pm**

WHERE: **NPWS Heritage Centre, Govetts Leap Road, Blackheath**

Supported by: NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, Blue Mountains
 City Council Environment Levy, Australasian Bat Society, Blue Mountains
 Conservation Society. **Enquiries:** 4787 8877.

THE GREAT GROSE WEED WALK—AUTUMN 2016

The beautiful Grose Valley in Blue Mountains National Park is under threat
 from noxious weeds. Volunteer for one of the activities in the Great Grose
 Weed Walk Program. You'll help restore endangered ecological
 communities and preserve threatened species like the giant dragonfly and
 Blue Mountains water skink. Experience a wide range of activities from
 remote to close by, meet new friends and make a difference. For the full
 program, contact Vanessa Richardson 4787 3112

vanessa.richardson@environment.nsw.gov.au or find it on Blue Mountains
 Conservation Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au

Mar 9 (Wed) – **Popes Glen Creek, Blackheath**, 9am to 3.30 pm. Contact
 Lyndal on (02) 4780 5623 or lsullivan@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Mar 16 (Wed) – **Weeding with a view, Govetts Leap, Blackheath**, 9am
 to 1 pm. Contact Vanessa

Apr 7 (Thu) – **Swampcare at Valley View Swamp, Blackheath**, 9am
 to 3 pm. Contact Lyndal.

Apr 10 (Sun) – **Yosemite Creek, Katoomba**, 9am to 3 pm. Contact
 Stephanie on 0425 325 659 or step_chew@hotmail.com.

More events in April and May: Grose Valley Remote (3 days); Swampcare
 at Kittyhawk, Wentworth Falls; Headwaters of Grose River, Mt Victoria.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

3 March 2016

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Society to be
 held at the **Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls at 7.30
 pm on Thursday 31 March 2016**. Business will include receipt of reports,
 adoption of annual accounts, setting of membership fees, determination of
 structure of Management Committee, election of President, Management
 Committee members and other office holders and appointment of auditor.

Membership Fees

You will be asked to vote on Management Committee's recommendation
 that annual membership fees increase by \$5.00 for all categories except
 corporate membership. If passed, membership fees will increase to the
 following (all including GST):

Single	\$35.00
Household	\$40.00
Concession	\$25.00
Concession Household	\$30.00

Corporate membership will remain at \$100 subject to negotiation.

This is the first increase since 2011 and is necessary to enable
 membership fees to cover newsletter expenses and other membership
 expenses.

**By order of the Management Committee
 Blue Mountains Conservation Society.**

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS 19 MARCH 2016

Christine Davies, 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ross Coster
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 or write to
 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Transport Planning – Build More Roads and Airports, or Re-Think?

On a recent holiday I gained a few kilograms, as I love to eat! None of my clothes fit me anymore. Should I lose some weight, or buy all new clothes? Next holiday, when I gain more weight, should I buy all new clothes again?

The M4 Motorway is operating beyond capacity in peak hours every day, turning into a parking lot at times. Do we need to add more lanes? Next time the M4 hits congestion, should we add even more lanes? When do we stop and re-think? When the M4 is 6 lanes, 8, 10, more?

Perhaps we could talk to the people in the cars on the Motorway, ask them why they don't catch the train, attempt to remove the public transport obstacles that make them drive.

Reduce the traffic to fit the road!

Sometime in the 2030's Sydney Airport at Mascot will be congested and no more flight slots will be available. Bigger planes will allow some passenger growth, but beyond that we will have problems leading to personal and economic consequences.

Tullamarine Airport in Melbourne will also be congested and 'needs' another runway.

So what do we do? Build another Airport in Sydney? Build another runway in Melbourne?

NO!

We dig into the flight data, find out why people fly, where to, and look for alternatives.

Alternatives that do not massively increase noise pollution, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and risk.

Alternatives that do not run on precious fossil fuels.

We look for a clean, safe, fast way of moving people and goods that can be run on renewable energy.

We discover that 8 million people per year fly Mascot to Tullamarine or vice-versa, contributing to congestion at *both* Airports.

We discover that High Speed Rail is *the* answer in both cities.

Zero Carbon Australia have produced an amazing plan for an East Coast High Speed Rail, which you can read about here: http://media.bze.org.au/hsr/HSR_web_01_medium.pdf

This research and planning effort is a collaboration of Beyond Zero Emissions, the German Aerospace Centre and University of Melbourne. They have designed the route, the stations, the speeds, even the train timetable!

The project is fully costed, and \$30 Billion *cheaper* than the plan prepared by Infrastructure Australia.

The HSR network will pay for itself over its first 40 years, runs on renewable electricity, and gets you to Melbourne faster than flying.

Some recent articles have been appearing promoting the HSR idea, including this one that says HSR could solve the housing affordability 'crisis'.

<http://www.domain.com.au/news/a-fast-train-would-be-a-quick-fix-for-housing-affordability-20150625-ghrwil/>

An interesting idea, people commuting from Goulburn to Sydney in 44 minutes.

