



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Workshop on Arboreal Mammals in the Blue Mountains

Thursday, 16 June 2016, 7-9 pm, at Santa Maria
Centre Hall, Lawson (253 Great Western Highway,
Lawson, next door to Our Lady of the Nativity Church).

Over the last year, Judy and Peter Smith have been undertaking spotlighting surveys across the Blue Mountains Local Government Area to find out how arboreal mammals are faring locally. They will present their findings from this study and discuss ways in which the data that they have collected might be built upon.

Come along if you would like to learn more about our night life – which gliders, possums, quolls and koalas are out and about at night, how to identify them, listen to their calls, find out where they live, how to find them – and consider how they might be monitored in the future.

RSVP to Judy and Peter Smith smitheco@ozemail.com.au
or 4739 5312.

(Image: Common Ringtail Possum, juvenile, Blaxland, 2016)

VOTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Conservation Society has sent questions about the environment to five Macquarie electorate candidates from recognised major and minor parties. Topics include DAMAGE TO THE GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS FROM COAL MINES, THE AIRPORT PROPOSAL, STRENGTHENING THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA and CLIMATE CHANGE.

Posting of what we asked and the answers from candidates on our website has now begun.

[http://bluemountains.org.au/
campaign-vote_environment.htm](http://bluemountains.org.au/campaign-vote_environment.htm)



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Threats to Native Species: A Watershed Period

New South Wales environmentalists are mobilising as the Baird Government's proposed weakening of vegetation clearing laws comes to a head. Find out how you can join the campaign on page 6—and there's still time to rsvp for the workshop on arboreal mammals (see left).

The habitats of native plant and animal species are being violated in the Blue Mountains and elsewhere by climate change and by numerous localised human activities. Native fauna is at ever increasing risk of diseases, exposure to predators, becoming road kill and losing its habitat. On page 4, Louise Bennett writes about some of the threats to wombats in her enlightening article "For the Love of Wombats".

Whether or not wombats are the most high profile native fauna at risk, everything that forces us to think about human impacts on native species is a big step in the right direction.

Feral species control is a crucial element in protecting native species. The Baird Government's feral horse management proposals in Kosciuszko have major implications for the Greater Blue Mountains (see article on page 7)

You can make a submission on the feral horse campaign. You can choose an event or events to attend to become better informed about the welfare of native species. You can speak to your friends and to your local State and Federal representatives. **It's time for us all to be there for Australian native species.**

Don Morison, President.

FORUM ON WOMEN PIONEERS IN CONSERVATION

Saturday 23 July, 2 pm
Wentworth Falls School of Arts

Learn about some of the women who worked to make our environmental consciousness what it is today: Marie Byles and Dot Butler's contribution to the environment and organised bushwalking; Eleanor Dark's inspiring prose describing places and natural events in the mountains and the genesis of rock climbing in the 1930s; Isobel Bowden and her contributions towards Blue Mountains botany, environmental art and political campaigning ...

Make a note in your diary! There will be more information in July Hut News.

FAREWELL, RUTH LEY

Ruth died peacefully on 12th May surrounded by loving friends. Ruth was a long-term Society member, active in campaigns to protect the environment and on-ground work through Blue Mountains Bushcare.

The funeral, held on 19th May at Leura was attended by Society, Music, Bushcare and Community Services friends and many others who Ruth's life had touched, usually significantly. Ruth was farewelled in a fitting fashion, covered in native plants and engulfed in stories told by those closest to her and music she had chosen.

Celebration of Ruth's life continued at a wake in Katoomba, where Ruth's musical arrangements and favourite pieces were played by members of orchestras Ruth had played with, more stories from friends, photos, food and cups of tea.

Ruth will be remembered for her wonderful smile, her crusade to rid the mountains of Montbretia weeds, her generous soul and her compassion.

"Ruth was a shining light, brightening the world around her."

NURSERY NEWS

Our Native Plant Nursery is closed for two months over winter and will reopen at the beginning of August. We have had a successful year with a very healthy crop of plants, some of them new to our range. There are hundreds of seedlings germinating at the Blackheath nursery, ready for next season.

The Nursery could not function without volunteers and we have a wonderful bunch of enthusiastic helpers at Blackheath and Lawson nursery. Some have been working with us since the beginning, like Joan Gahl at Blackheath and Simone Bowskill and John King at Lawson. Many new volunteers have joined us this year, some after visiting us on our 'open days' which we hope to repeat in the spring. A huge 'Thank you' to all of our volunteers.

We have finished the year with a volunteers' picnic at Green Gully in the Megalong Valley where we have been supplying plants for a major regeneration project for several years. We surveyed the progress of the plantings, enjoyed a walk, admired the views and celebrated with a barbeque.

Sue Nicol, Nursery Manager. nursery@bluemountains.org.au

WINTER MAGIC FESTIVAL

Saturday 18 June at Katoomba

Blue Mountains Conservation Society volunteers will be at Winter Magic and in the parade with other environment groups. Phone Tara Cameron 0419 824 974 if you want to join the parade or turn up at the intersection of Lurline and Waratah Streets by 11.30 am and look for our banners. We expect our stall to be in the usual place, in Bathurst Road opposite the station.

We need volunteers to help with our "Rubbish Room". This initiative started at the 2014 Festival and has been very successful in encouraging recycling and reducing waste. Each "Rubbish Room" contains separate bins for organic waste, recycling and general waste, with volunteers to assist festival patrons as to the right bin to use. Please contact Peter Green 4751 9474, 0438 519 474, misc@pwgreen.id.au, or Rob Baigent 4759 3104, 0428 780 617, rob.baigent@bigpond.com, if you can help.

Well-deserved praise ...

Brian Marshall's article "The Eulogy Should be Global" (Hut News, May 2016) deserves praise. I was impressed with Brian's research of information and his clarity of presentation. It set me thinking and agreeing with his explanations. My thanks to Brian for this article.

