



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

President's report

Since taking on the role of President, I've been familiarising myself more with the Society's activities beyond the committee work where I have been heavily involved for the last three years. I have also been getting views on the Society's most important achievements and thinking about the benefits of belonging to the Society.

We are the oldest continuing environmental organisation in the Blue Mountains. We have been active since 1961. We offer our members nature conservation and education activities through bushwalking, assisting at our native plant nursery and bushcare. We have run many campaigns to protect the spectacular natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

Living in the only local government area in Australia to be surrounded by world heritage national parks is our delight and our challenge. An active and dedicated group of volunteers run the Society's activities. So please encourage your friends and neighbours to join up and help support our work. Visit our website for more: <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.htm> And if you'd like to get more involved with the Society's work,

even in a small way, please contact me or other management committee members.

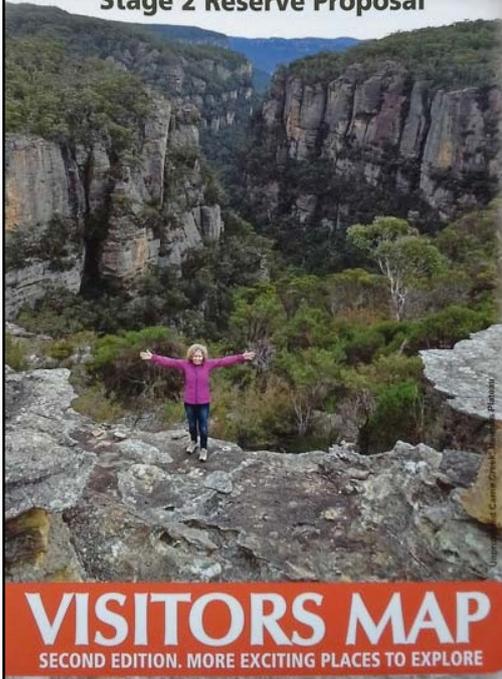
Threats to national parks: We are currently seeing new threats to our natural environment emerging from plans to accommodate Sydney's rapid growth and to service increasing international tourism. The Society has argued strongly for more consideration of our world heritage parks in our current submissions on the Greater Sydney Commission's *West Sydney District Plan* and Blue Mountains Council's *Destinations (Tourism) Management Plan*. Learn more from our weekly emails and read our submissions on these two plans on our website: http://www.bluemountains.org.au/submissions_2017.htm

Management Committee changes: Since the Annual General Meeting, we are pleased to welcome two new people to positions in the Society. Hugh Brougham has taken on the Plant Nursery Coordinator position which Sue Nicol vacated after doing a sterling job in some difficult times. Heather Coster has taken on the vacant role of Events Coordinator. The management committee is currently finalising some special events for the rest of the year. More details soon.

Madi Maclean

THE GARDENS OF STONE

Incorporating the Gardens of Stone
Stage 2 Reserve Proposal



Society Events

Hello, I'm Heather Coster, your newly appointed Events Coordinator.

The Society holds a number of general meetings and special events during the year. My job as Coordinator is to organise these events, and coordinate volunteers to assist me. I need volunteers!

Winter Magic, our next big event, is fast approaching. I need *your* help. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact me at Heather@coster.com.au or 0408-223-843.

Buy a Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The *Gardens of Stone* Visitors Map shows trails, views and other main attractions of this spectacular area of pagoda rock formations, high cliffs, gorges and a great diversity of plants and animals. It also shows the western escarpment lands north from Medlow Bath.

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area.

This map has been prepared by the Gardens of Stone Alliance (Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Lithgow Environment Group) to promote protection of the area and to showcase the many low-impact recreational opportunities in the area.

Well illustrated with colour photos, the reverse side has lots of information on the plants, animals, pagoda rock formations and cliffs, as well as the cultural and historic places in the region.

You can buy a map on the society's website at http://www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

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

20 MAY 2017

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Council's tourism plan

Blue Mountains Conservation Society supports tourism that has a low impact on national parks and the natural environment as well as contributing to the local economy. The Society does not support large, intrusive tourism developments which lease or privatise parts of national parks.

We reject the proposal for private accommodation 'chalets' at Govetts Leap picnic area in Council's *Destinations Plan*. There are several other "large ticket" development proposed in the Plan which the Society rejects as unsuitable for the area. They are a "destination holiday park" and a 250 to 350 bed resort set in bushland with a conference centre and external 'event' amphitheatre. Both of these proposals presumably would be located in the upper mountains, where most tourists visit. They are likely to require significant bushland clearing, the possible takeover of public bushland and/or the takeover of existing open space such as a golf course.

The Society supports in principle the proposed upgrading of various attractions such as Leura Cascades and Katoomba Falls Night Walk. However, we oppose excessive use of landscape lighting. The wonder of viewing the night sky and a clear view of the Milky Way, which we enjoy in the mountains, should not be ruined. It is a simple pleasure accessible to all.

The Society welcomes lower impact proposals in the plan, such as the Great Walk concept which includes the Grand Clifftop Walk. We are concerned that there has been limited consultation in preparing the plan. Read our submission http://www.bluemountains.org.au/submissions_2017.htm

Regional environmental conference 3-4 June

The Nature Conservation Council, the umbrella group for NSW environmental groups, is holding a regional conference in Lithgow on the weekend of 3-4 June. There is an interesting program including sessions on Repowering NSW with renewables, the impacts on nature in the region and workshops on digital campaigning, energy transition, mining impacts on water resources and the new biodiversity laws.

