



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

New report identifies unique natural assets in the *Gardens of Stone Stage 2* region

The Gardens of Stone Reserve Proposal, Towards National Heritage, Final Report, July 2016, by Ian Brown, was commissioned by The Gardens of Stone Alliance¹, and released on Saturday 17 September at Sydney University at an event to celebrate the unique heritage values of the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 region (GoS2), near Lithgow.

The report found that this area's values are in some cases unique and in other cases surpass what is protected in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Yet these 39,000 hectares are not managed for conservation; they currently comprise poorly managed State Forest.

The report² found that the area of the GoS2 proposal features:

- pagoda rock formations of international significance;
- ancient Aboriginal rock art;
- rich biodiversity and geodiversity;
- nationally endangered swamp environments; and,
- a wealth of endangered plant and animal species.

The public forests in the Gardens of Stone region are of very little value to primary industries, but have immeasurable conservation value. The State Government **is not being asked** to spend millions on buying private land for conservation. Indeed, in a previous report³ it was demonstrated that substantial economic benefits could flow from GoS2 reservation. The State Government **is being asked** to place the State Forests and other small areas of public land which comprise GoS2 under the jurisdiction of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Reservation predominantly as a state conservation area and small national park additions would ensure that these highly valued lands were appropriately managed for conservation and recreation.

This is a simple request which has been on the table for far too long. Now is the time for government to act, before increasing proportions of the environmental and scenic values are irreversibly compromised. The natural, national and international treasures of GoS2 must be saved. They have developed over thousands and even millions of years; they should not be sacrificed on the altar of short-term expedience.

The importance of GoS2 is not restricted to its natural values. On Page 3 of this newsletter, Brian Marshall asks "Why is Gardens of Stone Stage 2 [GoS2] important?". He explains why the decisions facing the State over GoS2 are but part of the decisions the Federal Government must make if Australia is to protect the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and meet its commitment to limit global warming.



Photo Ian Brown

Family Bush Day

Sunday 16 October 10 am to 2 pm

Mid Mountains Community Centre, New St, Lawson
Cost: \$2 individuals, \$5 families. All ages welcome.

Lots of Frogs; All about Birds; Citizen Science projects "Hollows as Homes" and "TurtleSat"; Drawing Nature & Colouring Workshops; Zoomobile ...

Read more on page 6.

¹ The Gardens of Stone Alliance was formed in 2014 by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Lithgow Environment Group.

² https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/files/news/gos2_values_report_web.pdf

³ http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/campaigns/seeing_the_gardens.pdf

Photo: Twilight Pagoda and Scribbly Gum, taken in Gardens of Stone Stage 2 region. Ian Brown.

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Ancient Wings Over the Blue Mountains

By Louise Bennett

I think we'd all prefer the soft sound of 13cm wings flapping over the Blue Mountains, to noisy jets. So let's zoom in on one of our local endangered species.



The Giant Dragonfly (*Petalura gigantea*) or Southeastern Petaltail has been around for at least

190 million years. They even waved goodbye to the dinosaurs, possibly glad to see them go. The dragonfly's ancestors were not much larger than our modern ones, but there were variants (sometimes called griffinflies) that grew wingspans of up to 71 cm.¹ Now, that's a fair stretch of air-space, not to mention the imagination!

Some dragonfly facts that might surprise you

Size: The Giant Dragonfly can grow to 10 centimetres in length. Males have a wingspan of up to 11 cm, while females can have up to 13 cm. This makes it much larger than the little fishpond variety that flutters about in our gardens.

Habitat: The Giant Dragonfly lives in peat swamps, bogs and seepages, including large swathes of the Blue Mountains (and several other areas in Australia).

Points of interest: Dr Ian Baird is a widely recognised expert on Giant Dragonflies, and has observed that they are unique compared with other dragonfly families, having unusually long larval stages (possibly more than 5 years). He also adds poignantly... *"their lives are not long and there's a transience in their beauty."*

Special talents: Dragonflies are adept at trapping prey, using their spiny front and middle legs to form a basket. They are superb aviators and can hover, fly backwards (and forwards of course!). They also have excellent vision, with two large eyes and three small eyes (*ocelli*).

Challenges that the dragonfly faces

The Giant Dragonfly is listed as endangered, with a sadly predictable list of threats, highlighting habitat loss and degradation as the main problems. In addition, the ever present dangers of fire and rapid climate change are becoming serious concerns.

Nicola Benyon (program manager for the Humane Society International's Wildlife and Habitat) states that the peat bogs where these dragonflies live are intrinsically vulnerable. "They rely on drainage patterns and it's quite easy to disturb them," she said in a recent interview.

But there is some good news! An American actress (Jessica Biel) was not permitted to run across bogs in the Blue Mountains whilst filming, to avoid disturbing the dragonflies' habitat. Now *that's* entertainment!

¹ early Permian *Meganeuropsis permiana*, (Wikipedia)

Photo credit: Newnes Dragonfly used with kind permission from Reiner at <http://photos.rnr.id.au>

Sources:

<http://au.dragonflies.wildiaris.com/trips/11066-Winged-Giants-of-the-Blue-Mountain-Swamps>

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2005/02/03/2575942.htm>

The **DEADLINE** for the next issue of HUT NEWS is

15 OCTOBER 2016

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Why is Gardens of Stone Stage 2 important?

