



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

A Spring Day in the Gardens



MONSTER BANNER EVENT, GARDENS OF STONE
Sunday November 26th – 11am to 2.30pm
turn left at the top of the hill, State Mine Gully Road,
Newnes State Forest via Lithgow

Join us to raise awareness for the Gardens of Stone reserve proposal. Tell your friends and family. Discover another spectacular pagoda-studded location overlooking Lithgow. Participate and enjoy:

- Welcome to Country—respect People and Country
- A really Big Banner Event—Protect Gardens of Stone
- Music and song—celebrate and defend Country
- People Pagoda Landscape—be part of a photographic spectacle

Transport to and from Lithgow station available. Catch the 8.18 am from Central

In support of a 39,000 hectare Gardens of Stone reserve proposal that will help facilitate tourism in Lithgow

Please RSVP using <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/form/spring-day-gardens-banner-event>

We ask the NSW Government to immediately move to create a state conservation area to protect 39,000 hectares of land containing giant pagoda rock formations, sandstone escarpments, slot canyons, pristine rivers and waterfalls, along with significant Aboriginal sacred sites.

Reserving this area is a critical step towards transitioning the economy of Lithgow towards a vibrant tourism economy similar to the Blue Mountains.

The Gardens of Stone Alliance



GIANT DUMP PLAN

Caring environmentalists, as well as local residents, are outraged that the Bell and Clarence areas are set to become a massive dumping ground to bail out the poor planning of Sydney's major infrastructure projects. For 15 years or more, more than 30 large trucks a day could be driving along narrow, winding stretches of road so a complex of old sand quarries can be filled in with spoil from construction of the Westconnex motorway and the proposed airport.

Naturally, these trucks will be making their noisy and dusty way along the whole mountains length of the Great Western Highway en route to Bell.

More photos—page 9.



The old quarry is in the headwaters of the Wollangambe River, not far from the scene of a destructive colliery accident in 2015, now newly threatened by unsustainable development.

"Hut News", the newsletter of
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
Phone 4757 1872 (leave message)
Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au
Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Twitter: [bmcsnsw](https://twitter.com/bmcsnsw)

President: Madi Maclean 0412 428 202
president@bluemountains.org.au
Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron
04198 24974 taracameron4@gmail.com
Second Vice President:
Don Morison 8230 2116
donmorison@bluemountains.org.au
Treasurer: Elizabeth Howard 0414 090251
eh_mistover@bigpond.com
Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson
sao@bluemountains.org.au
Bushcare Officer: Paul Vale
4787 8080 04290 14454
bushcare@bluemountains.org.au
Environmental Education Officer:
Beth Rohrlach 04247 32287
BethRohrlach@yahoo.com.au
Events Coordinator:
Heather Coster 0408-223-843
Heather@coster.com.au or
Landuse Officer:
Angela Langdon 0417 004 722
landuse@bluemountains.org.au
Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull
4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au
Membership Secretary: Ross Coster
4739 2987 04184 62576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
National Parks/World Heritage Officer:
Brian Marshall 4784.1148
briannamar@bigpond.com
Newsletter Editor:
Christine Davies 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
Plant Nursery Coordinator:
Hugh Brougham 04079 55028
nursery@bluemountains.org.au
Publicity Officer: VACANT
Sustainability Officer: A subcommittee has
been formed.
Threatened Species Officer:
Judy Smith smitheco@ozemail.com.au
Website Manager: Valda Low
webmaster@bluemountains.org.au
Walks Convenor:
Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942
mauricekerkham@hotmail.com
Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson
4751.2303, mob 04275 12303
fmatter@bigpond.net.au

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

18 NOVEMBER 2017

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

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

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

50th year celebrations for National Parks in ashes because of massive restructure

In October Hut News (http://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/1710_Hutnews.pdf) we celebrated the achievements of National Parks and Wildlife over its 50 years of service. However, under the current State Government, NPWS has suffered funding and staff cuts and a massive restructure is underway.

Rallies have been held across the state against the drastic cuts, with events in Katoomba, Queanbeyan, Grafton, Griffith, and Wollongong. Several members of the Society attended the rally in Katoomba.