It's a great chance to meet up and share ideas with like-minded people without having to go all the way to Sydney. The host organisation is Lithgow Environment Group, a member of the Gardens of Stone Alliance along with the Society. See the details here: <https://www.nature.org.au/about/governance/2017-regional-conference/>

Wild Life in Blackheath by Christine Davies



A few leaf-curling spiders seen in my garden at the beginning of January became plentiful in February. Then I noticed another wave of leaf-curling spiders in early April. On 2 April I found the spider on the left working at curling a "leaf"* of *Acacia longifolia*. The spider on the right chose to use one of the plentiful empty snail shells in her part of the garden, possibly discarded by a Blue-tongued Lizard. Others had chosen Eucalypt leaves, one a smaller leaf of a weed Forget-me-not (unfortunately also plentiful).

* *Acacia longifolia* is one of a large group of *Acacia* which do not have true leaves but develop modified flat leaf-like structures called phyllodes (which are flattened stems) soon after germination.

FOWSA or Fizzer?

The Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FOWSA) is a Committee established by Federal Urban Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher. FOWSA is proposed to “provide a communication channel for the community’s engagement in the development of the airport and ensure community’s views are taken into account, and ... will play an important role in the airspace and flight path design process for Western Sydney Airport”.

The committee has now been selected, there are 22 members, and none of our anti-airport nominees were selected! <http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/forum/>

No-one from Residents Against Western Sydney Airport, No Badgerys Creek Airport or BMCS were selected. Several State and Federal Members of Parliament were selected, but not our locals Susan Templeman or Trish Doyle, nor anyone from Blacktown.

Representatives from the Blue Mountains are Luke Nicholls, Director, City and Community Outcomes, Blue Mountains City Council, and Joanne Bromilow ‘Resident of Blaxland’. Luke Nicholls is a Member of the Blue Mountains Mayoral Reference Group, as am I, and he is opposed to the proposed airport. He appears to be the only anti-airport member of FOWSA!

Joanne Bromilow is, of course, far more than a ‘Resident of Blaxland’. She is a member of Blaxland Chamber of Commerce and of the Mountains Combined Chambers of Commerce, and a strong proponent for the proposed airport.

The Chair of FOWSA is Professor Peter Shergold AC, Chancellor, Western Sydney University, an organisation that is part of the cheer squad for the proposed airport. I plan to write to all of the 22 members, pointing out our objections to the proposed airport.

If Joanne Bromilow is truly our community representative, she should really be calling for a curfew (she is not), and for a railway line to the proposed airport (she does want this).

An interesting quote from Ms Bromilow’s Facebook page (which recently went dark to the public) reads as: “It’s so disappointing they can’t see the opportunities this is going to bring and focus on what we need to be ready in an eco free way”. Not sure what ‘eco free’ means, but an airport that generates traffic, noise, air pollution and greenhouse gases is in no way sustainable nor eco friendly, and we will continue to oppose the project.

WRITE A LETTER: If you think that building a committee of ‘Yes’ people is not the right way to represent the community, write to Urban Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher and tell him. (He loves hearing from us!) The address is PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.

The campaign is not over! The airport has not been built! We keep working!

Ross Coster, No Western Sydney Airport Subcommittee nwsa@bluemountains.org.au

The Forest’s Secret Jim Low

While at university in the 1960s my brother and I would sometimes head off with friends, away from the city, our books and study. One of the favourite spots to which we would travel was the Blue Gum Forest.

We camped for a couple of nights one Easter in this special part of the Blue Mountains National Park. This year marks the eighty fifth anniversary of the Blue Gum Forest being gazetted as a public reserve.

Years ago I listened to an oral history recording made by Mr Jack Harris who lived with his family at Blackheath. The tape is part of the Blue Mountains Oral History Collection. Harris tells of an experience that befell his brother Ted and himself in those youthful days around the 1920s. It has to do with the vandalism of what he refers to as “a truly magnificent tree” in the Blue Gum Forest.

After listening to the Harris tape I felt moved to write a poem which retells this sad little piece of history. I hope my poem also underlines the constant need to value and protect the wonders of our natural environment. I know this comes through strongly in Mr Harris’s account of this senseless vandalism by people whom he says “had absolutely no regard for Nature and what it meant”.

THE FOREST’S SECRET

Long ago they walked this forest
Touched its spirit, and reached Dreamtime
Not disturbed these natural wonders
Watched the blue gums skyward climb.

It’s a place to come to and smell the bushland
See its beauty and hold in awe
Light the campfire and boil the billy
Marvel at the things you saw.

These trees have stood for countless years
Have seen the pioneers of old
Whose unsure footsteps trod this country
But quickly gained a firmer hold.

One tree stands out above the others
A blue gum of enormous height
The biggest tree that guards the clearing
This blue gum - a magnificent sight.

But some who pass are not so caring
They must destroy, then disappear
Into the bark they brutally carve
“J.C. and R.M. have been here.”

A tree so noble and so stately
Bleeding from a senseless act
Still others fire the ground beneath it
The tree’s foundations no more intact.

Well, J.C. and R.M. are no longer
Nor the tree that bore their name
The Blue Gum Forest holds the secret
And those who know it, share the shame.

It’s a place to come to and smell the bushland
See its beauty and hold in awe
Light the campfire and boil the billy
Marvel at the things you saw.