By Brian Marshall

This might seem to be a strange question. After all, the GoS Alliance (Colong Foundation, BMCS, Lithgow Environment Group) has promoted the values of the region and detailed information is available on the Colong and BMCS websites¹. But much of it fails to consider GoS2 in global and national contexts before focussing on more detailed aspects. I shall attempt to rectify this.

Coal is said to be fundamental to Australia in terms of domestic power generation and the ship-based export market. It is also a major factor in relation to Australian and global greenhouse gas emissions (GGE). To in any way comply with the aspirations of the Paris agreement on limiting global warming to at most 2° and preferably 1.5°C, coal-fired power generation must be progressively phased out. This raises the question of whether Australia, and that mainly means the eastern states, should be exploiting thermal coal which, as well as contributing to GGE, has 'local' environmental impacts and is (at best) marginally economic. At what stage should the decision be made to leave coal in the ground? The answer is blatantly obvious!

The Western, Central and Southern underground coalfields of NSW provide examples of why their coal mining operations **should not be expanded**, in contrast with the proposals of the Minerals Council of Australia². In fact, **governments should now be emplacing programmes for the phased closure of these coalfields and dealing with the obvious social consequences**³.

The ongoing exploitation of these coalfields contributes to the State's GGE, has the capacity to directly impact on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) and Sydney's water supply, and on State- and Commonwealth-listed ecosystems and numerous endangered plant and animal species.

Most would agree that the Great Barrier Reef must be saved, not least because of the obvious visual impacts of global warming, but also because of its World Heritage Listing and implications for tourism. The GBMWA must similarly be saved. Reasons include the importance of world heritage recognition and the environmental arguments related to retention of species and preservation of Aboriginal heritage. To these must be added: the fundamental importance of water-supply; preserving and expanding the tourism and recreational industries and their contributions to regional employment; and preserving the health benefits of those in the congested coastal tract by having in their backyard a relatively pristine playground, and an educational and research laboratory. The ravages of mining and ill-considered pollution of surface water and groundwater systems create short-term gain for long-term pain.

GoS2 reservation and particularly that of Newnes Plateau encapsulates the debate embodied in the preceding paragraphs. That is, reducing GGE by retiring coal-based power and leaving coal in the ground; not proceeding with mining which is detrimental to endangered ecosystems, internationally recognised landforms (platy pagodas), and the GBMWA; and compromising significant tourism and recreational opportunities.

To elaborate, the GBMWA is inadequately buffered from adverse impacts along its western boundary. Reservation of GoS2 as a State Conservation Area would provide a substantial buffer-zone, whilst not precluding **low-impact** underground mining (should this remain economical) during the phased closure of existing operations. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the buffer would be greatly enhanced by: targeting **high-impact** longwall mining beneath Newnes Plateau to ensure that the destruction of Newnes

(continued on page 4)

Elphinstone – leave it alone! COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNER WANTED

Blue Mountains Conservation Society has committed to launching a major campaign to prevent redevelopment of Elphinstone (Radiata) Plateau and to ensure the long term protection of this unique place. The Society is now looking to contract a Community Campaigner to assist us with our "Elphinstone - leave it alone!" Campaign.

This is a short term paid contract position to commence in October 2016, initially for three months. The successful candidate will work an average of one day a week on the campaign, including weekend and after hours work, and will work with a subcommittee of the Society to achieve campaign goals.

We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed community campaigner. Candidates must have previous community or political campaign experience, be able to co-ordinate and lead volunteers, have excellent written and verbal communication skills, have print and social media experience and be able to co-ordinate events.

Please send an application demonstrating how you meet the above criteria plus a short CV to angela.langdon@bigpond.com. For further information email angela.langdon@bigpond.com. Applications must be received by COB 21 October 2016.



Photo: *Eucalyptus oreades* on Elphinstone Plateau.

Why is Gardens of Stone Stage 2 important?

(continued from page 3)

Plateau Shrub Swamps and Hanging Swamps **immediately ceases**; ensuring that mine-water discharges are properly treated to meet the **natural water quality upstream of all mining activities**; and, by closing the uneconomic forestry operations on Newnes plateau, fostering the progressive return to native vegetation.

The policy implications of the foregoing for Federal and State governments are substantial. To date, there is little indication that the Federal and NSW governments have the stomach to confront them. Indeed, if weasel-words were a saleable commodity, governments would never be short of funds!

Federal and State governments should accept that coal-based power generation must be progressively superseded by renewable energy sources, and that there is no time to waste if the rate of climate change is to be decelerated. At present, Federal and State governments are more concerned with retaining the power of office than with the mode of generating power; they lack vision! There is need for bi-partisan commitment, but this is hampered by internal deal-making. Politics is said to be the art of staying in power, but in our current system it attracts time-servers and engenders both temerity and arrogance.

The Commonwealth is responsible for the environmental integrity of the GBMWA and has listed the Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps and Hanging Swamps as Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone (an Endangered Ecological Community). With similar philosophies in Canberra and NSW, there are both subtle and overt moves towards handing the Commonwealth's responsibilities to the NSW planning systems in the interests of 'efficiency' (i.e. speeding up the approval process!) The NSW planning system is geared to ensuring that mining can continue; the Commonwealth under the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act has totally different responsibilities such that an approval outcome should not be paramount. **The twain must not meet!**

To preserve an adequate level of independence, the Federal Department of the Environment (DoE) must be staffed such that it can adequately evaluate issues. For example, in relation to the Springvale Colliery Extension, the Minister largely accepted the assessment of the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), despite contrary recommendations from the Commonwealth's Independent Expert Scientific Committee. This should never happen because the DPE and DoE have vastly different responsibilities. As it now turns out, the DPE's and DoE's approval reflected incorrect assurances from the company and its consultants. The Commonwealth should have listened to independent advice rather than being swayed by a tainted process.