*In the same newsletter, what a great piece by Ron Hyslop, "Bird Counts", told with enthusiasm and humour. Do we have an answer to Ron's question, "How do they count birds?" Anybody? **Sylvia Beamer.***

**"Hut News", the newsletter of
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone 4757 1872 (leave message)
Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au
Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation
Society Twitter: [bmcsnsw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)
President:: Don Morison 8230 2116
president@bluemountains.org.au
Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron
04198 24974 taracameron4@gmail.com
Second Vice President: Marilyn Kraus
04025 51809 marilynkraus@hotmail.com
Treasurer: Bart Beech 4739 9947
bart.beech@schneider-electric.com
Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson
sao@bluemountains.org.au
Bushcare Officer: Paul Vale
4787 8080 04290 14454
bushcare@bluemountains.org.au
Environmental Education Officer:
Beth Rohrlach: 04247 32287
BethRohrlach@yahoo.com.au
General Meetings Convenor:
Annette Coulter: 04088 22080
annettecoulter@bigpond.com
Landuse Officer: Angela Langdon
0417 004 722
landuse@bluemountains.org.au
Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au
Membership Secretary: Ross Coster
4739 2987 04184 62576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
National Parks/World Heritage Officer:
Brian Marshall 4784.1148
briannamar@bigpond.com
Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies
4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Plant Nursery Manager: Sue Nicol
4787.8887 nursery@bluemountains.org.au
Publicity Officer: Mellissa Opie
Melissa.opie1@bigpond.com
Sustainable Population and Climate
Change Officer: VACANT
Threatened Species Officer: Nakia Belmer
04143 44741 bayern11@tpg.com.au
Website Manager: Valda Low
webmaster@bluemountains.org.au
Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham
4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com
Project Officer-Events: Rob Baigent
4759 3104 rob.baigent@bigpond.com
Project Officer—Gardens of Stone:
Madi Maclean
mhmaclean@bigpond.com
Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson
4751.2303, mob 04275 12303**

DEADLINE for the next issue of
HUT NEWS is **18 JUNE 2016**
Christine Davies, 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ross Coster
02 4739 2987 0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Aircraft emissions over Sydney Ross Coster

In this article I am going to be very parochial.

We know that aircraft leaving the proposed Western Sydney airport will consume 986 million litres of jet fuel per annum in 2030, because the draft EIS says so. Burning this fuel will generate 2.5 million tonnes of CO₂e per annum. This is also in the draft EIS, buried in an appendix. But how much of this fuel will be burned in the Sydney Basin?

Every aircraft movement, taking off or landing, will spend about 50km of the flight in the Sydney basin. We know that 50% of these flights will be 'short haul' flights to and from Melbourne and Brisbane, 20% will be 'medium haul' domestic flights to and from other cities, and 30% will be 'long haul' International flights to and from overseas. Assuming a mix of Airbus A321, Boeing 787 and Airbus A380 aircraft are used (these are the latest models used for these types of flights), and the 10 million passenger movements per annum predicted in the Draft EIS, we get numbers like these:

Destinations	Plane	Seats	Fuel consumed over Sydney	Flights per annum	Litres per annum
Melbourne Brisbane	Airbus A321	180	225 litres	34,000	7.5 million
Adelaide Cairns Perth	Boeing 787-8	238	318	10,000	3 million
Singapore Dubai Dallas	Airbus A380	525	858	7,000	6 million
TOTAL					16.5 million

This fuel consumption is like running 5,000 V8 Commodores for 25,000km each every year. The burned fuel will generate 44,000 tonnes per annum of CO₂e, *in the Sydney Basin*, and millions of tonnes more over the lengths of the flights. Is it OK to add 5,000 V8 Commodores to the skies over Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains? Is it OK to add 2.5 million tonnes more CO₂e per annum to the global atmosphere? How do we achieve emissions reductions, while also building long-life infrastructure that will generate massive emissions?

Over the period 2030 to 2060, emissions from Western Sydney Airport will *climb by 8 times*, while we are committed to zero net emissions by 2050. The planes will run on jet fuel, as there is no viable alternative fuel on the horizon. The burned jet fuel will generate gases and particles into the atmosphere. Our surface transport will be increasingly hybrid, electric and rail-based, as we strive to reduce emissions on the ground. Reduce them much faster than the Airport pushes them up, we hope!

The most interesting part in the draft EIS for me was the idea that CO₂e emissions for Aircraft are only counted as Airport emissions when the planes are on the ground. Once they take off and leave the Airport, they become Airline Industry emissions! Emissions are emissions, wherever they happen, they change the Global atmosphere, they cause global warming, they expose us and the World Heritage Area around us to gases and particles that we should not be breathing, and we must stop this happening.

NO AIRPORT!

What can you do? Write to some politicians and ask them if they support an airport that will increase emissions for decades into the future. You could start with candidates for Macquarie in the forthcoming Federal Election (some contact details are in the next column).

Ross Coster, nwsa@bluemountains.org.au



Leura Public School supports the Animals

In a lovely act of generosity, Emma Jones-Cook of Leura Public school has run a mufti day to raise funds for the Society. Emma wanted to do something for animals so she and the other students dressed up as animals for a day and raised \$314.

This is very much appreciated. We would like to thank Emma particularly and are pleased that the fundraising will help her achieve the Gold Boomerang badge.

The Society will have a family bush event, involving citizen science projects about turtles and other animals, in October. We hope to see the students of Leura School there. (Photo: Emma Jones-Cook)

No Western Sydney Airport Flyers

Our 4th generation flyer is available now for you to download. There are separate versions for the Blue Mountains, and Western Sydney. We will be printing these in quantity for letter-boxing by volunteers in both areas, and for handing out at events. You can download the flyers at www.bluemountains.org.au/campaign-airport.htm

Vote for the Environment

Candidates for Macquarie:

Mrs Louise Markus, MP, Liberal Party
PO Box 855, Windsor NSW 2756
louise.markus.mp@aph.gov.au

Ms Susan Templeman, Aust Labor Party
PO Box 4215, Winmalee 2777
macquarie.labor@gmail.com

Terry Morgan, Australian Greens
PO Box 184, Lawson NSW 2783
convenor@bluemountains.nsw.greens.org.au

Dr Hal Ginges, Animal Justice Party
81 Lurline Street, Katoomba 2780, 4782 2888
hhginges@pnc.com.au

Ms Catherine Lincoln, Christian Democrats.