Jim Low

Dispatchable Renewable Electricity? Ross Coster

Dispatchable generation refers to sources of electricity that can be dispatched at the request of power grid operators or of the plant owner; that is, generating plants that can be turned on or off, or can adjust their power output. Dispatchable generators are needed to allow the 'grid' to deliver reliable power to a network that has varying electricity demands, in particular during the evening peak (high demand) and the overnight trough (low demand).

Peak demand has historically been met by hydro-electric generators, which can be 'spun up' in a few minutes, or by gas generators, which can also be 'fired up' in a few minutes. The trough in demand at night is 'filled in' by off-peak hot water, which is switched on by the grid operators using signals down the power lines to increase demand. Coal burners are not dispatchable, they need to run continuously, although they can vary their output to some extent to meet demand cycles. Wind turbines are not dispatchable as they can only generate when it is windy (about 40% of the time) with no predictability. Solar PV (rooftop panels) are not dispatchable as they can only generate when the sun is shining.

The variability and unpredictability of renewable generation (wind and solar) is a nasty conundrum for the grid, as variable demand has to be met, blackouts are unacceptable, and coal and gas need to be phased out lest we cook the planet.

We desperately need a clean, renewable, dispatchable generation technology.

Some see batteries as the answer. Capture the output

from intermittent renewables in batteries, and generate into the grid as required. I am not a fan of batteries, as they are expensive, have a limited life, have efficiency issues (losses as heat), and use exotic materials (like Lithium).

Vast Solar: One company I have been following for some time is Vast Solar <http://www.vastsolar.com/> They are based in Forbes in Central NSW (a lovely town to visit if you like historic buildings), and they are developing dispatchable solar thermal generation. They use the sun to heat salt (cheap and plentiful and liquid above 200 degrees C), store the hot salt in tanks, use the hot salt to boil water into steam, and use the steam to generate electricity.

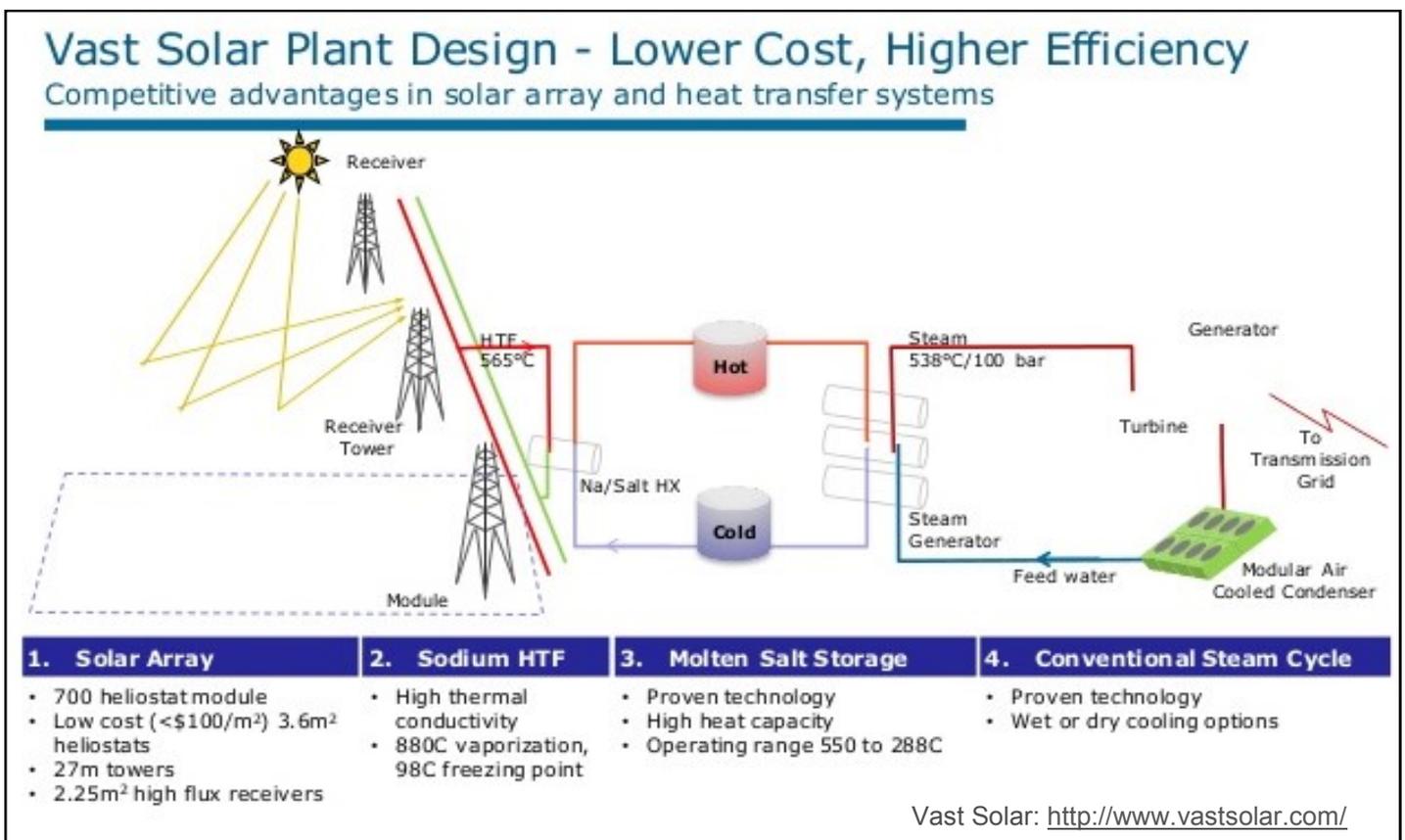
We have all seen photos of massive solar thermal power plants in Spain, the USA and Morocco.