I finish with a question and a possible answer. **Is it possible to be visionary when the blind are leading the blind?** Perhaps the answer lies in the saying that **'there are none so blind as those who will not see!'**

¹ <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/campaigns/the-gardens-of-stone>, <http://bluemountains.org.au/gos2.shtml>

² http://www.minerals.org.au/file_upload/files/resources/vision2020/MCA_2020_Vision_NSW_report_FINAL.pdf

³ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-16/coal-death-would-not-kill-economy/7851260>

GARDENS OF STONE UPDATE

By Madi Maclean

Pollution laws fail to protect from Springvale mine discharge

The Land and Environment Court decision on 13 September regarding the challenge to the Springvale Mine near Lithgow allows the mine to continue to discharge its toxic and saline mine water into the Coxs River and Sydney's drinking water supply. This is a very disappointing outcome for all conservationists who have been supporting the challenge. Springvale Mine operates within the Gardens of Stone stage 2 conservation proposal area.

Environmental group, 4nature, challenged the Planning Assessment Commission's conclusion that this discharge would have a "neutral or beneficial" effect on the quality of Sydney's drinking water. However, the judge found that the Commission had reached its conclusion according to the environmental laws and the court could not review that decision unless the commission's conclusion was grossly unreasonable.

The State's planning policy to protect Sydney's drinking water states that a development cannot be approved unless the consent authority is satisfied that the development will have a 'neutral or beneficial' effect on water quality. However, this policy has been unable to stop the toxic discharge from Springvale mine and definitely needs to be strengthened so it is effective. This discharge is the largest point source of salt water pollution in the Coxs River and will increase salinity in Lake Burragorang by at least five percent according to the Department of Planning' Environmental Assessment of Springvale extension in 2015.

This case was an important challenge to the Planning Commission's approval of the Springvale mine extension last year. 4nature have said they will be considering whether to appeal the decision.

You can read 4nature's media release [here](https://www.facebook.com/stopspringvale): <https://www.facebook.com/stopspringvale> and learn more about the court's decision at the Environmental Defender's Office website: http://www.edonsw.org.au/springvale_mine_extension

Independent experts on what's causing swamp damage in Springvale Mine area

The Springvale Mine Independent Monitoring Panel (IMP), established by the Department of Planning, has prepared its first report. The panel of mining and subsidence experts concluded that the serious damage to Carne West swamp including loss of a waterfall was likely to have been caused by subsidence from mining occurring up to 700 metres.

The far field impacts were not assessed in the environmental assessment for the Springvale mine extension approved last year. The society has asked the federal Minister for the Environment, Josh Frydenberg, to take action under the commonwealth environmental legislation to protect the nationally listed endangered swamps in the Springvale mine area.

Growth is the Enemy! Ross Coster

We have opposed the Western Sydney airport on many grounds: noise, emissions, air pollution, World Heritage impacts, and alternative transport options.

A recent reading of a document by John D. Kasarda has made me realise that we are opposing much more than an airport - we are opposing a broken ideology that threatens the entire global environment.

<https://www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au/NWBWebsite/media/Policy/Thinking%20Business%20Reports/A-Western-Sydney-Aerotropolis.pdf>

The document: "A WESTERN SYDNEY AEROTROPOLIS - Maximising the benefits of Badgerys Creek" talks up the new airport as the centrepiece of a huge development area of industrial land and houses, all intended to replace the semi-rural landscape around Badgerys Creek with massive-scale development. To quote: "An aerotropolis is a new urban form placing airports in the centre with cities growing around them, connecting workers, suppliers, executives, and goods to the global marketplace."

This is all premised on huge growth in Sydney's population, with an extra million people in the next 10 years, many millions more in coming decades, with growth in demand for housing, product, jobs, transport and of course energy. There is little if any consideration of greenhouse gas emissions in any of this, and all of it will be roads connecting to an airport, all fuelled by oil.

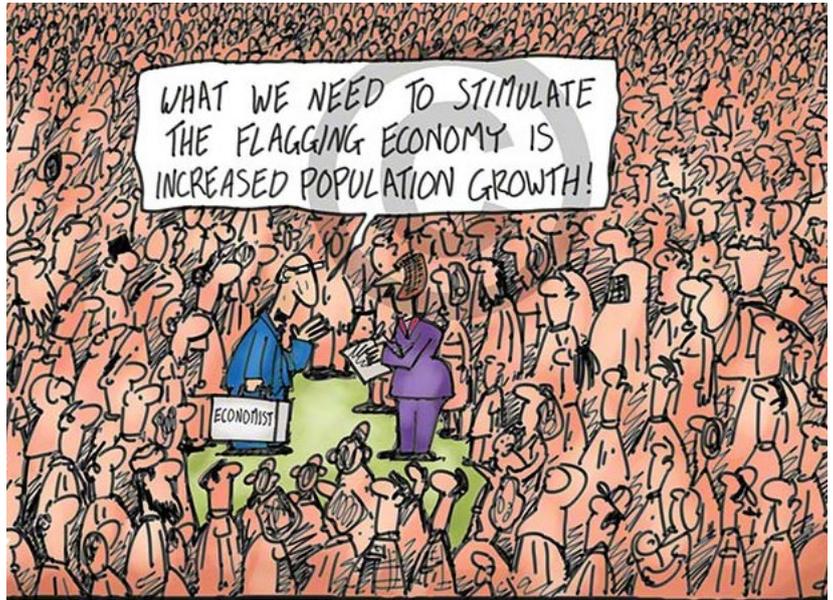
Both Major Political parties (Liberal and Labor) have stated policies that they want to take real action to address global warming, yet they both support this nightmare development on the Cumberland Plains.