An article in a Murdoch publication says that the only thing holding us back is inertia:

"Before it was axed by Abbott government in November 2013, the High Speed Rail Advisory Group released a report arguing the biggest threat to high-speed rail in Australia was not cost or any other obstacle, but "inertia" — brought about by perceptions a bullet train was unrealistic or would simply take too long to build."

"According to an independent report into high-speed rail released by think tank Beyond Zero Emissions last year, Australia is the only continent — barring Antarctica — not to commit to high-speed rail. Even the US has plans in the works to commit to high-speed rail as early as next year."

To read more, Google "Australian high speed rail: The little engine that can't".

(All the links in this article will be on our website www.bluemountains.org.au in the No Airport section.)

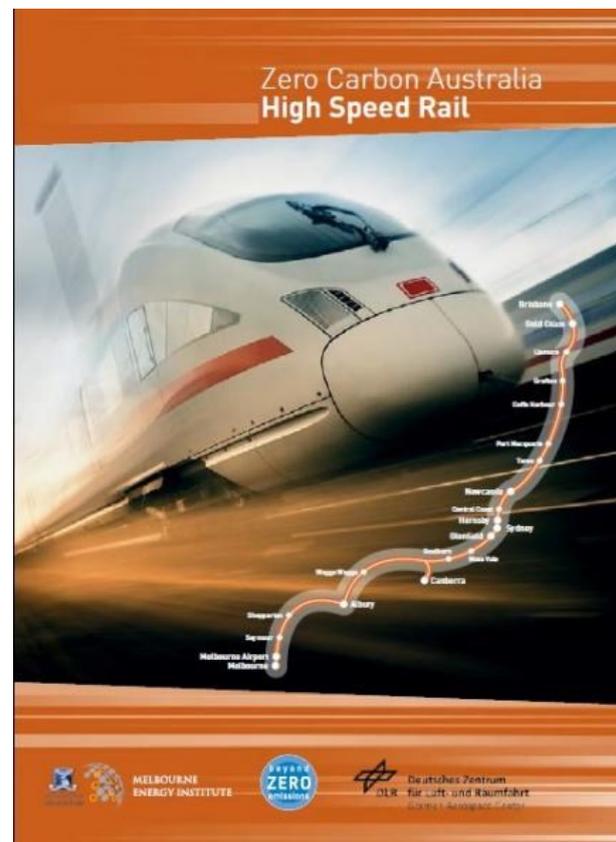
One of the members of Residents Against Western Sydney Airport (RAWSA) has been promoting the idea of building the Sydney to Newcastle section first, as a kick-start for the whole project, but also to allow Sydney residents to access the Airport at Williamstown.

This Airport has been recently upgraded to handle International flights, has no curfew, and has minimal effect on residents.

I do not understand how anyone could want to build a second Airport, or another runway, when High Speed Rail could solve so many problems.

This great project is sitting on the shelf, 'spade ready', just waiting for Government action.

Ross Coster, nwsa@bluemountains.org.au





Hearing date set for action to protect Coxs River and Sydney's drinking water

Conservation organisation, 4nature, is taking court action to enforce the environmental laws designed to protect the quality of Sydney's drinking water. A directions hearing in the NSW Land and Environment in February decided that the hearing will be held on 8 to 10 May.

Under the approval granted in September 2015, Springvale Mine north of Lithgow is allowed to discharge up to 19 million litres of salty toxic mine water into the Coxs River every day. The Coxs River flows through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and into Sydney's drinking water supply at Lake Burragorang. This polluting discharge should be stopped.

You can learn more about 4nature's court action and how you can support them at 4nature's website at: <https://www.facebook.com/stopspringvale/>

Madi Maclean.

Protect the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Reservation Proposal is a long-term campaign of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

For more information go to the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au/gos2.shtml or www.facebook.com/protectgardensofstone

Former Coalpac mine coming back to life

Castlereagh Coal (the new owner of Coalpac's two mines) has issued some details of their 'modest' proposal to re-start open-cut mining in the Ben Bullen State Forest, home to spectacular cliffs and pagoda rock formations. Members will remember the Society's successful campaign to stop two previous proposals for open-cut mining here.

Castlereagh Coal are applying to the Department of Planning to open-cut mine 68 hectare at their Invincible mine near Cullen Bullen. The new mining will be south of the existing works.

Two Planning and Assessment Commissions have found that the highest and best use for Ben Bullen State Forest is to be protected for its conservation values. The state government should declare this area a State Conservation Area under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* and so stop any further open-cut mining.

The coal will be used at the owners' operations in the Shoalhaven. Castlereagh Coal are currently meeting stakeholders. Their full proposal will be available later this year.

Sunset Get-together, 24/2/16

We were delighted with the exciting mix of new members and long term members at the sunset get together. The views over the Kedumba catchment in the sunset, the slideshow compiled by Tara Cameron and the musical offerings from Jim Low were all inspiring.

On the journey home we were further delighted by the spectacle of the moon, two days past full, rising as a huge golden-orange orb. And the weather forecast promised us relief from the heatwave.