Vast Solar is different in that they don't build huge power stations, but small ones, in modular form, that can be stand-alone or ganged together to form larger arrays.

This technology shows fantastic promise for rural Australia, as these power stations could be built-to-order from common components in each rural town, supplying all the electricity the locals need and pushing extra power back into the grid to supply all of us.

Vast have commissioned their first solar thermal power station at Forbes and are testing it now. Here's hoping that they can build the "cost competitive, dispatchable renewable energy" that their website promises.

Ross Coster membership@bluemountains.org.au





RUTH'S REVENGE

Members of the Minnehaha Bushcare group joined with friends on 1st April to celebrate Ruth Ley's birthday and continue her good work in caring for Yosemite Creek. Not only was she a founding member of the group and active for 25 years, but was also a founding and active member of the Katoomba Creek Group for 20 years and active in three other groups.

Ruth happily claimed to be obsessed with Bushcare, and one of her missions was to rid Yosemite and Katoomba Creeks of montbretia.

On this glorious sunny morning, her many friends planted a memorial garden and installed a plaque in her honour, paddled in the creek to continue Ruth's mission in dealing with the montbretia and enjoyed a cuppa, date muffins and many other delights. There are plans to continue this tradition on 1st April each year.

(Photo: Ruth with montbretia)

RUTH LEY

A TIRELESS AND FOUNDING MEMBER OF MINNEHAHA BUSHCARE GROUP (FROM 1991 TO 2016). FRIEND AND PROTECTOR OF THIS LAND. AN INSPIRATION TO BUSHCARERS WHO CONTINUE RUTH'S LEGACY

WANTED! PUBLICITY OFFICER

The Society needs a volunteer to take on the job of PUBLICITY OFFICER. If you would like to find out how you can help, please contact the President or one of the Vice Presidents (contact details are on page 2 of this newsletter)

If you are interested but don't want to take on the main role, perhaps you would like to help as part of a subcommittee.

Visit to Popes Glen bushcare site

On Saturday 25 March, six North Sydney Bushcare volunteers arrived in Blackheath and were met by Popes Glen bushcare site convenor Alan Lane, Paul Vale, Erin Hall from Blue Mountains City Council and ConSoc volunteers.

Alan gave a background to the work of the group, which began in 1989 to help control European weeds in Popes Glen Bushland Reserve and rehabilitate the area to its natural state. He said the most significant problem for the site was stormwater surges and the resulting silt deposition and weed infestation.

The Popes Glen Bushcare Group started to control the willow forest in 2002, a huge task in which they were supported by Blue Mountains Council and several grants. The group removed the willows and other weeds progressively, revegetating the site with plants grown from local provenance seeds.

A number of engineering actions were implemented to reduce the impact of storm surges which created channels through the site, deposited sheets of silt and uprooted the group's plantings. A weir was constructed to divert half the inflow into a diversion channel and a sedimentation pond.

The other major engineering task was the stabilisation of the highly vulnerable 20m long by 3m high head wall where the silt flat terminates. This task required the services of skilled contractors, who were employed under a grant from the Environmental Trust of NSW.

After the tour the visitors assisted in planting 258 plants, some as part of the group's on-going program of creating bird habitat and others to continue revegetating an embankment along the creek, built with the silt removed from the sedimentation pond.

Alan said the group was proud of the fact that the Popes Glen Bushcare site was now well on the way to becoming a healthy Upper Blue Mountains Peat Swamp on Sandstone. This classification would offer the site protection as an Endangered Ecological Community and under both Commonwealth (*Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*) and State (*Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*) legislation.

Thank you to Andrew Scott, North Sydney Bushcare Officer for organising the visit, to Erin and Blue Mountains City Council for hosting a generous morning tea, and to Aiden, Benita, Jodi and Ian, managers of Blackheath Glen Tourist Park, for allowing us to use the communal kitchen.

Bushcare volunteers from North Sydney join Popes Glen Bushcare Group in planting 258 native plants at Popes Glen. Photo by Paul vale.



The Sustainable Home, by Gary McCue and Alex Bergmann

Solar Hot Water Considerations - Part 3

One of the more important considerations when installing a solar hot water system is correctly sizing the storage cylinder and solar collectors to meet the needs of your household. Ideally your hot water system should be sized for your dwelling and not necessarily for the current number of occupants. You may have just two people living in your three-bedroom home, but a house this size can easily accommodate four or more people. Under-sizing your system can lead to excessive boosting, increasing your running costs and your home's environmental impact. Here in the Blue Mountains it is better to oversize your solar system somewhat to maximise hot water production in winter, lessening the need for boosting during the colder months.

In Australia the average rate of hot water consumption is about 50L per person per day. When determining an appropriate size for your solar hot water cylinder, it's good to allow for a day and a half of storage capacity, so a 300L storage cylinder would suit a three-bedroom home, or three to four people. A home with four bedrooms and five to six people would typically need a 400L cylinder, while a couple in a one to two bedroom house may only need a 180 to 250L tank.