For the Love of Wombats *Louise Bennett*



Bare-nosed wombats* (*Vombatus ursinus*) are stout, sturdy marsupials. They grow to 1 metre in length and can weigh up to 40 kg. Their sharp claws and stubby, powerful legs make them powerful diggers. A single wombat may occupy a territory of 5 hectares, containing 1 main burrow (up to 30 metres long) and several boltholes (small escape burrows). Wombats spend two-thirds of their lives tucked up

peacefully in their burrows. Mostly nocturnal, they are herbivores; their diet consists of grasses, sedges, herbs, bark and roots.

Wombats diverged from other Australian marsupials around 40 million years ago. Prior to European settlement they flourished in several regions, but today the species suffers a discontinued and fragmented distribution. Disease, roadkill, destruction of their natural habitat, as well as hunting, trapping, and poisoning have severely reduced the wombat's population. The wombat is protected in all parts of Australia (unfortunately this protection is not enforced), excluding areas of eastern Victoria, where it is classified as vermin and often shot.

Some intimate things about wombats

- Although wombats waddle about, looking anything but athletic, they can actually run up to 40 km per hour when threatened.
- One of the wombat's primary defences is its toughened backside, which is made mostly of cartilage. When threatened, a wombat dives headfirst into a tunnel, blocking the entrance with its rump. This sturdy rump, and lack of a significant tail, make it difficult for a predator to grab on.
- They're not as helpless as they look. Wombats defend home territories around their burrows and can be aggressive.
- They mark their territories by defecating, and their poo is distinctive by its cube-shape.

How can we help wombats?

Building a broader awareness and an attitude of care is paramount to their survival as a species. Also:

- *Check for joeys:* A wombat joey can live for many days in its mother's pouch if the female is killed, so if you see a dead wombat beside the road, check for a joey.
- *Mange medical alert:* Mange is a parasitic infestation brought to Australia by foxes, and is now a very serious problem for wombats in the wild. A wombat suffering from mange will need special medical care.
- *Wombat fencing:* To avoid fence damage caused by wombats, install a solid wombat gate. Stand-off electric fencing is also safe and effective for wombats (for more fencing information visit www.wombatprotection.org.au)



The Strategic Wombat 2017

Presented by the Wombat Protection Society of Australia

Date: Saturday 18th Sunday & 19th March, 2017

Venue: Panthers Leagues Club, Penrith, NSW

- Update wombat knowledge
- Develop wombat education for children
- Develop strategies for protection and preservation
- Develop ongoing networks to address major issues affecting wombats, including mange.
- Papers, forums, workshops and displays will be presented from across Australia.

For more information:

www.wombatprotection.org.au

email: info@wombatprotection.org.au

PO Box 40 Lithgow 2790, NSW Australia

Phone: 02 63593175

- *Who to contact for help:* Veterinarians Australia-wide are mandated to assist injured wombats and usually provide their treatment free of charge. In addition, vets are a good source of knowledge regarding local organisations and appropriate carers.

For more information and helpful tips visit:

www.wombatprotection.org.au

www.narg.asn.au

*The bare-nosed wombat was, until recently, generally referred to as the common wombat.

BLUE MOUNTAINS BOTANICALS

Watercolours by pioneering
conservationist

ISOBEL BOWDEN

Saturday **18 June** 2016

WOODFORD ACADEMY

A 2016 National Trust Heritage
Festival Event

Former Blue Mountains Mayor now spearheads advocacy for renewables

The former Mayor of the Blue Mountains, Adam Searle, MLC, has called on the Baird Government to take note of Climate Council advice to lift its game in promoting renewable energy. In his current role as State Opposition spokesman on energy, Mr Searle said that a recent Climate Council report showed the State Government had "fallen out of the renewable energy race" and "has no road map to get to 20%" (renewable generation). (Source: ABC News Online, 25/5/16). The Blue Mountains Conservation Society wishes Mr Searle well in his quest for a better State Government policy on renewables.

COMMENT: Climatic negligence and wilful destruction! ¹ Brian Marshall

In May 2016 Hut News [*The eulogy should be global*] I emphasised the distortions which arise when the Commonwealth and State Governments export thermal coal emissions and fail to confront the damage inflicted on our global environment. Since that article appeared, another unfair Budget has been unveiled, a double dissolution is upon us, and the parties' campaigns are underway.

From an environmental viewpoint, the Commonwealth Government continues to offer little of substance. The Direct Action plan with all its deficiencies remains the only 'solution' to dealing with Australia's emissions. The PM claims, through Minister Hunt, that Australia is well on track to meet its commitments; yet the Coalition only aims to cut 26-28% from 2005 emissions-levels by 2030, whereas Labor is targeting 45% by 2030, and the Greens are aiming for 63-82% by 2030. The Coalition's pathetic commitments are like aiming to run 100 metres in 12 seconds, while most competitors are achieving less than 10 seconds! When facing global warming, a soft emissions-target is a form of negligence with climatic desecration and impending chaos as its reward.

The PM spruiks the need for Australia to be agile and innovative, yet the Coalition is failing to prevent a number of world-class climate-scientists being cut from CSIRO. Many of these scientists are at the forefront of climate-change research and are fundamental to gaining a global view (southern and northern hemispheres) of atmospheric and oceanic changes. It is no accident that some of the most accurate data on CO₂ atmospheric pollution comes from the Cape Grim site in north-western Tasmania. Yet, just when Cape Grim reports that the 'world's cleanest air' has attained the symbolic and potentially critical value of 400 ppm CO₂ (excluding other dangerous emissions), some of the team will be culled! Could crippling the messenger be the Coalition's new weapon for reducing Australia's emissions?