In a recent press release, the Public Service Association (PSA) said that the latest restructure will not only cut jobs but jeopardise public safety.

The Berijiklian Government is overseeing the scrapping of 13 highly experienced Area Managers, who perform a critical role in bushfire and pest management.

In recent years, NPWS has downsized from 66 areas across NSW to just 37 under this restructure. "These highly experienced officers are meant to preserve our flora and fauna and ultimately help protect the public but they now find themselves on the threatened species list – an appalling 50th birthday present," said PSA General Secretary Stewart Little.

Pest Management Officers (PMO) are also being thrown on the jobs scrapheap in the shake-up. PMO's perform a critical role in the control of wild dogs, feral pigs, cats, goats, deer and invasive plant species and in so doing, ensure NSW meets its obligations under the Biosecurity Act. "60 PMOs and Fire Management Officers (FMO's) were introduced 20 years ago, but their numbers have been progressively slashed across the state, with the new structure containing just eight PMO's," Mr Little said. "That's eight people to cover more than seven million hectares."

"The bushfire season has already started with devastating impact and if these cuts go through, there simply will not be sufficient experienced staff to contain them."

"The skills of these people and several hundred years of combined experience are gained on the ground, not in a classroom, so what has been lost to date and what we are about to lose will take a lifetime to replace."

At its meeting on 21 October, the Society's management committee resolved to write to the Chief Executive, Anthony Lean, Acting Executive Director Park Operations, Robert Quirk, Executive Director Park Programs, Michael Wright, Minister for the Environment, Gabriel Upton, and Shadow Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe, expressing the Society's concerns about cutbacks to the NPWS staff.

You can read more at these links:

<https://npansw.org/latest-news/media-releases;>
[http://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/4864556/national-parks-cuts/;](http://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/4864556/national-parks-cuts/)
[https://johnmenadue.com/john-benson-biodiversity-is-threatened-in-new-south-wales/;](https://johnmenadue.com/john-benson-biodiversity-is-threatened-in-new-south-wales/)
[http://bluemountains.org.au/
documents/2017_BM_Gazette_25Oct_National_Parks_Decimated.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/2017_BM_Gazette_25Oct_National_Parks_Decimated.pdf)

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

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

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

Book launch at Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens “WAYFARING IN WOLLEMI: stories of people in Wilderness” by Andy Macqueen

In October 2017, Colong Foundation for Wilderness organised the launch of Andy Macqueen’s new book, “Wayfaring in Wollemi: stories of people in Wilderness” at Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens. Keith Muir, Executive Director of Colong Foundation, introduced David Crust. David has worked for NPWS for 30 years and has recently been appointed Director of Blue Mountains region which includes the whole World Heritage Area.

Keith next introduced Haydn Washington, “a fantastic campaigner for wilderness”. Haydn spoke about the Colo Committee’s campaign to protect the Colo Wilderness which culminated in the creation of the Wollemi National Park in 1979. The wilderness was saved from such proposals as army war games, having power lines strung across it, and future mining when “Neville Wran gazetted the park to the centre of the earth!” Haydn finished with a poem “Not For Me” which is published elsewhere in this newsletter.

Well done to the organisers for choosing a younger member of Colong and president of Bushwalking NSW, Alex Allchin, to then perform the actual book “launch”. Alex spoke about how he came to love wilderness and natural places through personal experience and reading about other people’s experiences and the places that have been fought for. He described the book “Wayfaring in Wollemi” as telling 28 people’s stories and above all Andy’s own story, his journey in Wollemi, his journey in life.

Andy Macqueen acknowledged his grandsons who were present and represented people of the future. He spoke about “wayfarers – people who go on a journey”. Many in the audience had walked at some time in the Wollemi. He spoke about the Wollemi as “a great big time machine”, “a big wild natural area holding stories for the future”.

Wyn Jones then told how the name of Wollemi has spread across the world with the fame of the Wollemi Pine. He read a poem by Sue Morrison when they walked in the Wollemi during the Great Blue Mountains Heritage Walk in 1992.

It was a privilege to attend the launch and find a seat where it was “standing room only”. I look forward to reading the book.