Once the storage cylinder capacity is worked out, the size of the rooftop collectors can be determined. For solar hot water collectors (flat panel or evacuated tubes), a good rule of thumb is 1sq metre of panel area per occupant. A typical flat panel collector is about 2sq metres. The equivalent evacuated tube collector has

about 12 cylindrical glass tubes and will provide hot water for one to two people with a 180L or 250L tank; two collector panels or 24 collector tubes will suit three to four people and a 300L cylinder; and plan on three panels or 36 tubes for five to six people and a 400L cylinder. If roof space is limited, consider installing Compound Parabolic Concentrator (CPC) evacuated tube collectors; the highly polished parabolic reflector behind the tubes significantly increases efficiency, thus reducing the roof area needed to produce hot water. Once your solar system has been installed, try to have most of your hot water consumption occur in the morning, particularly if you boost at night with off-peak electricity. This allows your storage tank to be topped up with solar heated water during the day before boosting occurs in the evening.

Heat pumps don't require rooftop collectors so system sizing for different households is based on the cylinder's storage capacity. Because heat pumps efficiently heat water day or night, a smaller tank than would be needed for a solar hot water system can provide sufficient hot water while lowering electricity bills. Your plumber's recommendation and the manufacturer's sizing guidelines will help determine the right size for your home.

This column is by local solar experts Gary McCue, with the Sustainability Guys in Blackheath, and Alex Bergmann with Energywise Living in Katoomba. Future columns will address photovoltaic (PV) solar systems, battery storage, off-grid solar, and other sustainable home topics.

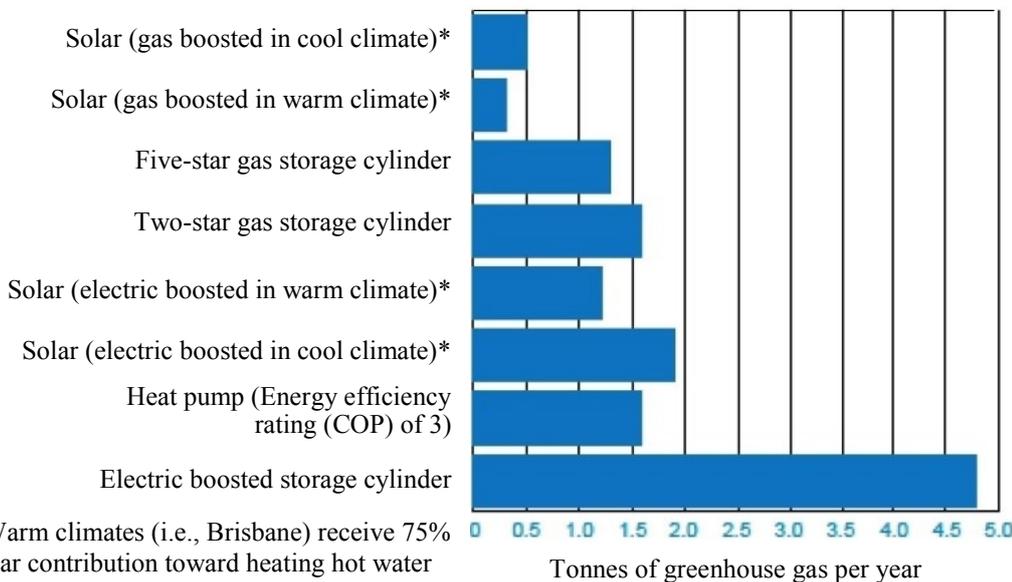


Diagram caption: Comparative green house gas emissions for heating domestic hot water based on 200L daily water use (Note: If using 100% Green Power, solar with electric boost, heat pumps and electric boosted systems would have zero emissions)

Diagram source: "Efficient Hot Water" booklet published by Alternative Technology Association, 2014

*Warm climates (i.e., Brisbane) receive 75% solar contribution toward heating hot water

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

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

The nursery will be closed during June and July and reopen in August. There is still time to plant and establish plants purchased at the markets in May.

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm. No market sales in June and July. Sales will resume on August 6.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm
No market sales in June and July. Sales resume on August 20.

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries Hugh Brougham 04079 55028 nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Welcome to new members

Heather McKaig
Bruce McKaig
Wendy Varney
Nicky Wallis
Catherine
Sophocleous

A Blue Mountains tragedy connected with Darwin's Walk Jim Smith.

Ever since the Weatherboard Inn was built in Wentworth Falls in the 1820s travellers, of whom Charles Darwin was the most famous, have walked along Jamison Creek to view the Valley. These visitors found their own way along the banks, occasionally leaping over the creek, to get to their destination. It was not until the mid-1980s that a constructed track was made beside the creek. The supervisor for this work was Blue Mountains City Council ranger Phil Roux. His workforce was made up of a group of unemployed people who were being trained in track making, bushcare and landscaping skills. I was in regular contact with Phil at the time, and I remember how shaken he was when he told me that one of the women in his team had been murdered. Her co-workers installed a small plaque beside the track in her memory (see photo). I have been asked many times about who 'Robyn' was.

Robyn Michelle Austin was born in 1957 in Grafton. She first married in Sydney in 1975, at the age of 18. After divorcing her first husband, she remarried in Brisbane. Robyn had four children, born between 1976 and 1981. At the time of her death, she was renting a house in Haviland Avenue, Blackheath, and living with her de-facto partner John Putan. Robyn, aged 29, was using the surname Wise (also spelt Wyse).

On the night of 29 July 1986, Robyn was shot in the head with a .22 calibre rifle by Putan. Neighbours had heard the sounds of "a heated argument" from the house. Robyn's two youngest sons, aged five and eight, discovered their mother's body and ran to a neighbour's house next door. In the meantime, Putan had driven Robyn's car to Little Hartley where he killed himself with the same weapon.