People at the meeting were able to find out what they could do to help and several new members put their

hands up to volunteer.

If you couldn't make it, you can still increase your participation in Society activities and communicate with those who have been working on our multiple projects. Contact a member of the management committee (contact details are on page 2).

Photo: The new banner for "No Western Sydney Airport" was displayed near the Conservation Hut. A clear blue sky, the silence of nature and not an aircraft in sight—let's keep it that way! Photo by Heather Coster.



COMMENT

2016: moving forward or stagnation¹? Brian Marshall

This was started for February Hut News, but ongoing euphoria over Abbott's departure, optimism about the views of the 'new broom', and the interceding 'holiday season' caused me to wait. Unfortunately, the 'new broom' has failed to sweep, so when this appears in March Hut News, the Commonwealth government's honeymoon may be over; or perhaps all will have been beneficially resolved!

For the first Abbott-Hockey budget, Australia's economy was decreed a basket case and this was used to justify draconian, blatantly unfair measures. Thanks to the Senate, many of these measures were rejected. Then, following Abbott's 'near death' experience in February 2015, the second budget asked Australians to "have a go". Short-term political pragmatism supplanted economic necessity and did nothing to resolve the country's fiscal deficit. Restlessness stirred in cabinet and on the back-benches!

'Captain's calls', opposition to a republic, rejection of same-sex marriage, unacceptable educational policies (including ditching the full 'Gonski'), little movement on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, a combative approach to international issues, lack of credible commitment to human-induced climate change, and an inadequate approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GGE), became destabilising factors. All presaged Abbott's downfall, and contributed to Turnbull successfully ousting him. Turnbull emphasised the collective inability of Abbott and Treasurer Hockey to develop and explain any sound economic policy dealing with the deficit between government's revenue and spending.

The new PM apparently obtained the numbers by making commitments to the Liberal Party's right faction. Other factions probably received no commitment, but justifiably expected substantial changes in the degree of consultation and in various areas of policy. Their confidence was misplaced. PM Turnbull has been in office some 5 months, yet it is not the time to revisit the republic debate, the ridiculous plebiscite on same-sex marriage is set in stone, educational and health policies are in turmoil, the Aboriginal 'Close the Gap' need is supported but constitutional recognition is seemingly in limbo, and the economy is again in dire straits. The PM has rejected a 50% GST-increase, while Treasurer Morrison reluctantly conformed. Reforming the taxation system is all '*on the table*' and the outcome will be '*fair*', but the mooted changes seem to be politically driven, so what will be '*swept under the carpet*' and will the '*fairness*' pass the '*pub*' test?

Now, timid Malcolm, or should it be ruthless (whatever it takes) Malcolm, has abandoned serious tax reform². With an election approaching, the deficit is insufficiently serious to take the risk! Yet tinkering with income tax brackets in a way which decreases revenue and disproportionately benefits those on upper middle and high incomes is still '*on the table*'. It must be electorally prudent to offer relief to the '*poor*' on declared taxable incomes at least above \$80,000. Could this be the much vaunted '*fairness*'?

The environment has similarly suffered, despite the PM believing in climate change and, when he was a

frontbencher, advocating a carbon pricing scheme and referring to the Coalition's Direct Action plan as a '*con*'. Surely, as a PM with strong public support and the Paris Climate Change Conference imminent, he needed to show some backbone? Well, to some extent he did, but only when compared with his predecessor's negativity. He attended the leaders' conference, talked the talk, committed to the largely aspirational target to keep global temperature increase "well below" 2°C and even to 1.5°C, signed onto the final five years (through to 2020) of the Kyoto 2 round of reductions, pledged at least \$1 billion to help developing nations cut GGE, and joined 19 other nations in boosting clean energy innovations by 2020. But in terms of what Australia should be doing his performance was underwhelming and deceptive.

When the PM embraced Kyoto Stage 2, Minister Hunt confidently stated that the required GGE reduction (at least five per cent decrease on 2005 levels by 2020) would easily be attained provided that "*...the rules will remain as they are and accommodate all our objectives.*" This was deceptive as Australia only signed Kyoto 1 provided that it was allowed to offset reductions in deforestation against other GGE. The offset-process enabled Australia to exceed Kyoto 1 commitments and accumulate surplus GGE-credits to set against the Kyoto 2 commitment! Christine Milne noted that Australia "*...is relying on dodgy accounting rules...in order to massage the figures and do nothing*" and the WWF argued that Australia could really achieve a 25% GGE-decrease on 2000³ levels by 2020.

Deception also characterised the pledged \$1 billion over 5 years. Although worthwhile, the money is taken from the existing foreign aid budget. Australia is robbing Peter to pay Paul! The Government seems unable to realise that a positive commitment to deal with climate change should involve new money. Instead, it tries to sound the part without accepting the necessary level of commitment.