How can we possibly continue to grow population, road transport, air transport, fuel consumption, and of course greenhouse gas emissions if we want to reduce overall emissions? When will planning for our future infrastructure embrace *reducing* emissions as a key goal?

Some see population growth as inevitable, and it is to some extent, as the young of today will want to have children, and their children will want to have children. But birth rates are falling everywhere and my reading suggests that global human population will peak at 11 billion later this century, then slowly decline over time, as affluence increases, and birth rates continue to fall.

However the people that promote projects like the Western Sydney Aerotropolis don't want to see a slowing in population growth, they want to *accelerate* it, *encourage* it, *profit* from it! High immigration rates, the baby bonus, endless talk of jobs and growth, endless infrastructure rollout with the disruption it causes, are all seen as good by the boosters. Increasing population and affluence will crank up the pressure on our environment to breaking point.

To quote David Attenborough: "I have little doubt that if we have the capacity to limit our birth rate, then we should consider doing that. We have a finite environment, the planet. Anyone who thinks that you can have infinite growth in a finite environment is either a



madman or an economist."

He is right of course, but he doesn't go far enough.

We *have* the ability to limit our growth in affluence, consumption, energy use and destruction, and we *must* do it. We *have* the ability to make reduction in environmental impact a *key goal of all development*, and we *must* do it.

What Can You Do?

Some of us have written so many letters about the airport that we have writer's cramp. But write again to Federal Member for Macquarie Susan Templeman and other Federal politicians. We don't want or need a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek. We don't want or need infinite and unsustainable growth on the Cumberland Plains. We must make the environment a key goal in all decision making. We want a world our children's children can live in.

Ross Coster nwsa@bluemountains.org.au

Image: INKCINCT Cartoons www.inkcinct.com.au

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

We are in process of relocating our mid mountains nursery. In the meantime, plants can be purchased at:

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. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY www.bluemountains.org.au

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BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY PRESENTS

Family Bush Day

Sunday 16 October 2016
10am-2pm

Mid Mountains Community Centre

New St, Lawson (located behind the shops)

Cost: \$2-individuals, \$5-families

All ages welcome



TARONGA ZOO is bringing some special animals in the ZOOMOBILE for you to meet.

Find out ALL ABOUT BIRDS with fun activities from Birdlife Australia Southern and the Blue Mountains Bird Observers.



Photo by Dilshara Hill

LOTS of FROGS - Come and find out all about frogs with the Frogs and Tadpole Study Society (FATS) and meet the frogs.



Photo by Dilshara Hill

Meet the Science teams from CITIZEN SCIENCE projects "Hollows as Homes" and "TurtleSat (WSU)" and find out how you can be part of these projects, contribute to science and help protect our unique and special native species.



Photo by Dilshara Hill

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN NATURE AND INTERESTED IN DRAWING OR COLOURING?

We'll come along and meet Stephanie Holm, Natural History Illustrator and author of Australian colouring book "Wildscapes". Book into one of her "DRAWING NATURE" or "COLOURING NATURE" workshops suitable for school aged children (primary and high school) and families and community members. No prior experience necessary.

Please arrive early to ensure you have a place as workshop places are limited and PLEASE BRING for the Drawing Nature workshop a range of pencils from H to 6B, art paper and eraser with you. For the Colouring Nature workshop you will need to bring your colouring books, colouring pencils, sharpeners and erasers with you.

Enjoy the fun of a short FAMILY BUSH WALK with an experienced Environmental Educator from BMCC and learn more about our special bushland, waterfalls and beaches on the Lawson Waterfall Loop Track, medium grade 2.8kms. Walking time is about 2 hours. Arrive early to book into this local bushwalk as places are limited and PLEASE BRING closed in walking shoes, water, a hat and sunscreen, and snacks with you. Safety briefing provided.

From Coalpac to Castlereagh Coal – the phoenix arises Brian Marshall

The Coalpac Consolidation Project (CCP) comprised a proposal for a massive open-cut coal mine (about 40 km around the perimeter) near Cullen Bullen on the western escarpment, within the Ben Bullen State Forest (BBSF). Many will recall the protracted campaign against the CCP, from December 2010 until October 2013, at which time Coalpac withdrew the CCP because it faced an unfavourable report by the Department of Planning and an anticipated rejection by the Planning Assessment Commission. A satisfying outcome, but Coalpac wasn't finished!

The company returned in April 2014 and proposed two 'modifications' which still included many of the objectionable elements of the CCP. The Planning Assessment Commission rejected the modifications in October 2014, and Coalpac entered voluntary liquidation in November 2014. Again a satisfactory outcome, but Coalpac played one more card!

In April 2015, the Commonwealth's Department of the Environment determined that Coalpac's proposal to extract 250,000 tonnes of coal from a six-hectare remnant of an old consent at the Cullen Valley Mine did not constitute a controlled action. This presumably enhanced Coalpac's worth within the context of the liquidation process.