As well as the plaque on Jamison Creek, Robyn's other memorial is her headstone in the Casino Lawn



Cemetery. One of the saddest parts of this story is to think of the impact this tragedy must have had on Robyn's four children. I am sure they would have been given a loving upbringing by her large extended family. It is shocking that disrespect and violence toward women is still a major social problem in Australia, despite millions being spent on educational and support programs such as White Ribbon Day.

Those of us who walk regularly in our beautiful Blue Mountains accumulate a storehouse of pleasant memories, of our wildflower and wildlife sightings, wonder at the rocks, flowing water, scenery and ever-changing light. But our bushland does not always have such happy associations, as there are some places associated with sadness and loss.

Acknowledgement. Some information for this article was supplied by Peter Rickwood.

Our Society's submission to the Draft West District Plan

Over the summer months, members of the Society's Landuse Subcommittee have been digesting the *Draft West District Plan* and associated documents, attending various community consultations convened by the West District Commissioner, Sean O'Toole, and preparing the Society's submission. When the Draft District Plans are finalised later this year, Local Environmental Plans in all council areas in the Greater Sydney region will be reviewed to ensure they conform to their District Plan's Priorities and Actions. This is why it is important for the Society to strongly advocate for better recognition of the unique Blue Mountains environment and the limits it places on development as the West District Plan is being finalised. We don't want to see our hard fought-for LEP 2015 undermined.

Many aspects of the Draft Plan are welcome. But we are concerned about the mandatory minimum housing targets set only for the first five years. In our submission, we strongly argue that the housing strategy being developed for the Blue Mountains should be based on town master planning with community consultation – as is currently being undertaken by the council – rather than a 'predict and provide' approach which sets mandatory housing targets based on unreliable population growth projections.

The Society is also concerned that international tourism is seen as the major driver of economic development in the Blue Mountains. In our submission, we call for support for a more diverse tourism economy building on the smaller scale, sustainability-related and 'nature' tourism sector already established in the Blue Mountains. We also call for a more diverse and resilient economy, arguing for more support to establish 'smart', sustainability-related jobs and industries in the Blue Mountains, along with related educational facilities.

The Society supports the Draft Plan's priorities such as the proposed separated walking and cycling corridor between Penrith and Blackheath, the Eastern Escarpment Open Space and Trails project and the rehabilitation of South Creek. But we are opposed to some measures in the Draft Plan such as biodiversity offsets and offsetting between sub-catchments. In our submission we also call for a sensible replacement of the 10/50 bushfire vegetation clearance regulations and reiterate our opposition to the Western Sydney Airport, coal seam gas exploration and extraction, and raising the Warragamba Dam wall.

You can find the Society's submission on our website <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/submissions.htm>

Where are they now?

From New South Wales trains' four-car and eight-car rattlers to a different kind of rattlers. "Sail Cat" and his walking companion, Chloe, have been located and are now somewhere on the Pacific Crest Trail which winds through desert, glaciated mountains, forests and volcanos from Mexico to Canada. Some photos from Sail Cat's blog are reproduced below. (<https://packstrap.wordpress.com/blogposts/>)

Yes, as the keen eyed will have divined, before the government's latest retrenchments, "Sail Cat" was Geoff Luscombe, experienced National Park manager at times in charge of the Blue Mountains and other regions. Now he and Chloe are undertaking one of the world's great walking, nature conservation and photography challenges over five months and blogging it to the envious. They have even met "Trail Angels". These are not mythological characters, such as might appear in a sales pitch to entice somebody into a religious cult. They are real people who offer trekkers a comfortable bed and home cooked meals just before they are going to undertake an arduous section of the trail.

Many people who work in or voluntarily support the activities of NPWS, Blue Mountains Council and other environment related bodies have the potential to become alpha males and alpha females of international conservation. Let's hope that all these entities use such people's experience to help make our own region an inspiring and visitor friendly area among the natural jewels of Planet Earth. As few as possible should be shunted prematurely into a forlorn and remote retirement. Don Morison



Photos copyright Geoff Luscombe (<https://packstrap.wordpress.com/blogposts/>):

- Chloe and "Sail Cat" pose at the Southern Terminus, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail
- Cactus garden
- An American rattler poses for "Sail Cat"



Henry Lawson in the Blue Mountains

Celebrating the sesquicentennial of Henry Lawson's birth

"In the week-end we made a practice of camping. A party of us, 'The Mountain Push', as Henry called us, would take packhorses and ride down the steep Zig-Zag on Mount Victoria into Kanimbla Valley. It was wild bush with open flats here and there. We camped on the Cherry Tree Flat under Mount Blackheath. There was a ruined farm-house there, and an old stone chimney which figures in Henry's poem of that name. He wrote the story round it. I remember him one evening sitting on top of the chimney and reciting to us. But mostly he liked to smoke his pipe and listen, while we sang and told stories and yarned round the camp-fire." (Arthur Parker, an extract from 'Henry Lawson by his Mates', published in 1931)

THE OLD PUSH AND THE NEW

You will find, when over forty, man was made but to repine,
And I sadly sit reflecting on that sinful past of mine;
When the trade that I've forgotten paid far better than the pen,
And when I too, for a season, was a leader amongst men:
When in townships on the Mountains, in the nearer, dearer bush,
I - by virtue of my "writin's" - was the captain of a push.