At a more specific level, the Coalition (through Minister Hunt) favours commercial development over Aboriginal artefacts (*Hunt won't stop rail project for artefacts*, SMH, April 25). The Minister claims that in the absence of incontrovertible proof of the site's value as an important Aboriginal location, he will not place a hold on the project. He contends that the site does not meet the definition of a 'significant Aboriginal area'. This is despite the expert consultant stating that this is one of the most significant finds of Aboriginal artefacts that the country has ever seen. So the construction continues and ensures destruction. Perhaps, as the area is progressively destroyed, enough will be found to satisfy the restrictive definition; unfortunately, too late!

The Coalition is able to overrule the State Government on the approval of longwall coal mining beneath state- and nationally-listed upland swamps in the catchments of the World Heritage Area and Sydney's water supply. Yet, despite a substantial record of dead and dying ecological communities, Commonwealth approval has been given, subject to more monitoring to 'minimise damage'. This approach ensures that mining continues in the face of irremediable swamp-destruction; when the inevitable happens, the company can forfeit its bond and/or offset the damage through paying a fine.

At the level of state governments, South Australia is providing a breath of fresh air, both literally and metaphorically, by announcing the closure of its last remaining coal-fired power station and its commitment to renewable power sources; while the Victorian Government cancelled the dubiously justified and outrageously expensive (at least \$11 billion) East West Link at a cost of \$340 million. But elsewhere, and particularly in NSW, the environmental cupboard is bare (or should I say Baird?); I will elaborate.

When Mike Baird became Treasurer in Barry O'Farrell's government, he first demonstrated his penchant for the privatization of public assets through 99-year leases (e.g., Sydney desalination plant, Port Botany and Port Kembla, and the Port of Newcastle). Having taken over as Premier, he risked all by 'selling the poles and wires' to fund "*Rebuilding NSW – a \$20 billion plan to revitalise the state's infrastructure.*" Fresh from this supposed triumph, the Premier embarked upon an ongoing and rapacious program of asset sales and construction in the face of increasing public outcries and with negligible regard for the consequences.

Concerns exist over the selling processes, the refusal to release business cases said to justify development proposals such as Westconnex, the inadequate compensation paid for the forced displacement of residents, the level of discord between UrbanGrowth NSW and the City of Sydney Council, the dictatorial approach to Council mergers, the appalling disregard of heritage, and the irrational sale of assets when interest rates are ludicrously low.

All developments have direct and indirect emissions-consequences. This has negligible significance to Premier Baird, who seemingly views open space as a development opportunity, and grass and trees as expendable commodities.

The destruction of trees and understoreys, natural repositories for carbon emissions, started when the Baird government introduced the 10/50 rule to reduce bushfire risk. The legislation was abused with outrageous consequences such that the government was forced to amend the legislation, but not before thousands of trees were removed to the detriment of Sydney's canopy.

The destruction is ongoing! Baird could currently save a large population of Moreton Bay Fig trees along Anzac Parade and Alison Road, despite avoidance being a viable option, but he turns his head away. A similar story exists along part of Parramatta Road where residents were misleadingly assured (in writing) that the removal of Hills Fig trees would not be necessary; it has happened regardless.

Another example comes from the Wollie Creek area where the WestConnex project (i.e. the one where costs keep blowing out and the supposedly justifying business case has the costings redacted) requires removal of threatened vegetation communities. How sad! Here come the chain saws and bulldozers, so find an offset; but where?

(Continued on Page 6)

COMMENT BY BRIAN MARSHALL: Climate negligence and wilful destruction (continued from page 5)

Now the final cut! If the outrageous draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill and Local Land Services Amendment Bill are accepted without major modifications, trees and understoreys will face state-wide obliteration. Baird will be presiding over legislation which will weaken the protection of public lands in urban areas and turn trees, understoreys and wildlife habitat in rural NSW into collateral damage. The Premier will be free to pursue his obsessive determination. In Sydney, he will sell or sacrifice public land for endless development; in the country he will destroy the natural environment through broad-scale land-clearing for agribusinesses.

Under these Bills, other than where the expanded levels of 'self-assessment' apply, offsetting wilful destruction will be central to the approval process. Unless anyone seriously believes that 'self-assessment' ever works other than for the direct beneficiary, I will now focus on offsetting.

If trees and habitat are in the way, then provide an offset; there is no provision for 'no-go' areas in terms of outstanding, even unique, environmental significance. Offsetting need not be 'like-for-like', permits mine-rehabilitation to be accredited (for whom remains unclear), and allows unrelated measures such as funding research in place of a tangible offset. If none of this fits, then pay money to the government's Trust Fund and clear the land at will; or better still, manage part of the property (or a separate property should the landholder possess one) for biodiversity conservation and the generous Trust fund will, subject to an agreement, pay the lucky landholder stewardship fees. What a farce! If you wish to destroy the environment Baird will facilitate it; if you wish to protect the environment Baird will look after you. A win-win situation for landholders, but Baird is spending our money to destroy our natural heritage.

This wilful destruction must stop and Baird should return to the merchant-banking environment from which he came.

What can you do? The following will immediately help:

- Go to http://www.standupfornature.org.au/petition?recruiter_id=108171 and sign the petition.
- The NCC's excellent evaluation of the legislation is available at: bluemountains.org.au/documents/research/NCC_Summary_of_Draft_Legislation.pdf.
- A community workshop will be hosted by BMCS and run by the Environmental Defenders Office on June 6 – information about the Bills is at http://www.edonsw.org.au/biodiversity_legislation_review
- The government's Bills are available at <https://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au/> – to a response, no matter how small/large is required by **June 28, 2016** – please make one via <https://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/>.

¹ The referenced article is available from the Editor or Author.

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.