On completion of the liquidation process in July 2015, it was revealed that Coalpac's numerous Mining Authorities, and Exploration and Mining Licences are owned by Shoalhaven Coal Pty Ltd, which is trading as Castlereagh Coal and is part of the Manildra Group. Coalpac was no more, but the titular capacity to inflict damage on the Ben Bullen State Forest and the Gardens of Stone proposal had passed to Castlereagh Coal¹. The phoenix arises!

In January 2016, Castlereagh Coal (CC) announced its Southern Extension Project². This proposes to open-cut a 2.7 million-tonne resource immediately south of the existing Invincible Mine. The proposed mine-life is scheduled as 4 to 20 years depending on the Manildra Group's needs. Although CC hopes to gain an approval-to-mine by modifying an existing development consent, it will need to provide a comprehensive Environmental Assessment which will be open for community comment.

BMCS has been assured by CC that development will be restricted to the 'Invincible' resource. Any poorer quality coal unsuited to Manildra's requirements (still the subject of laboratory investigations) would need to be transferred to the power station. CC insists that³: "*We have not discussed nor do we have any commercial arrangement with Energy Australia in relation to supplying the power station coal from the Invincible mine*"; it further insists that there are "*no plans or intentions to mine at Cullen Valley*".

Despite the above, CC has, in the name of Shoalhaven Coal Pty Limited, applied for two exploration licences north and northwest of Cullen Bullen⁴. Although the exploration licence applications (ELAs) are associated with the Cullen Valley operations, CC again insists that there are no current plans for mining at Cullen Valley; apparently, the areas were held by CC and recently lapsed⁵.

From Blue Mountains Conservation Society's viewpoint, the larger of the two ELAs is wholly within the BBSF which is part of the Gardens of Stone proposal and part of why we campaigned so strongly against Coalpac. In rejecting the CCP and then the Coalpac 'modifications', two different Planning Assessment Commissions decided that the environmental values of Ben Bullen State Forest, both in general and also within the larger of the current ELAs, merited protection from mining and its associated activities. For the foregoing reason, and because assurances about future plans and intentions are at best qualified in terms of the company's 'current' thinking, the Society has opposed the ELAs and will oppose the Southern Extension Project when the Environmental Assessment becomes available.

¹ A map of the holdings of CC may be seen at http://www.castlereaghcoal.com.au/?page_id=721

² A map showing the Southern Extension Project and the two ELAs relative to the CCP and the BBSF is available on the Society's website at http://bluemountains.org.au/campaign-Castlereagh_Coal.htm

³ Email to Karen McLaughlin from Brett Moore, Manildra's Head of Finance, dated 15 April 2016.

⁴ Refer to endnote 2.

⁵ Email to Keith Muir (and copied to Brett Moore) from David Holmes of Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited, dated 4 Aug 2016.

What is happening at the Fairmont Resort?

When the Fairmont tourism development at Leura was originally proposed there were significant community concerns given the scale of the development, its location on the escarpment and the potential of the resort to negatively impact on the Blue Mountains National Park.

These concerns continue. You may have noticed a recent article in the Blue Mountains Gazette on the Fairmont Resort being fined by Blue Mountains City Council for undertaking construction works without development approval or environmental assessment. The unauthorised development is significant and consists of a dirt road, boardwalk, viewing platform and cabin accommodation and is located just below the main resort building, right on the boundary with the national park.

Council issued a stop work order to prevent further construction work and a \$6,000 fine. The Fairmont has now lodged a development application (X790/2016) to enable the development to proceed.

The Society has made a submission opposing the development given the highly sensitive nature of the site and raised concerns the Fairmont commenced construction works without approval or assessment. The Society opposes the development:

- The development is inappropriate as it is located on highly sensitive land zoned E2 Environmental Conservation. The Society believes components of the development, such as the cabin, are not a development type which can legally be built on land zoned E2.
- The development application fails to adequately assess the environmental impacts of the development including impacts on regionally significant vegetation, including Blue Mountains Swamps, and nearby watercourses.

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

Parts 1—6 of this series were published in April/May/June/July/August/September 2016 Hut News and can be found on our website: <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews-archive.shtml>

Suggested name changes for the Wild Dog Mountains (continued)

3. Replacement of pseudo-Aboriginal placenames and Aboriginal words moved from other areas.

I do not have a problem with the many English names applied to features by Myles Dunphy. I accept that the first explorers of an area have some 'naming rights' for places which do not have existing names. Alan Rigby wrote:

...according to the late Norbert Carlon, who spent the whole of his life in the district, no stockman ever wandered into the Mouins, their only concern was cattle and feed, he said, and he thought that the few walkers who first went over them were probably the first ever.³⁷

However, Dunphy's bizarre combinations of syllables and words from languages used in other parts of Australia to create pseudo-Aboriginal placenames is disrespectful of Aboriginal culture. The alleged meanings attached to these artificial constructions are also often based on misunderstandings. Don Morison objects to "trite names associated with the passing fashions of non-indigenous people." One of these "passing fashions" was the desire of non-indigenous people to name their houses, boats and other possessions with Aboriginal words. This began in the 1920s and peaked in the 1930s, with several booklets published containing Aboriginal words from all over Australia listed in alphabetical order, with no reference to the languages they came from. Dunphy, in naming features in the Blue Mountains with Aboriginal words, regardless of where they originally came from, was engaging in this "passing fashion". Morison is also critical of "names that have precious little to do with our mountains". In my view, any Aboriginal placenames in the Southern Blue Mountains that are not in the local Gundungurra language "have precious little to do with our mountains." I wonder what Dunphy's fellow Counsellor Professor Elkin of Sydney University's Anthropology Department thought of the practice of using translocated Aboriginal words as placenames. In his retirement, the former Surveyor General Hamilton Mathews may have wondered if he had erred in not specifying to Dunphy that Aboriginal placenames on maps should be in the local Aboriginal language.