(first verse of a poem by Henry Lawson, 1912)

NPA CELEBRATING 60

To celebrate 60 years of protecting nature through community action, the National Parks Association of New South Wales is organising events and activities throughout 2017. <https://npansw.org/what-we-do/celebrate-60/>

- Photo competition: This competition will be running over most of the year.
- Great prizes in NPA'S 60th Anniversary Raffle.
- 60 Best Walks in NSW

NPA's branches and walks leaders have chosen what they consider to be the 60 Best Walks in NSW which will be part of NPA's bushwalks program this year. 13 of these walks are in the Greater Blue Mountains and offer a cross section of some of the great walks in our area!!! <http://bushwalk.npansw.org.au/best-walks>

New film celebrates bushland values

South Lawson Park bushcare group in the Blue Mountains celebrated twenty years of bushcare in 2016. Their recently released commemorative film takes a look at the values that urban fringe patches of bushland possess and how bushcare and streamwatch help to maintain these values.

Produced by Peter Ardill and Vera Hong and directed by Vera Hong of Seconds Minutes Hours Productions, this professionally crafted film portrays the complexity of the Lawson Creek catchment, including the waterfalls, swamps and rich flora diversity. The aerial scenes are stunning. The life, knowledge and beauty intrinsic to this bushland area are celebrated. The eight minute film may be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/verahong/south-lawson-bushcare> The star performer is our beautiful bushland.

Lawson Creek is a significant Blue Mountains catchment and eventually discharges into the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system via the Blue Mountains National Park and World Heritage Area. Weed invasion, pollution and high sediment flows, which can have severe downstream effects if not managed, are common occurrences.

The bushcare group engages in a two stage approach to managing the urban impacts. Via *bushcare* activities the weed problem is addressed and the flora of the riparian area has been enhanced with both planting and natural regeneration techniques. *Streamwatch* monitoring, supported by Australian Museum and Blue Mountains City Council, provides measurable and standardised data on water quality and macroinvertebrate life. Oxygen, phosphate, salinity, pH and turbidity levels are tested on a monthly basis. Testing for macroinvertebrate life is done on an annual basis.

Maintaining the urban reaches of Lawson Creek catchment in a reasonable environmental condition will always be an ongoing battle. The consolation is that this buffer zone of bushland, although damaged in many ways, is being supported and improved, assisting with the preservation of the more pristine bushland and riparian tracts further downstream.

Thanks to Seconds Minutes Hours Productions for their generosity with time and skill. The bushcare group's website is available at www.southlawsonpark.bushcarebluemountains.org.au

For further information visit Australian Museum Streamwatch www.streamwatch.org.au and Bushcare Blue Mountains www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au



Collecting macroinvertebrate samples in Lawson Creek. (Photo by Seconds Minutes Hours Production)

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

Printed on Australian-made 100% Recycled Paper

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.

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.

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)

Nursery News

Still plenty of time to establish more plants before winter. Our final market before the winter break (June/July) will be at Lawson on Sunday, 21st May – see you there!

Amongst our big range at the markets, of special mention at the moment are several varieties of *Correas* which have started flowering. These are ideal for semi shade and are bird attracting. We also have *Acacias* on special again while *Dianella caerulea* sold well at the last Lawson market. *Eucalyptus cunninghamii* and *Eucalyptus stricta* (both upper mountains mallees) are also available.

Negotiations are continuing on a site for a second nursery at Lawson to be our sales nursery and to allow our nursery at Blackheath to expand on its propagation role.

If there is anyone out there who could contribute to the running of the nursery and would like to be a volunteer please contact me.

Hugh Brougham, Plant Nursery Coordinator
04079 55028 nursery@bluemountains.org.au

When the sun don't blow and the wind don't shine

by Ian Brown, 2017 (with apologies to nobody)

Coal is nice and black and shiny;
it all comes out of the miney-miney.
Coal smells real good and makes lovely black dust,
to keep the lights on it's a no-brainer must.

Underground mines stop the swamping above,
and those open-cuts...well, what's not to love?
But awful turbines that suck up the wind
are a blot on the landscape and as ugly as sin.

Chorus:

When the sun don't blow and the wind don't shine,
old king coal is my very best friend of mine.
So dig dig dig, as fast as we can,
flog it overseas, that's our plan.

Greenies want to destroy society
and bankrupt all companies proprietary.
But we'll stick it to 'em good all over the land
because we and the shock-jocks have got it planned.

Together we shun all that climate inanity,
'cos we know that coal is best for humanity.
Let industry experts give us our lines,
scholars and lefties are just ignorant swine.

(Chorus)

Coal-miners give us lots and lots of money,
so whatever they say we'll believe it, honey.
If honourable folk tell us how high we should jump,
then I for one am no bloody chump!

After all our coal comes from God you know,
and I'm sure she wants us to go go go!
So logically – and I'll speak on the level -
wind and sun must be the work of the devil!

(Chorus)

We'll dig bloody big holes way up in the north,
and sell out Australia for all that we're worth.
The science is quite clearly confected
and very soon now it will all be corrected.

So join with me now and sing coal's praises,
'cos renewable energy's just one of those phases.
Into the future we'll proudly march,
and if we're wrong you can just stick it up your arch.

(Chorus)



37. AROUND LOCKYERS TRACKHEAD, Hartley Vale

The steep northern and western slopes of Mount York presented problems for horses and carts using the economically important road from Emu Plains to Bathurst in the early 19th century. Major Edmund Lockyer (1784-1860) initiated work on a new route in 1829 but it was supplanted, before it could be completed and opened to traffic, by the Victoria Pass favoured by the ambitious Thomas Mitchell (very much the 2017 route of the Great Western Highway).