Our native species are facing their biggest threat

The Baird government recently released the new draft Biodiversity Conservation Bill for public comment. The Society believes the Bill significantly waters down the current laws aimed at protecting our wildlife and our native bushland.

This is an important issue for our community as 10% of all threatened species in NSW can be found in the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains is home to 65 threatened animal species and 30 threatened plants including a number of plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. This high level of biodiversity in the Blue Mountains is due to the significant amounts of high quality bushland both within the national park and, importantly, on private land.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society believes that if these draft laws pass Parliament remnant bushland across the state will be destroyed, native habitat will be lost and our precious plants and animals will face a dire future.

Some of the changes the government wants to make are:

- Scrapping the *Native Vegetation Act 2003* and the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*;
- Lowering the threshold for tree clearing by ditching the requirement to 'maintain or improve biodiversity'; and
- Making it easier for developers to clear native bushland through the increased use of flawed biodiversity 'offsets'.

Unless Premier Baird changes course, this new law will:

- Add extinction pressures to our threatened animals and plants;
- Increase the risk of broad scale clearing of native vegetation in agricultural areas;
- Threaten our clean, reliable drinking water;
- Put native bushland on the edges of our towns and suburbs at risk;
- Release millions of tonnes of carbon pollution into our atmosphere from increased clearing.

We now have an eight week public consultation period to show the Government that these laws are not supported by the community.

The public consultation period ends on June 28 – we must act now.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Join the campaign: Go to

www.standupfornature.org.au/ This is the campaign website for all the major environmental groups who have joined together to fight these new laws.

Take action: Write, email, phone, scream, yell! This must be stopped! Find out what you can do—Go to

www.standupfornature.org.au/

Land Use Subcommittee, Email:

landuse@bluemountains.org.au

FERAL HORSE DECISION WILL AFFECT GREATER BLUE MOUNTAINS

There are 6000 feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park, damaging the park's fragile alpine and subalpine environment. NSW Environment Minister Mark Speakman has announced that NPWS proposes to reduce the population by half, in the next five to 10 years, using a range of methods. The Draft Wild Horse Management Plan for Kosciuszko National Park 2016 - <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/protectsnowies/knp-wild-horse-plan-draft-160271.pdf> - is on public exhibition for comment until 19 August, 2016.



The Southern Corroboree Frog, found in moss bogs in the Australian Alps, is listed as Critically Endangered at a national and international level. Image created by Marjorie Crosby-Fairall.

"The Snowy Mountains are one of the few places on Earth with subalpine treeless flats and valleys. They contain over 204 species of flowering plants and 33 of those species are rare. The Snowies are the only habitat for a number of rare species like the mountain pygmy possum, the southern corroboree frog and 13 other species declared threatened or vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Even the extensive peatland soils are unique, as are the alpine and subalpine bog and wetland catchments."

(www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/protectsnowies/140548Snowies2.pdf)

The importance of this fragile environment cannot be too highly emphasised. It should not be compromised, despite the sentimental attachment to "brumby" populations held by many visitors to the region. Unfortunately, the high (and perhaps poorly informed) emotion about feral horses has distorted Government policy for years, and effectively contributed to the current unacceptably large numbers.

This is the third feral horse "Management Plan" for Kosciuszko National Park exhibited in 13 years. Read Colong Foundation's submissions in response to previous draft plans: <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/files/pages/kosi-feral-horses.pdf> (2003) <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/files/pages/dft-horse-mgt-pLan-07.pdf> (2007)

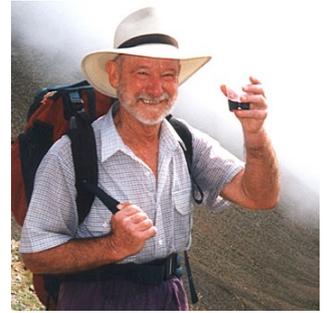
Aspects of past policy failings include the "brumby" rehoming policies which are believed to have led to small feral horse populations in the Wolgan catchment, including the Gardens of Stone, in 2013 and 2014. Rehoming (legal or otherwise) from one critical environment to another equally important environment is no solution. Likewise, but from a different viewpoint, the 2014 documentary movie, "The Man from Coxs River", contained distressing scenes involving the roping and breaking of feral horses in the Warragamba catchment; these actions are equally unacceptable.

The feral horses are extremely harmful to the Snowy Mountains fragile environment. It therefore seems that, despite some commercial interests wishing for retention of at least part of the "wild" horse population, the principal objective should be to remove them by the most suitable means within the shortest practicable time-frame. Some may feel this is harsh, yet they perhaps have few (or fewer) qualms about removing rabbits, feral cats and dogs, feral goats, feral pigs and, in parts of the Northern Territory, donkeys and camels. If we value native fauna and flora habitats, particularly as protected within our National Parks and other reserves, then harsh decisions must sometimes be made.

You can make a written submission, before 19 August 2016, online at <https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/wild-horse-management-plan> or by post to The Project Officer, Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Management Plan Review, PO Box 2228, Jindabyne NSW 2627.

Bill Orme: by Jim Smith

The most recent talk I gave for the Blue Mountains Conservation Society was in 2014 at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts. I summarised what I had learned over half a century of listening to the ambient sounds of the Blue Mountains. After my presentation, entitled 'The Music of the Mountains', instead of having a 'question time', I invited those present to talk about their own memorable bush experiences. That turned out to be one of the most interesting discussions I have been involved in.



Bill Orme, 1935-2016

The highlight was the contribution of Bill Orme who captivated the audience with his story of meeting a platypus family on the Nattai River during a walk from Katoomba to Mittagong. I don't think anyone who was there will ever forget hearing how a trusting platypus mother brought her two babies to inspect Bill's toes and camping equipment. I asked Bill to write it down for Hut News but his short article in the December 2014 issue did not convey the emotion and wonder of his spoken words.