Unfortunate examples of 'Dunphyisms' in the Wild Dog Mountains are Merriganowry said to mean "the hunting ground of the dingoes" and Merrimerrigal said to mean "the tribal place or home of many dingoes"³⁸. The former did not make it onto official maps but Mount Merrimerrigal is recognised by the Geographical Names Board.

The Gundungurra word for the Dingo was pronounced *mirragang* or *mirrigang*³⁹. Warrigal and Dingo are words from the Dharug language which have been adopted into Australian English. The former refers to a wild Dingo and the latter is used for the domesticated Dingo associated with Aboriginal camps. So, looking at the main peaks of the 'Wild Dog Mountains' we have Mount Mouin, the solitary peak now bearing the name once applied to the

whole range, Mount Warrigal, Mount Merrimerrigal and Mount Dingo. Of these, Merrimerrigal stands out as a fake word, neither true Aboriginal or English. The *-gal* suffix comes from the Dharug language. The Gundungurra equivalent, meaning 'place of', is *-ba*. If Gundungurra descendants were happy for the 'dog' theme to be retained, Merrimerrigal could be replaced by Mirrigang-ba, meaning 'place of the Dingos'. Billy Russell also recorded *mirrigang ambero* for 'many dingoes'. Another name from Russell is *binure* for 'old mountain Dingo'. This is an evocative word for a former 'alpha dog' of a Dingo group which has been ejected from the pack and lives alone in the mountains. A place for this word could be found in the Me-oo-wun Range, for example to replace Little Dingo Hill or Howling Dog.

There is no name currently on our maps for the area at the bottom of the Black Dog Ridge, close to the junction of Little Cedar Creek and the Cox River. This could have its original Gundungurra name of Karrangatta restored.

What we call the Wild Dog Mountains is one of the most easily accessed and popular 'off-track' bushwalking areas in the Blue Mountains. Generations of walkers have developed emotional attachments to this landscape and their memories are often associated in their minds with Dunphy's names. The dense network of Dunphy placenames allows bushwalkers to describe their past and planned journeys to each other in terminology much more vivid than map references or GPS coordinates. I would like readers of this article to consider the small number of changes I have suggested to names in the Wild Dog Mountains without feeling that their personal attachments and memories are under attack or that I lack respect for Myles Dunphy's achievements. Some people have such a strong admiration of Myles Dunphy that they are not able to objectively assess his ideas. His maps are beautiful works of art but not every placename on them deserves to be preserved on the State's official maps for all time.

Endnotes:

³⁷ Alan Rigby, 'The Wild Dog Mountains', *The National Parks Journal*, March 1964, p.6.

³⁸ This meaning is in notes prepared by Dunphy for Wilf Hilder in December 1974, p.37. On his 'Gangerang, Wild Dog Mountains Map' Dunphy has the meaning "Playground of the Dingoes"

³⁹ This and other Gundungurra words discussed are taken from the recollections of Billy Russell, a regular traveller on the Black Dog Track. W. Russell, *My Recollections*, Camden News, 1914.

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

PIES FALLING FROM SKY, ELEPHANTS IN ROOM READY TO SIT ON THEM? by Don Morison

Ross Coster ("Growth is the Enemy", page 5) has alerted us to the ridiculous population growth foreshadowed by supporters of Badgerys Creek Airport. They want massive employment and high density residential growth zones all over the Cumberland Plain. Just recently, six possible railway routes out of Badgerys were canvassed. This pro-Badgerys mob has more pies in the sky than a Himalayan bakery.

How soon could the growth-addicted, mesmerised, jet-deafened politicians start to imagine the possibility that it might not all happen? Australians have seen attempts to supercharge economic growth through cheap transport, cheap power and cheap mining products. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. There has been a very long standoff between Greater Western Sydney and job growth, even when population growth has been building steadily.

Where are the elephants in the room for the Western Sydney mega-growth obsession? Ross Coster pointed out one of them as air pollution. The rate of respiratory illness in Western Sydney is already high. How many hospital emergency departments have to clog? How many doctor's waiting rooms have to overflow? How many native plant species have to disappear? How many native animals have to be extincted? What will it take to make politicians realise that too much air pollution in Western Sydney is genuinely too much?

Another elephant is Governments' "urban sprawl" model of Western Sydney growth. Good urban models are "linear" with a single high-speed rail corridor providing a "backbone" for a large urban megametropolis. The Turnbull and Baird Governments' elephant in every room policy for Western Sydney is to take growth here there and everywhere. No matter what new railway lines are built, they will never be able to capture a respectable share of the urban travel market. The growth of private cars will continue to choke the entire area.

Sensible politicians will let the elephants just sit on all the fallen Western Sydney airport pies before things get any messier.

Poets' Corner

A TRUE FRIEND

"G'day old mate", in reverent tone,
I say as I pass by,
And give a wave to show I care -
For me he's always there.