You can find out more and purchase the book at <https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/store/books/wayfaring-wollemi>
A review of the book will be in December/January Hut News.
Christine Davies

(left to right) Alex Allchin, David Crust, Andy Macqueen, Keith Muir, Haydn Washington, Wyn Jones



Andy Macqueen takes time during book signing to sign the hand of his grandson Caleb;

Improving Blue Mountains Wildlife Connectivity

On 16th October a workshop to investigate Wildlife Connectivity was hosted by Blue Mountains City Council. Attendees included representatives from NPWS, BMCS, WIRES and Blue Mountains Bushcare.

Peter Ridgeway from Greater Sydney Local Land Services [GSLLS] provided an interesting and informative presentation on ways of improving faunal connectivity across transport corridors and the science behind successful (and unsuccessful) faunal connectivity initiatives.

The workshop was followed by a field trip to the recently refurbished RMS wildlife underpass at Bodington Hill, Wentworth Falls (a partnership project between GSLLS and RMS/Downer).

The group then visited the old highway underpass at Mount Victoria to investigate its potential as a future wildlife connectivity refurbishment. The Soldiers Pinch underpass has significant potential as a wildlife corridor under the Great Western Highway utilising existing infrastructure.

A collaborative working group led by GSLLS and BMCC was then set up to investigate funding and partnership opportunities for the Soldiers Pinch wildlife underpass project, and to pursue other potential connectivity initiatives across transport corridors in the Greater Blue Mountains WHA.

Prepared by Paul Vale





Western Sydney Airport – Joining Forces

Groups opposed to WestConnex, the M4 toll and the proposed Eastern Creek incinerator joined forces with anti-airport groups in a “Don’t Mess with the West” event. Protesters gathered at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and marched to the office of Stuart Ayres, Member for Penrith and NSW Minister for Western Sydney.

Many people are now seeing the plan – dump all the noisy, toxic, profit-generating nightmares in Western Sydney, so people in other parts of Sydney can live quieter, healthier, richer lives.

Stuart Ayres was being targeted as he had Premier Gladys Berejiklian with him for the day telling Penrith what a great job they are doing, and because of recent comments he made that a curfew at Badgerys Creek should be ‘off the table’ for economic reasons. Neither Mr Ayres nor Ms Berejiklian has ever faced up to a public meeting to defend their support for the proposed airport. Stuart Ayres was nowhere to be seen!

Meanwhile, the Greater Sydney Commission has been ‘restructured’ to merge two separate Western Sydney districts into one larger district, with the express purpose of better planning for the coming ‘aerotropolis’.

This charming word describes an airport, surrounded by industrial and logistics facilities, a ‘science park’, and thousands more houses. The proposed airport has morphed into a new city, Sydney’s ‘third city’, intended to rival Canberra in size, all being built at the foot of our beautiful Blue Mountains.

We object on many grounds, but our primary concern is the long term effect on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

We know that the GBMWA will be used as a huge noise buffer area, with long-term effects on birds, their communications, migration and breeding patterns, and therefore their ability to pollinate our World Heritage listed eucalypts. We know that planes will dump noise, benzene, fine particulates and unburned fuel into the crystal clear air over our parks, with predictable health effects on people and animals. We know that planes

travelling to east coast cities will pour out millions of tonnes of CO₂e gases, adding to global warming, when a high speed rail network could serve these routes faster, safer, more conveniently and with zero emissions.

The array of forces pushing this crazy concept are many and powerful, but we are not giving up yet. We recently wrote to all 74 (at the time!) senators, asking them to convene a senate enquiry into the approval of the Western Sydney Airport. We are waiting for their responses. The campaign goes on!

Ross Coster, nwsa@bluemountains.org.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK CELEBRATES GRAND CANYON TRACK RESTORATION AND ECOTOURISM AWARD

“It was the duty of Government to reserve to the people the beauties of nature.” (Joseph Carruthers, NSW Premier, speaking at the opening of the Grand Canyon track, February 1907)

100 years later, on 28 October, 2017, National Parks and Wildlife Service invited guests to help celebrate the restoration of the Grand Canyon Track, one of the most popular walks in NSW. Also to view the stunning ‘Our Grand Canyon’ Exhibition which will be on display at the Heritage Centre, Blackheath, until the end of November.