Australia joined 19 other developed and developing countries in Mission Innovation, in order to double investment in clean energy research and development by 2020. The gross commitment comprises \$20 billion, with Australia offering \$100 million. Astoundingly, the bills abolishing the \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation and crippling the Australian Renewable Energy Agency have not been withdrawn, despite these organizations being required to foster innovation; and the \$100 million is but a small fraction of that already stripped from ARENA. The offer is expedient and insultingly inadequate.

Many saw the deceptive and underwhelming commitments as a positive contribution to the Paris conference. But somewhat regrettably, Turnbull's reticence when confronted with the need for action was exposed by several other aspects.

At the leaders' summit, about 40 countries committed to removing the fossil fuel subsidies which effectively translate into GGE. The new Canadian PM reversed his predecessor's position and pledged his commitment;

Continued on page 8.

Three Months in a Bushcare Officer's Life - Summer Period 2015/2016 (Dec/Jan/Feb) Paul Vale

Again, my activities have not been limited to bushcare, and a **highlight of the period** was probably the excellent Climate Change rally in Springwood late last year. This was a very inspiring event, with a hot but happy crowd looking at the problems and optimistic for solutions. A small selection of other activities follows ...

ParkCare: In addition to the Bushcare Program, several Community Park Care groups have started up. These are aimed at public parks and are probably less intense than looking after bushland areas. But guess where a lot of weeds originate? Yes, in our parklands. So keep your eye out for a group in your area.

Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group (The Society's volunteer group): The group continues to make progress in removing the usual suspects from the urban interface above the National Park and from the drainage lines that run through the park areas. We weeded a significant section of Valley of Waters creek in January. February saw us return to Armstrong Street for Monbretia and Japanese Honeysuckle removal and morning tea with Valentine's Day chocolate mud cake.

The Gully Katoomba: Planting, mulching, weeding. While we wait for the natives planted up to four years ago to grow, it is mostly this maintenance work that brings long-term success in rehabilitation. Blue Mountains Bird Observers popped up here on a club walk in January, joining in the morning tea and learning about the history and ongoing rehabilitation work. In February we removed masses of Monbretia, Privet, Himalayan Honeysuckle and other weeds.

Centenary Reserve Blackheath: Sweeping the whole area for Gorse, which is now rare but still pops up and removing Holly seedlings, Monbretia and Japanese Honeysuckle - it's that time of year again. Great progress is being made.

Red Gum Reserve Bullaburra: I am helping the local Bushcare group create monitoring systems in their worksite as part of Bushcare Network projects.

Greater Sydney Landcare Network: GSLN was successful in obtaining grants through the Federal Local Landcare Coordinator Initiative worth up to \$350,000 over three years to facilitate a Community of Practice throughout the Greater Sydney Region. Recruitment is underway for two positions.

No Western Sydney Airport Subcommittee: An early December briefing from Environmental Defenders Office



Bushcare workers relax for morning tea beside Valley of Waters Creek (Paul Vale)

in Lawson, spurred many of us into more action. After Ross Coster had lodged the Society submission on the Environmental Impact Statement, I lodged a personal effort on 18th December. The work of the ever-growing subcommittee continues.

The 2016 Better Planning Network Summit: Held on 17th February at Parliament House in Macquarie Street. I attended with another member on behalf of the Society. This peak body attempts to focus its 400 plus member groups in opposing bad planning and encouraging government to listen to community concerns. It is a hard job to be sure.

Land Use Committee: A member alerted me to a development application for 20 dwellings in Winnicoopa Rd. Blaxland. We worked to gather support for opposition from various interested parties, and advised on how to respond using the Society Planning Development Resource Kit and my experience. Most of the work was done by local residents and a sizeable number of submissions were sent to Council.

The Local Environment Plan is done and dusted, so we can relax. You might think so, but the Land Use Subcommittee is still working on the accompanying Development Control Plan and other issues for our environmental health in the Blue Mountains.

Travelling Stock Reserves: In early December I lodged a submission to the TSR review (note the subtle but telling change of name from "Stock Routes") on behalf of the Blue Mountains Bird Observers. This is of interest to the Society as it is an integral part of the Crown Lands Review but there are no Stock Reserves in the Society's area of interest. There are serious concerns as to the commercialisation of the "Reserves", their potential sale and devaluing of their environmental aspects.

Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 6th March: The Gully traditional owners are part of this event, working around the Maple Grove picnic area near Katoomba Falls Kiosk from 9a.m. to 12 noon. Weeding, rubbish removal ... all the usual things.

What can you do?: GET INVOLVED! Remember, you don't have to "join" a bushcare group; you can come along any time you feel able and take on tasks to suit your abilities, time available and mood for the day. Or go to one-off events to get the feel and learn some basics.

Photo A hot but happy crowd at Springwood Climate Change Rally (Paul Vale).





Photo: A gnarled old Scribbly Gum (Ross Bridle)

Poets' Corner

IT'S HOT!

Here we are in summer time,
An erotic time of year -
More so for us who walk the tracks,
'Cos the Scribblys have dropped their gear!

Embarrassing to say the least,
I try to avert my eyes,
En-masse in naked splendour,
Me, intruding, on so many private lives!