Today a trackhead is shared by Lockyer's route and the very first route, completed in 1815, by William Cox (1764-1837). It is only a few hundred metres along the sealed road from Comet Inn in the picturesque village of Hartley Vale which became established during the kerosene shale mining era of the late 19th century.

Bushwalkers can follow downhill routes from the Mount York Road through woodlands of multiple species of Eucalypt with views over the Hartley Valley and picnic at Lockyers trackhead.

Hartley Vale is a secluded hobby farming area where alpacas and goats as well as the native Eastern Grey Kangaroos and wombats are frequently sighted.

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.

Hut News photos

Members receive a hard copy of Hut News by post, unless requested otherwise. Some members say that they prefer reading the newsletter at leisure in B&W and then view the photos in colour on our website

www.bluemountains.org.au



Images:

A space for a walker to pass through a country gate ... one of the most irresistible invitations in the NSW bush.

Alpacas ... very hard work for those grooming them but emblematic of hobby farming in the Central Tablelands.

Approach to Hartley Vale village with the Mount York slopes in background.

Photos by Christine Davies.

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)

May 13 **Gardens of Stone.** A new adventure of discovery – off track, part exploratory, wilderness area so party size limited.

Dependent on 4WD availability. Book early. Hugh 04233 09854 after 8pm. Hue.s@optusnet.com.au

May 20 Cox's River from the 6ft Track: **Diana 47513935** Meet at Mt. Vic Station CP 8.00am. 10km. Grade 3 Map Hampton

May 27 **Gardens of Stone.** A new adventure of discovery – off track, part exploratory wilderness area so party size limited.

Dependent on 4WD availability Book early. 5km., Gr 3. May be scratchy so protective clothing necessary. Leader: **Hugh** hue.s@optusnet.com.au 0423 309 854 after 8pm.

Walkers preferring on-track/longer walk should meet at Springwood Stn. CP at 8.00am, choose walk and leader on the day.

June 3 **Pt Hatteras & Ladders defile.** Leader **Harold 0409010737**. Meet at Wentworth Falls CP 7.30am. 6km. Grade 3.

Map. Glen Alice.

June 10 **Gardens of Stone.** A new adventure of discovery – off track, part exploratory wilderness area so party size limited.

Dependent on 4WD availability Book early. 5km., Gr 3. May be scratchy so protective clothing necessary. Leader: **Hugh** hue.s@optusnet.com.au 0423 309 854 after 8pm.

Walkers preferring on-track/longer walk should meet at Springwood Stn. CP at 8.00am, choose walk and leader on the day

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

May 15 **Mount Solitary** (long day). Car pool to Golden Stairs then down stairs onto Solitary and return. Katoomba Station car park 8.50 am. Car pool \$5. Wayne and Mary Read 4784 1060. Grade 3.

May 22 **BUS TRIP: Dambusters.** We will visit Avon, Cordeaux and Warragamba Dams. Fare \$12, book and pay Maurice 4739 4942. Springwood Westpac car park 7.55am. Tracy 04343 62611. Grade 2.

May 29 **Lockleys Pylon**, Leura. Best Grose Valley views. Meet Leura Station car park 8.50 am. Car pool \$5.

Ros King 0417 261 465. Grade 3.

Jun 5 **Greenwich Point, Harbour circuit walk.** Meet top of escalators, Central Station, 9.10 am. Maurice 4739 4942 or 0402 402 783. Grade 2.

Jun 12 **No walk.** Public holiday.

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, denfenella12@bigpond.com

May 11 Botanical Gardens and Mrs Macquarie's Chair, Sydney. Meet top of escalators, Central Station 9.30 am. Take lunch. Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 1.

May 18 **National Pass, Wentworth Falls.** Meet Stockyard Car Park 9.30am. Leaders Alan and Jeanette 4757 3750. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 3

May 25 **Red Gum Park and Minatonga Falls, Bullaburra.** Lovely Red Gums. Meet Bullaburra Station south side 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Grade 2

June 1 **Centennial Park and Paddington.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2193. Take lunch. Grade 1

June 8 **Bus trip to the Lost City.** Book and pay Tracy \$12 0434 362 611. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac, 8.00am sharp. Pick up along highway. Leader Maurice. 4739 4942. Take lunch. Grade 2

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

Congratulations! Recognition for Blue Mountains Seniors

It was standing room only at Springwood Hub on 28th March for the annual Blue Mountains City Council 2017 Seniors Week Recognition Awards Celebration! Four recipients of awards for bushcare and related community work were Rae Druitt, Erst Carmichael, Roger Walker and Paul Vale, who each received a certificate and a round of applause. All four are long-term active bushcare participants with multiple groups or responsibilities.

Rae has been a Bushcare volunteer Coordinator at Wentworth Falls Lake for 29 years and was a Society Nursery volunteer for a period of 10 years. Erst has been Convenor of the South Lawson Bushcare Group since founding it in 1995 and an active defender of local Community and the environment in

general.

Roger is a long-term member of Leura Cascades group and an active member of the Leura Falls Catchment Group. Since 2008 he has been volunteering at Everglades as a tour guide and gardener. Paul has been involved in a number of on-ground groups and various support and networking organisations for 17 years. He is the current Convenor of Blue Mountains Bushcare Network and Vice-chair at Greater Sydney Landcare Network and Bushcare Officer of Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Following the ceremony, an excellent morning tea was provided in the foyer.