In this age, when we are drowning in a torrent of words emanating from electronic media, it is worth remembering that the living voice of a storyteller, speaking from the heart, still has the power to move us deeply.

I have had a number of similar experiences in remote areas of the Blue Mountains when I have come across animals who have not seen humans before and are not afraid. How sad it is that our wildlife learns to fear us.

Bill Orme was not a member of our Society but somehow found out about the talk and came from Sydney to hear it. His obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 4 May 2016 revealed that Bill was a man of many talents and interests with "a deep anti-authoritarian streak". A lawyer by profession he worked for true justice for individuals and society in general. A great long-distance walker, he travelled 50,000 km on foot over a few decades, including walks thousands of km long in Europe.

In these days of increasingly arrogant and authoritarian governments, a quote from one of Bill's letters to the *Herald* is worth contemplating:

"We must always be active in protecting our civil liberties. We must never relax."

NAMING THE WILD DOG MOUNTAINS—Jim Smith (Part 3 of 7)

Parts 1 and 2 of this series were published in April and May 2016 *Hut News*—<http://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews-archive.shtml>

The Me-oo-wun Range

The Aboriginal name of the 'Wild Dog Mountains' was first recorded by surveyor William Govett in a letter to Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell: "The Native names of the three conical Hills, intersected from Jellore, which also you requested me to get is "Mouin" but they are not named separately."¹²

So, according to Govett's Aboriginal informant, the whole range that we call the Wild Dog Mountains was called Mouin and the "conical Hills" visible from the top of Mount Jellore: today's Mount Mouin, Mount Warrigal and Mount Dingo, did not have individual names. It is possible that Govett's informant, because he belonged to the Nattai clan of the Gundungurra, did not know the individual names for these peaks, which may have been known to the local Cox River clan, the Therabulat. The assiduous researcher of Aboriginal culture, Robert Hamilton Mathews (1841-1918), after interviewing Burraborang Aboriginal people, was able to establish that the pronunciation of Mouin was Me-oo-wun, that is it was missing a syllable in the non-Aboriginal usage. He also found that the primary location of this placename was a waterhole at the northern end of the range, near Medlow Gap, and that this waterhole was associated with the Dreaming story of Gurangatch and Mirragan.¹³

Gurangatch, in an attempt to escape from his pursuer Mirragan, burrowed underground from the Karrangatta waterhole on the Cox River and emerged at the Me-oo-wun waterhole, where he bled from some of the wounds inflicted by Mirragan.¹⁴ The blood that Gurangatch left

behind became a type of ochre. Right across Australia, many ochre deposits are believed by Aboriginal people to be the blood of their Dreaming ancestors. The underground journey of Gurangatch between Karrangatta and Me-oo-wun paralleled the above-ground Gundungurra route later known as the Black Dog Track.

The Me-oo-wun range has an extremely high visibility from other parts of Gundungurra country. It can be seen in Mitchell's 1837 engraving of the country seen from the top of Mount Jellore near Mittagong, 58 km away.¹⁵

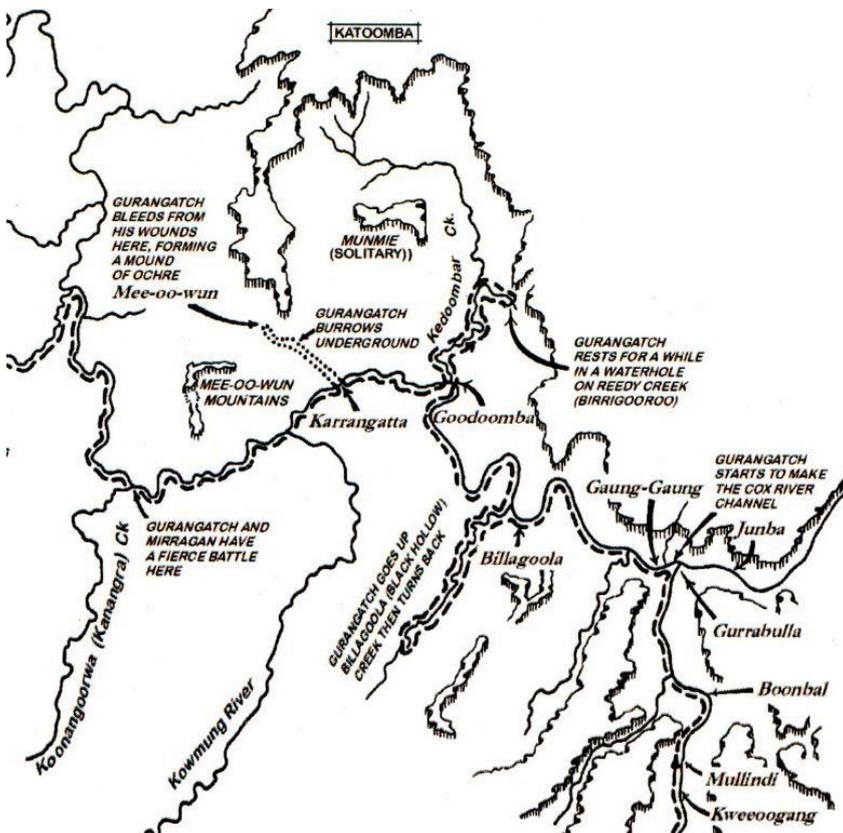


Engraving, based on drawing by Thomas Mitchell, showing the Me-oo-wun (Wild Dog) range on the horizon. Published in 1838. (The arrow points to the approximately position of Me-oo-wun)

Bushwalkers, like the travelling Gundungurra people of the past, recognise the range as a prominent landmark seen from many places in the Southern Blue Mountains. I have photographed it from the floor of the Burraborang and Kedumba Valleys, parts of the road to Jenolan Caves, Narrownneck, Hassans Walls and many other places. The view from the top of our Mount Mouin is one of the most remarkable in the Blue Mountains, with wide vistas of both Gundungurra and Dharug country. It would have almost certainly been a 'teaching place' where Gundungurra people were told the Creation stories of the landscape around the peak.