I sneak a peek at bodies bare -
Surreptitiously!? My mind's a-whirl!
Those trunks, those bumps, those curly things,
Just can't tell who's boy, who's girl!

That cold shower has done the trick -
My pulse is back to norm',
Can't wait to take that walk again -
To indulge in bushland porn!

Ross Bridle

Readers of Hut News are invited to send a poem inspired by the Blue Mountains, maximum of 20 lines. Each month, one or two will be published in Poets' Corner. Poems can be emailed to brendan049@gmail.com or even posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782. Brendan Doyle.

SUSTAINABLE POPULATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE AS FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRIES COME TO A PLANET TRANSFORMING CROSSROADS Don Morison

Many of you would have attended the screening of the movie "Black Hole" which packed out the Mount Vic Flicks cinema at a special showing in February. In this movie, it was apparent how the non-violent direct action tactics of campaigners against the Maules Creek open-cut coal mine near Narrabri contrast with the partly successful campaign approach that has been seen as necessary by groups (such as our own) striving to protect the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society needs a Sustainable Population and Climate Change Officer to coordinate our messages about fossil fuel, population growth, economic growth and other factors as determinants of our planet's wellbeing.

Please note the job description to "liaise with sustainable population groups, take an active role in political/governmental aspects of climate change policy and support sustainable village models and concepts" (see the list of Management Committee's Duties and Responsibilities inserted in this newsletter). Think about whether you have the communication skills, abilities and enthusiasm to help manage Blue Mountains Conservation Society campaigns and liaison with groups such as Nature Conservation Council, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Stop Coal Seam Gas Blue Mountains in this vital area of environmental campaigning.



VOTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT 2016

Go to **Blue Mountains Conservation Society** website. Find out how you can help elect a parliament to save the environment.

Candidates' questionnaire responses will appear when available. www.bluemountains.org.au

The next meeting of the Election Subcommittee will be on 18 March 2016. Contact Don Morison 8230 2116 or president@bluemountains.org.au if you would like to join our subcommittee or find out more.

All but one out of step

American Presidential candidates see little merit in the Trans Pacific Partnership. Australian environmentalists do not want a bar of provisions that give overseas corporations the right to override our Federal, State and Local Governments as we try to protect our environment. Objective analysis has shown virtually zero job growth or other economic benefits in Australia from the TPP. Only the current Australian Government sees any worth in this thoroughly bodgie 11-nation trade deal.

Demise of a lizard

There appear to be several species of skink in Blackheath, at least one of them nocturnal.

I often find skinks scurrying through the garden or basking in the sun. It is unusual for me to see a skink climbing on the window during the afternoon.

The kitchen window might be a good place to hunt insects attracted to the house lights. But, it's not such a good idea during the day!

I photographed this lizard, from both sides of the window, on 4 February. It was about 11 cm from snout to tip of tail, pale underneath and mottled brown above (it seemed a bit flaky and about to shed its skin).

Shortly afterwards I looked out to see a Pied Currawong with the lizard in its beak.

Well, I admit begrudgingly, Currawongs have to eat.

An unusual insect

This insect was probably attracted to the lights and was on the window in the early morning (16 Feb). I photographed it and emailed the photo to Search and Discover, Australian Museum (<http://australianmuseum.net.au/searchdiscover>).

It was identified as an adult Lacewing. Lacewings belong to an ancient order of insects, *Neuroptera*. When flying, they can be mistaken as dragonflies but at rest their wings fold on their back as a tent-like shape which dragonflies' never do. They can also be distinguished by their pair of long antenna while dragonflies' are very short.

Most *Neuroptera* species are predators of other insects. They range in size, some as small as 5 mm. This individual (17 mm from head to end of wings which are longer than the body) is one of the larger species.

More information on this wonderful insect is available here:-

http://www.brisbaneinsects.com/brisbane_lacewings/index.html

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/lacewings-and-antlions-order-neuroptera>

I moved the Lacewing to a bush in the garden, but it might have defences against being eaten and be less tasty than a skink.



2016: moving forward or stagnation? (continued from page 5)

PM Turnbull did not. He contended that Australia had no such subsidies, despite this being blatantly untrue. Yet logically, were there no subsidies, he could have signed with impunity!

Again at the summit, many invoked carbon pricing as the best way to curtail GGE, yet Turnbull disappointingly used semantics about carbon pricing to avoid specific support. Julie Bishop subsequently signed a declaration about rules governing international carbon markets when the Paris agreement comes into force in 2020. She unfortunately qualified this by insisting that Australia's Direct Action climate policy would remain up to and seemingly beyond 2017. This means the taxpayer will continue paying businesses to reduce emissions, despite the abuse-potential inherent in the policy.

Even worse, PM Turnbull failed on the international stage to increase Australia's 2030 emissions-reduction targets from the pathetic 26-28% below 2005 levels (only 19-21% below 2000 levels) to something commensurate with other developed countries. This was despite clear advice from the Climate Change Authority that, with reference to a 2005 base, Australia should aim for a reduction of 45-63% by 2030. Could the PM and Minister Hunt be arbitrarily rejecting the target because the ridiculous Direct Action policy is incapable of delivering it?