I may be feeling up or down,
The weather flooding or in drought,
The world around us in despair -
No matter! - he's always there.

Mountain bred and tough as nails,
Bushfires he's seen a few,
Unperturbed and free of care -
Stalwart - he's always there.

This gentle soul, this steadfast friend,
Life's burdens with whom I share,
Is my mate the Scribbly Gum -
Track-side....he's always there.

- Ross Bridle

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

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

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 Blue Mountains Council

Thank you to all members who helped to compile our Society's Council Election website and congratulations to the five new and seven returning councillors.

Many of those elected have expressed strong views in favour of maintaining Council's Local Environment Plan and opposing Western Sydney airport. Blue Mountains Conservation Society will be expressing our positions on these issues, on public land management and many other things which may arise during the forthcoming four-year term of Council.

We look forward to a positive relationship with the newly elected council.

Warren Alfred Crighton

*"Away, away from men and towns to the wild wood and the downs,
To the silent wilderness where the soul need not suppress its music..."*
Percy Bysshe Shelley.

It was with great shock and sadness that those who knew Warren Crighton learned of his sudden death on 6th September 2016, the second day of a two-week camping holiday with his wife Barbara. In her own words, 'Warren was the most loving, generous and thoughtful husband anyone could have.' A wise father and friend also to their son Neil and their daughter Paula and a loving grandfather to his four grandchildren.

To fellow members of CONSOC he was a quiet unassuming walking companion and a very competent, considerate and tactful walks leader.

Warren discovered a love of the bush and of climbing as a teenager, an interest that never left him. Upon retirement from Fairfield Council he and Barbara came to live in the upper Blue Mountains. They embraced the proximity of the bush, enjoying their local walks and in their bush-camping trailer they explored the more remote areas of Australia often accompanied by long-standing friends.

The Service in Leura for Warren was, all agreed, a beautiful, tasteful and entirely appropriate tribute to a fine man and friend, evident in the large number who attended. This modest man who disliked fuss would, as Barbara said, 'be amazed at the size of the gathering. Although not one for crowds he would have been touched by the presence of so many wonderful friends.'

Barbara has asked me to add, 'I know there were many people at the funeral that I didn't have the opportunity to speak to. I would like them to know that their presence and loving support has been greatly valued and appreciated.'

Mavis Roberts.



Photo: Consoc bushwalkers (L to R) Eddie, Jim, Warren and Harold

What is happening at the Fairmont Resort? (continued from page 7)

- The development is located at the track head of the heritage listed Gladstone Pass walking track and does not address the impacts of continued public access, or the heritage values, of the track.
- Part of the dirt road used to access the cabin and viewing platform is located within the national park, raising serious concerns about private development happening within a national park.

The Fairmont attracts a considerable commercial advantage given its beautiful location on the escarpment and the Society believes that it has both an ethical and legal responsibility to do everything it can to protect the surrounding environment. This is the second time in recent years the Fairmont has undertaken construction works without first seeking development approval, commencing construction of its horse riding facilities without first submitting a DA.

Land Use Subcommittee lus@bluemountains.org.au



27. LIMIT OF THE PINES, Jenolan State Forest

Commercially motivated transferring of tree species from one continent to another is never without its controversies. One could facetiously argue that the export of groundwater-thirsty Eucalypts from Australia to northern hemisphere continents was retaliation for the abundance of a Californian native, the Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) in eastern Australia.

There are more than 100 km of boundaries between Monterey Pine plantations and native bushland areas in the western Blue Mountains. Walkers on the Six Foot Track, ascending the Black Range towards the Jenolan Caves Road, would be aware of the exotic pines nearby. In the 1960s and 70s, there were several scientific papers about managing the potential impact of the pines on the bushland surrounding them.

Fortunately, many of the steepest slopes of the western Blue Mountains have been spared from clearing for pines and a major environmental campaign in the 1970s saw the whole of the Boyd Plateau (now part of the Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness) avoid becoming a pine plantation. In Jenolan State Forest, the contrast between the exquisite intricacy of the nearby native forests and the “monoculture” of the pines is striking. Perhaps because native mammals that live in or near pine forests have to forage further, road kill in and around coops of pines is very noticeable.

PHOTOS

1 & 2. Pines invade native forest with diverse understorey

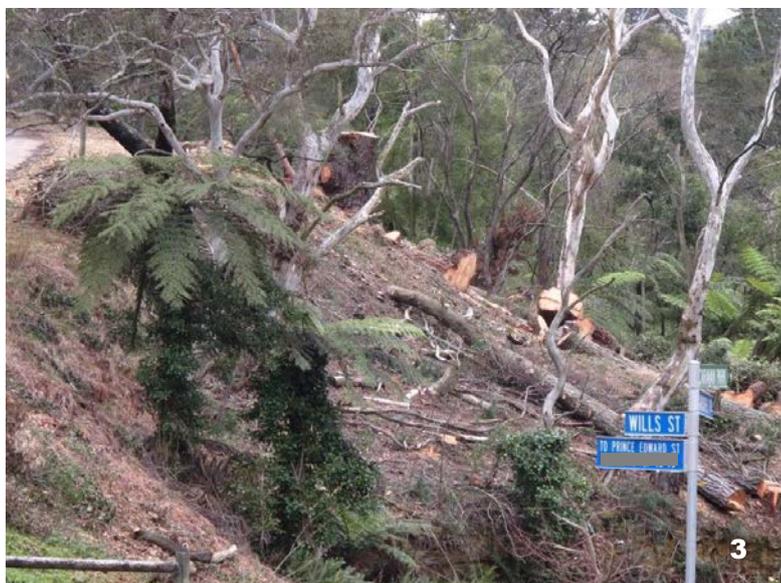
3. The felling of the pines, Blackheath

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.