It may seem paradoxical to non-Aboriginal people that a huge mountain range could be named after a small waterhole at one end. However there are many other examples of this Aboriginal naming principle in Australia. To our way of thinking, the high peaks are the most obvious and 'important' landscape features in the area, and the small waterhole relatively insignificant. However, the waterhole, with its powerful associations with the Dreaming, was the most important site in the minds of Gundungurra people. The Me-oo-wun waterhole was well known to travelling cattlemen, as it lay directly on their route between the Valleys. Mathews described it in his account of the Gurangatch and Mirragan story as "...even now a menace to the white man's cattle on account of its narrowness and great depth". Knowledge of the location and significance of the Me-oo-wun waterhole was lost by the descendants of the Gundungurra people. Only Keith Duncan (1923-2013) and Ben Esgate (1914-2003) knew where it was.

(Continued on page 9)



The Aboriginal landscape of the Wild Dog Mountains and surrounding areas, showing the Me-oo-wun waterhole and range. Map by Jim Smith

Naming the Wild Dog Mountains

(continued from page 8)

When Ben took me there in 1990 there was water in the spring, and the logs which cattlemen had put over the top were still in position. The iron-rich solution of the spring water precipitates iron oxide (ochre) in contact with the air and the ochre deposits eventually choke the hole. Over the next 25 years the Me-oo-wun waterhole became blocked and the spring waters began to emerge in other nearby locations.



Ben Esgate at the Me-oo-wun waterhole in 1990.
Photo by Jim Smith

The Second 'Dog'

As the Black Dog Track was hard on cattle, horses and men it was natural that the stockmen of the region would look for an easier path to the Cox River. It is reputed that Norbert Carlon found what he called the White Dog Track, clearly named as a counterpoint to the Black Dog Track, with the implication that it was a better route than the 'black dog' of a track used by the earlier cattlemen.¹⁶ Again, this name does not have any direct association with canines. As Carlon did not arrive at 'Green Gully' until 1908, the White Dog Track dates from after this time.

Endnotes:

¹² Letter dated 25 November 1833.

¹³ Mathews first published a version of the legend in 1908, and this has been reprinted many times. An easily accessible reprint is in Eugene Stockton and John Merriman (eds), *Blue Mountains Dreaming*, Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust, Lawson, 2009, pp.162-64.

¹⁴ I do not endorse the suggestion made by Wilf Hilder that this waterhole be named Gurangatch Spring. Michael Keats, *Day Walks in Therabulat Country*, Keats Holdings, Marrickville, 2006, p.166. Its name is Me-oo-wun.

¹⁵ 'Part of New South Wales from the summit of Jellore', plate 38 in Thomas Mitchell, *Three Expeditions Into the Interior of Eastern Australia...*, T. and W. Boone, London, 1839 (first edition 1837). The original drawing on which this engraving is based was probably done in 1828.

¹⁶ Barrett, p.59.

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 \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

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

Poets' Corner

Bush track, early autumn

The air so still and sun-charged
I'm almost afraid to move
lest this beauty be sullied
or turn out not to be real.

Walking down the track
into painted light
I'm like a pup
open to discover the next moment
in the shimmer
of morning eucalypts.

All is as it should be
all nature here
smiling
or benignly indifferent.

I smile too
like a kelpie
running after its master.

Brendan Doyle

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.

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.

Welcome to new members

Taib Ezekiel
Leanne Eagle
Huldah Warren
Annette Cam

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION
SOCIETY www.bluemountains.org.au

'Like' us on Facebook:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Follow us on Twitter: [bmcnsnw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)



Prosecution for Clarence Colliery mine waste collapse

The society welcomes the EPA's decision to prosecute Centennial Coal for the major mine waste collapse into the Wollangambe river last July. The prosecution decision has come when Centennial is already in court in relation to a challenge by environmental organisation, 4Nature, to the government's approval of the Springvale mine extension.

The toxic mine waste spread down the river and into the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area for at least eight kilometres. These coal fines have formed a black, gooey sludge which is still being cleaned up, almost a year later, under an order from the EPA.

Independent research by Western Sydney University and the Office of Environment has shown Clarence mine was already damaging the river.

This prosecution will be for a Tier 1 offence, the most serious level available in the environmental legislation. The society will monitor how the prosecution progresses.

Madi McLean (mlhmaclean@bigpond.com)

Don't mention the reef ...

Guardian Australia (27/5/16) reports that a major UN report on climate change was released with every reference to Australia removed, following Australian government intervention.

Chapters on the Great Barrier Reef and sections on Kakadu and Tasmanian forests were removed from the World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate report, following the Australian Department of Environment's objection that the information could harm tourism.

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), which jointly published the report with the United Nations environment program and UNESCO, have published an independent statement on the reef: "The biggest threat to the Great Barrier Reef today, and to its ecosystems services, biodiversity, heritage values and tourism economy, is climate change, including warming sea temperatures, accelerating rates of sea level rise, changing weather patterns and ocean acidification."

Adam Markham of the UCS, the lead author of the report, said he was "really disappointed" by the revelation that parts of the document had been excised.

He also noted that with the removal of every mention of Australia went a number of positive stories about research and safeguards, including the protected area management strategies being tested to make Australian world heritage sites more resilient to change.

"Australia has a good story to tell about its climate science and it should tell it", he said.

Read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/may/27/great-barrier-reef-un-report-lead-author-shocked-all-australian-references-removed?CMP=soc> 567

Editorial contributions from a member

In this issue of Hut News you will find an article by Louise Bennett, "For the Love of Wombats". Louise has become a valued and regular contributor to our newsletter. Her writing offers a positive angle in the midst of our often difficult conservation issues, and she has the ability to reach into the hearts of our readers.

We look forward to more of Louise's creative and thoughtful copy.

Christine Davies.