Despite the Paris Conference, the government's true position on GGE reduction and climate change remains overshadowed by the party's right faction. The PM has retained and thereby endorsed Minister Hunt's past and

current actions. Hunt shamelessly approved the enormous Carmichael coalmine in the Galilee Basin, expansion of the Abbot Point coal terminal, the Springvale Extension, the Shenhua Watermark mine and many others in NSW and Queensland. Likewise, having removed the beneficial carbon tax and resorted to Direct Action, emissions have soared due to the increased use of brown coal. Hunt also drove lowering the Renewables Energy Target, substantially undermining the renewables industry. One wonders at the supreme irony of this man receiving the 'world's best minister' award.

Stagnation: with an election-focused PM who once failed the republican movement and is now failing voters' expectations, and a minister who values career-advancement ahead of the environment, stagnation could be the best option. Why? This might limit damage to the economy and the environment pending other options!

¹ Only essential references – the fully referenced article is available from the Editor or author.

² *PM abandons tax reform*, Peter Martin and Mark Kenny, SMH, February 25, p1

³ A deceptive practice! Australia selected 2005 as it was a year in which its GGE were very high, thereby making 5% very easy to achieve – most other countries used 2000 as their baseline.

JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society,
or renew your membership online.
www.bluemountains.org.au

DO YOU HAVE SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS?

Our Election Subcommittee needs a volunteer with **SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS** for a short-term project to prepare content for our Vote for the Environment 2016 campaign.

Can you make our message stand out and be seen?

Please contact Marilyn Kraus 04025 51809,
marilynkraus@hotmail.com

WILD: An exhibition by Robyn Collier



On 23rd March 2016 Robyn Collier's most recent exhibition will be hanging again at Lost Bear Gallery - Lurline St, Katoomba. 'WILD' is a collection of 38 paintings painted from some of Australia's most iconic and beautiful areas such as Antarctica, the Pilbara, Western Australia and our own beautiful Blue Mountains. The Official opening will take place on Saturday April 2nd and the exhibition will be opened by Alan Henderson - Regional Manager, Blue Mountains Region, National Parks and Wildlife Service. Members of the Conservation Society are welcome to attend.

(Pictured: Valleys of the Grose, a painting by Robyn Collier)

Shooters' surprising demand

The Shooters and Fishers Party want to change their name to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

This party was originally closely associated with the Game Council of NSW which Premier Barry O'Farrell (sensibly) abolished after an investigation of political demands made by the party, including shooting in NSW national parks. The episode was overshadowed by court appearances of senior Game Council identities after an incident in which their vehicle broke down a farmer's fence while pursuing an (allegedly) feral animal.

In recent years, a most unpopular moment for one of the BMCS bushwalking groups came when a farmer mistook them for people wanting to shoot on his property. It is the wrong time for the Shooters to try to reinvent themselves as farmers' friends.

Coal approvals savaged

The Saturday Paper's national correspondent, Mike Secombe, has applied savage but deserved criticism to Federal and NSW processes for assessing coal mines. www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/resources/2016/02/27/coalmine-approvals-based-flawed-models/14564916002934

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You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- Post this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, OR
- Join online at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

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

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20

Household \$35 Household Concession \$25

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

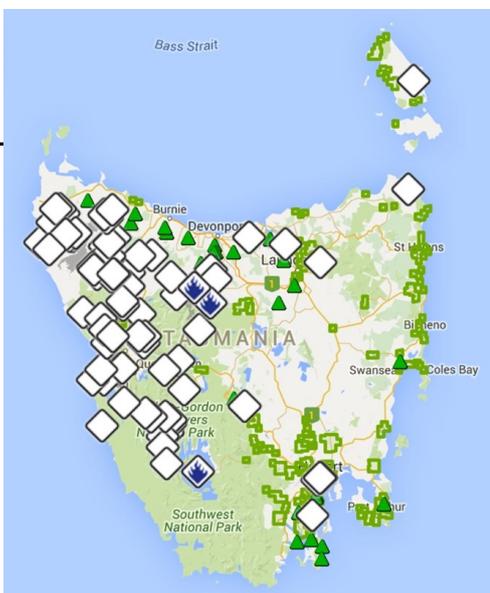
Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

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

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

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

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



Get Involved! Ross Coster, Membership Secretary

Every morning, my wife and I walk our dogs around Glenbrook, often around Glenbrook Lagoon (a beautiful place!). We often notice litter on the street, coffee cups, Maccas wrappers, bottles and the like.

I used to be like everyone else, see the litter, tut-tut about it, and move on. Then one day I decided to do something about it.

These days I take a plastic shopping bag with me, my wife has bought me a 'litter claw', and we pick up litter. Most days we get a full bag, and about half of what we put out each week in our 'red-top' bin is other people's rubbish.