28. LIMIT OF THE PINES, Blackheath

In the canyon-dissected sandstone from Wentworth Falls to Mount Victoria, the Monterey Pine plays a very different role to its commercial harvest potential. It is easily killed during bush fires and extremely unmanageable in those pockets that rarely experience fire due to natural landforms or preventative actions by humans.

These pines have been planted as ornamentals in the upper mountains for over a century and many specimens are now gigantic. A major project in the catchment of Popes Glen Creek, Blackheath, with Council contractors assisting the Popes Glen Bushcare Group has removed a substantial number of them in recent months. The bushcare group’s website reports that “one area is now cleared of pines, holly, cotoneaster and other woody weeds”. The guardians of upper mountains bushland face a major challenge to stop runoff water, birds or other spreaders of pine cones. One of the greatest fears is that they will propagate along inaccessible sections of water courses. A few individual pines have become objects of public affection, but this is not an ornamental compatible with the ecological systems of the upper mountains. More projects like the excellent work at Pope’s Glen will be needed.



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 Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

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)

Oct 15 **Narrow Neck.** Fire tower and beyond. Leader Eddie 47842691. Meet Katoomba Station 8.30. 19km Gr 3 map Katoomba & Jamison.

Alternate off-Track walk. Contact Hugh 0423309854 or email hue.s@optusnet.com.au for details

Oct 22 **Gemini Cave & Rain Cave.** Spectacular Scenery off-track walk. Leader Emanuel 47571090 or emanuelnddi@yahoo.com.au for further details. Map Cullen Bullen

Oct 29 **Rock Island** - off-track wilderness, east of Gloworm Tunnel. AWD needed. Leader Harold 0263551762, 0409010737. Meet at Mt Vic station 8.15am. 7km. Grade 3-4. Map Ben Bullen, Mt.Morgan

Alternate off-track walk. Contact Hugh 0423309854 or email hue.s@optusnet.com.au for details.

Nov 5 **Victory Track, Magdala Track** to Springwood. Leader Eddie 47842691. Meet at Faulconbridge Station 9am. 11km. Grade 3. Map Springwood.

Nov 12 **Sunnyside Ridge** FT6. Some off-track. Wolgan views. GOS. Leader Bob 47589300. Meet at Wentworth Falls station 8.00am. 5km. Grade 3. Map Cullen Bullen

Alternate off-track walk. Contact Hugh 0423309854 or email hue.s@optusnet.com.au for details.

Nov 19 **River Cave.** Repeat by popular demand. Wet feet guaranteed. Contact Leader Emanuel 4757 1090 emanuelnddi@yahoo.com.au Map Rock Hill

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

Oct 10 **Wollangambe Wanderings.** Walk from Bell to upper Wollangambe River and return, 10km. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50 am. Warren 4787 5403. Grade 3.

Oct 17 **Birrabang Ridge/Yileen Ridge.** Off Bells Line of Road near Mount Wilson. Some off-track walking. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.50. Car pool fare \$7. Liz Stark 4754 4966. Grade 3.

Oct 24 **Prince Henry Cliff Walk, Leura.** Some steep parts. Meet Leura Station car park 8.30. Maree Giddins 4784 2034 (M) 0427 390 645. Grade 3.

Oct 31 **Bicentennial Park, Homebush Bay.** Wetlands, brickpit, shipwrecks, birds and frogs. 8 km. Meet Strathfield Station 9.31. Judith 0419 780 640. Grade 1.

Nov 7 **City Walk – Balls Head and Berry Island.** Delightful bushland harbour walk. Meet top of escalators, Central Station, 9.30 am. Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 2.

Nov 14 **Red Hands Cave.** Ancient rock art, Blue Mountains National Park, Glenbrook. Meet Glenbrook Station, east car park 8.30 am. Car pool. Ben Godbehere 0423 450 200.. Grade 3.

FORWARD PLANNING

Dec 12 **Christmas Party Harbour Cruise.** 3.5 Hrs, Morning Tea, Lunch, Dessert. Optional Trivia, Bingo etc. Cost \$45-00 pp. Self purchase bar on board. Each person needs to Phone 1300 551 804 and book and pay themselves. Ask for Seniors & Retirees Big Day Out booked in Judith Dyer's Name. Only 30 seats available. Judith Dyer 0419 780 640.

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

Oct 13 **Historic walk, Paddington.** Meet top of escalators, Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2103. Take lunch. Grade 1

Oct 20 **Nepean River Walk, Emu Plains.** Easy 7k walk along the river with lunch at O'Donoghue's Pub. Meet Emu Plains Station south side 9.30am. Leader Keith 4736 1010. Grade 1

Oct 27 **Baltzer Lookout, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Nov 3 **Willoughby Road to Sublime Point, Leura.** Meet cnr the Mall and Megalong St 9.30am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 1

Nov 10 **Chester Trail, Rocket Point, Mulheran's Masterpiece, Wentworth Falls.** Meet Stockyard Car Park 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> and <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 - noon.

Tools and gloves are available.

Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.