19. DOBBS DRIFT PAGODAS, State Mine Gully

The pagoda rock formations define the Gardens of Stone region, rising against the skyline in their thousands. While the majority of them are remotely located, viewed only by keen bushwalkers and canyoneers, pictured is a large and accessible group of pagodas. From a small informal unsealed car park on the western side of the Lithgow to Glow Worm Tunnel Road, the visitor can dawdle over relatively level terrain through tremendously varied sandstone formations. Some of the pagoda protuberances are rounded; many are jagged and conjure images of medieval gargoyles and numerous other objects.

Cliffside overhangs, “honeycomb” wind weathering, and “keyholes” (small natural arches and apertures often pierced by rays of sunshine) adorn a mosaic of sandstone and ironstone surfaces. There are 360 degree views from the flattish top of the ridge. Anyone who considers climbing part way up a pagoda for an even better outlook must take great care not to permanently damage the rock formations or themselves.

Although the huge October 2013 bushfire actually started in the Marangaroo Army Reserve, it became known as the “State Mine Gully fire”. It had a profound influence on the Dobbs Drift area and unusual botanical phenomena associated with this fire included the blooming of a huge spread of pink flannel flowers (*Actinotus forsythii*) over Dobbs Drift and elsewhere on Newnes Plateau.

20. BOYD RIVER CROSSING, Southern Boyd Plateau

Ian Brown writes that the Boyd River site was an early camping reserve used as a stopover for droving stock across Boyd Plateau from the Oberon area to Kanangra Walls and thence to the Kowmung and Burragarang. Long before that, it was an Aboriginal campsite, as evidenced by artefacts found there, including a broken ground-edge axe.

Today, this camp is the accommodation of choice for those wanting extra time to take in the spectacular lookouts of Kanangra Walls and surrounds.

The abandoned pastures of the Kanangra Boyd Wilderness Area have become home to mobs of Eastern Grey Kangaroos. This locality is one of the rare natural sites for *Eucalyptus macarthurii*. Also known as Camden Woollybutt, it is listed as Vulnerable under the Threatened Species Conservation Act.



Images, clockwise from top:

Marilyn Kraus at Dobbs Drift; Coarse majesty of the tall pagodas; Pink and white flannel flowers (Christine Davies); *Eucalyptus macarthurii* (Country, Farm & Garden); Modern hut blends into legendary Boyd River campground (NPWS website)

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.

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 Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. 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)

June 11 **QB LWE Asgard Swamp to Thor Head Mackenzie Mine and Asgard Head** - some off track. Great views into the Upper Grose and Victoria Creek and the Silver Cascades above Victoria Falls. Leader **Warren** 4787 5403. Meet at Mt Vic Station Carpark 8.30am. 10Km (400 M total ascent and descent). Gr 3. Map **Mt Wilson**.

Jun 18 **The Catacombs and Temple of Doom** - a new adventure in this exiting area. Leader **Harold** 6355 1762 or 0409 010 737. Meet at Mt Vic railway station carpark 8.00 am. 7Km. Gr 3. Map **Cullen Bullen**

Jun 25 **Mt Banks and Banks Walls.** Great Views into the mighty Grose Valley from Banks Walls which are as high as 510M from the valley floor. Leader **Eddie** 4784 2691. Meet at Mt Vic railway station carpark 8.30 am. 6Km. Gr 3. Map **Mt Wilson**

Jul 2 **Walls Lookout and Wongarra Hill,** with great views into the Grose. Leader **Harold** 6355 1762 or 0409 010 737. Meet at Blackheath station carpark 8.00am. 5Km. Gr3. Map **Mt Wilson**

Jul 9 **Gardens of Stone** – off track - part exploratory. Contact Leader for more detail. Leader **Hugh** 0423 309 854, best after 8pm, or email: hue.s@optusnet.com.au - 5Km - Gr -3 - Map **TBA**

Jul 16 **Hat Hill to Bald Hill via Bald Head Ridge** with possible extension to Anvil Rock. Leader **Harold** 6355 1762 or 0409 010 737. Meet at Blackheath station carpark 8.00am. 7Km. Gr3. Map **Mt Wilson**

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, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

Jun 13 Queens Birthday public holiday. No scheduled walk.

Jun 20 **Hanging Rock, Blackheath.** Magnificent rock formation. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.40. Maree Giddins 4784 2263. Grade 3.

Jun 27 **Euroka Clearing via The Ironbarks, Glenbrook.** Walk from station, approx 11 km circuit. Meet Glenbrook Station east side car park 8.30. Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 3.

Jul 4 **Six Foot Track, Megalong Valley.** Walk from cemetery to Swing Bridge and return 15 km. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40. Car pool \$5 fare. Jo O'Loughlin 4757 2830, (M) 0490 348 044. Grade 3.

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

Jun 9 **Baltzer Lookout, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jun 16 **Braeside Walk to Evans Lookout, Blackheath.** Waterfalls, creeks and Grose Valley views. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jun 23 **Kedumba Pass to Cleary Memorial, Wentworth Falls.** Meet Stockyard Car Park, Wentworth Falls 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jun 30 **Govetts Leap to Pulpit Rock, Blackheath.** About 7ks with no significant hills. Glorious views of the Grose Valley. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jul 7 **Bus trip to Minnamurra Falls.** Bus fare \$12. Book and pay Tracy 0434 362 611. Meet Springwood Car Park, behind Westpac Bank 8.00am. Leader Maurice 0402 402 783. Take lunch. Grade 2/3

Jul 14 **Asgard Swamp, Mount Victoria.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. 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>

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

Henry Gold Photography

Henry Gold is well known for his black and white photography, with wonderful photos published over many years of campaigning by Colong Foundation and other environmental groups to promote conservation of the Greater Blue Mountains National Parks and Wilderness areas.

Quality colour prints signed by Henry Gold can be purchased in various sizes up to 600 x 450mm.

All proceeds go to support the work of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

<https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/galleries/nsw-wilderness-gallery-photographs-henry-gold>