Every second Sunday we walk Mitchells Pass, from Lennox Bridge up to Mount Sion Park, and we pick up a *garbage bag* of litter. It takes some effort and planning, but it *feels* worthwhile.

If you see something that needs fixing, don't just tut-tut and move on, get involved, report it to Council, clean it up yourself, join a bushcare group, do something for the community.

In 1996 I joined the BMCS Management Committee as Membership Secretary, having been chosen for my skills in databases, and coerced because I was needed (thanks Les!).

Within months I was doing far more than running the database, getting involved in various campaigns on water, sewerage, National Parks and wilderness, and of course recruiting Members (we went from 350 to 850 in five years). In my five years on the Committee I made a real difference, a period of which I am immensely proud.

In 2013 I re-joined the Management Committee, again as Membership Secretary, and I am now involved in the No Western Sydney Airport campaign.

The first time around I had no skills in campaigning, learned as I went from brilliant colleagues, and now I feel like I am making a difference again.

Perhaps *you* can join the Committee or find out what else you can do to help the Society. Get involved, help us to conserve and improve our beautiful Blue Mountains.

Don't be intimidated, get into it, join us ... make a difference!

Drone video of Tasmanian bushfires

For over a month now, intense fires have ravaged remote parts of Tasmania, causing heartbreaking environmental damage. Firefighters continue to do an extraordinary job battling the fires.

But these fires aren't normal bushfires. They've spread to areas that don't often burn. 1,000-year-old trees in World Heritage Areas have been destroyed. Australia's biggest rainforest wilderness - the Tarkine - is under threat. And scientists are drawing the links between this devastation and climate change.

Greenpeace and The Wilderness Society sent a helicopter and a drone camera to document the extent of the damage. Take a look at the video footage: www.facebook.com/greenpeaceaustraliapacific/videos/vb.9480502970/10154432927257971/

More than 72,000 hectares of western Tasmania have been burned by a cluster of bushfires, most of them ignited by a spectacular dry lightning storm that crossed the island on January 13. This Tasmanian Fire Service map shows the geographical extent of the fires on January 29. <https://theconversation.com/fires-in-tasmanias-ancient-forests-are-a-warning-for-all-of-us-53806?>

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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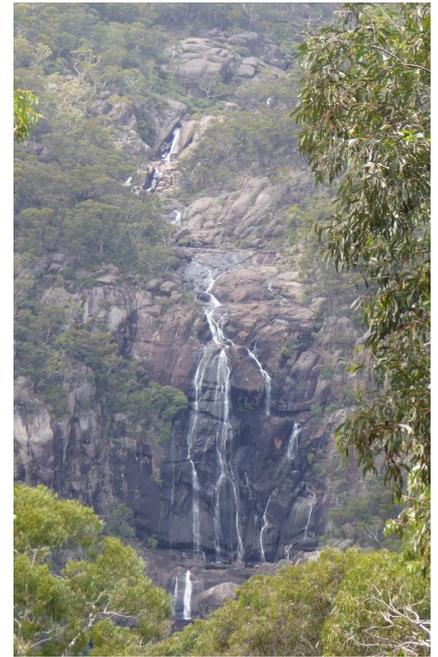
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13. MORONG VIEW RIDGE, UPPER KOWMUNG CATCHMENT

In the south-west section of Blue Mountains National Park, a high ridge offers a view of the distinctive Morong Falls.

A red-necked wallaby, a goanna and a snake – possibly a copperhead – crossed our path as we traversed the vehicular track between the National Park boundary and Morong Falls Lookout.

700 metres before the lookout we came upon a narrow ridge peppered with lichen-encrusted granite boulders and the air was perfumed with the scent of the dominant Eucalypts. The vehicular track plunged steeply through 100 metres of loose rocks and gravel, causing us to park the four wheel drives and walk.

The diverse vegetation provided a plant identification challenge as the descent flattened out and we surmounted one more little knoll before reaching an inspiring panorama centred on the spindly streams of Morong Falls whispering their way into the “Morong Deep” section of the Upper Kowmung River.

14. CLASSICALLY CLOSETED, MOUNT VICTORIA

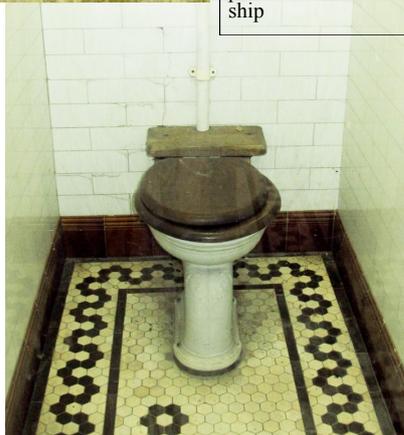
When one bushwalks, all of one’s bodily essences are stirred. So it is comforting to find Thomas Krapper’s invention, the water closet, at a location of convenience. The depicted example (of 1900-1910 vintage) in the Men’s at Mount Victoria’s Imperial Hotel is possibly the oldest functioning water closet in Australia.

Even so, it is not the only auspicious facility in the town. The entrance to the Ladies’ in the park opposite is flanked by a Henry Lawson mural. Fortunately the Lawson poem used is about a Mount Victoria local legend, not his 1892 poem: “The Queen has reigned for 50 years, for 50 years and 5, she’s yet to do just one good turn to anyone alive!”

Because ... this township of tasteful toilets was named after the ruler of the British Empire while she was still Princess Victoria. It’s important that the amenities block decorations do not disparage said sovereign. If a time machine allowed Victoria to travel to her Australian tourist town in 2016, her majesty might not be amused. But she could certainly be fittingly enthroned! Don Morison.



The cement toilet cistern bears a logo "TRADE MARK THE ORIGINAL Sydney" with a picture of a steam ship



This “Blue Trail” is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.



Photos: Viewing point for Morong Falls (Sue Nicol); Granite outcrop, SW Blue Mountains NP (Christine Davies); the unique patterns of the multiple watercourses of Morong Falls (Sue Nicol); Henry Lawson was a true “ladies” man; Throne room in Imperial Hotel, Mount Victoria.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerckham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerckham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email jp34@tpg.com.au Check www.bluemountains.org.au for updates.

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

Mar 12 **Evans Crown Nature Reserve** - A tour of the Granite Tors. Leader **Diana** 4751 3935. **Please contact leader.** Approx 6 Km. Maps **Oberon or Sketch Map.**

Mar 19 **Stargate Trail and Slots.** Another new and adventurous walk by Harold.

Leader **Harold** 0409010737. Meet at Blackheath Station Carpark-7.30am. 7Km. Gr ¾. Map **Ben Bullen**

Mar 26 **Easter LWE** Jinki Ridge to Jungaburra canyon - Exit via the rock climbers rungs. - some exposure on the climb out.

Leader **Emanuel** 4757 1090 or 0419773906 or email: emanuelanddi@yahoo.com.au - for place and time details. 5.8Km. Gr3.

Map **Mount Wilson**

Apr 2 **Gardens of Stone** – off track - part exploratory. Contact Leader for more detail. **Leader Hugh** 0423309854. 5Km.

Gr 3. Map **Cullen Bullen**

Apr 9 **Lower Mountains Classic - Glenbrook – Duckhole – Lost World Lookout – Springwood.** Leader **Bart 4739 9947.**

Meet at Glenbrook Station Carpark-8.00am. 18Km. Gr 3. Maps **Springwood/Penrith**

Apr 16 **Gardens of Stone** – your chance to see the majestic **Cathedral Cave** - off track - Contact Leader for more detail.

Leader Hugh 0423309854. 5Km. Gr 3. Map **Cullen Bullen**

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, keithdor53@hotmail.com

Mar 14 **Porter's Pass and Centennial Glen.** Historic track built in 1866. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45 am. Car pool. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 3.

Mar 21 **Birrabang Ridge**, end of Bells Line of Road, 6-7 km. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50 am. Car pool fee \$5.

Liz Stark 4754 4966. Grade 2-3.

Mar 28 **Magadala Creek**, Springwood (Easter Monday). Meet Springwood car park behind Westpac 8.45 am.

Francoise 4751 2302 (M) 0438 512 301. Grade 2.

Apr 4 **Bus Trip to Mittagong. The Boxvale Track.** Fare \$12. Book and pay Tony 9625 3985. Meet Springwood car park behind Westpac 7.50 am. Robyn Hine 4739 3923. Grade 2.

Apr 11 **Ikara Head.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50 am. Car pool fee \$5, Warren 4787 5403. Grade 2.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella@optusnet.com.au

Mar 17 **Bus trip, Sphinx Track to Bobbin Head.** Book and pay Chris 0413 107 912, \$12. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac Bank 8.00am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2.

Mar 24 **Giant Stairway to Federal Pass, Katoomba.** Return by Scenic Railway or Cable Car \$16 or walk up Furber Steps.

Meet Katoomba Station car park 9.30am. Leader Christine 4757 2864. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2-3.

Mar 31 **Cremorne to Mosman, Sydney.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2103. Take lunch. Grade 1.

Apr 7 **Berghofer's Pass, Mount Victoria.** Constructed 1907-1912 as an easier grade than Victoria Pass. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Doreen 6355 2371. Car pool. BBQ lunch at Doreen's. Bring meat to barbecue and a plate to share.

Grade 2.

Apr 14 **Merriwa Street to Echo Point, Katoomba.** Meet Katoomba Station 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2.

Read about our bushwalkers' exploits on Facebook—with lots of wonderful photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/BmcsBushwalking>

<https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks>

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available.

Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

New members are welcome.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml

Welcome to new members

Terry Morgan

Susan Roxon

Lesley Anne Kent

Gillian Hewitson

Neil Perry

Shae Foenander

Koto Sataja

Warwick Stanbridge

Anne McLeod

Michael O'Regan

Jacqueline Spedding

Ronah Tuite

Michelle Hinchcliff

Coel Kirkby

Kate Purcell

Hugh Brougham

Joyce Edward