National Park an Ecotourism Destination

Blue Mountains National Park has been awarded certification as an Ecotourism Destination, the second National Park to be so recognised. In the photo below, David Crust (Director Blue Mountains Branch) on left, receives the award from Peter Cochrane, Board Member Ecotourism Australia, on behalf of Blue Mountains National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Not for me

Not for me
A lyrebird sings,
Not for me
Rivers ripple in flow,
Not for me
My Beautiful Tree
Curves sublimely
In the morning light,
Not for me
Does my cliff slowly weather,
Not for me
Do grasses breezily sway,
Not for me
Do ancient stars enlighten –

They do it
As privilege of *being*,
A gift of existence
And do so for themselves -
For life, for love
In joy untrammelled.
This world is no
Mere diversion
No 'Vale of Tears',
No plaything
For the self-obsessed,
For the world
Does not turn
On a human whim,
And no tree recognizes
Our portentous
'Anthropocene'.

This world amazingly
Exists
Let us cry out in rapture
At this joyous chance
Each glorious day.
The *value*
In all these
Magical, numinous
Encounters
Does not lie
In *my* mind.
The wonder
And the beauty
Are there to be found
By those who listen and feel -
Falling in love outwards
To the sheer wonder
Of it all.

Haydn Washington
June 12th 2017

The energy conundrum! Dr Brian Marshall¹

Some things being done by governments lack scientific credibility and are frightening from an environmental perspective. A classic example is provided by the Federal Government's energy policy, as the Coalition engages in mental acrobatics to avoid using terms and concepts which are anathema to either its extreme right wing, or, heaven forbid, in some way favoured by the Opposition. This is a pathetic way to deal with a policy which has global dimensions.

Confusion reigns and renewables get wet! The Federal Government accepted 49 of the Finkel report's 50 recommendations. The Clean Energy Target (CET), without which business-certainty is unattainable and the pragmatic Finkel approach must founder, is no more! There is no scientific justification for inaction over emissions, yet the Coalition stumbles along in its self-induced nightmare! We, in contrast, are faced with an environmental nightmare comprising climate change fanned by Australia's direct and indirect contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions.

Why was the CET a stumbling block for the Federal Government? The answer lies in the government's support for 'Adani' and the destructive Carmichael Mine in the Galilee Basin, its persistent support for oxymoronic 'clean coal', its wish to extend the life of yesteryear's coal-fuelled power station and, having discovered in the AEMO reports that there are **low** probabilities of power shortages in south-eastern Australia, its argument that these concerns supersede Finkel's report. Thank you and goodnight Dr Finkel!

National Energy Guarantee (NEG). The NEG's emphasis is on energy-security (reliability) and affordability within the broader context of meeting Australia's underwhelming commitments to the Paris Agreement. The guarantee is largely predicated on coal-fired baseload, coupled with gas and 'stabilized' renewables to handle demand-peaks. There will be **no more** subsidies for renewables under the Renewable Energy Target (RET) after 2020; apparently, renewables are too successful to continue needing help. In contrast, the diverse subsidies for coal² will remain!

Somewhat disingenuously, the NEG'S 'guarantee' necessitates reaching agreement with all states and territories about an emissions reduction target (possibly 26% on 2005 levels by 2030) and trajectory for the electricity industry. Assuming a viable agreement is forthcoming, the NEG's environmental and reliability 'guarantees' will be imposed on retailers and selected large energy users, while large coal-fired generators will be pressured to delay planned closures. The environmental and reliability 'guarantees' should ensure that retailers have a power-source spectrum comprising low-emissions sources to meet environmental commitments, rapid-response dispatchable sources (e.g., gas-powered systems and battery storage) for sudden demand-peaks, and the traditional coal-fired baseload. Nuclear power, another form of baseload, is unsurprisingly not mentioned.

Affordability, that is whether the consumer will win or lose, is in the realm of conjecture. Optimism from Frydenberg, uncertainty from Turnbull and doubts from Labor have little merit. This is because the NEG is a hastily assembled concept plan which, on currently available data, has little provision for downward pressure on pricing, will not ensure **long-term** bi-partisan acceptance, and is therefore unlikely to create business-certainty.

The NEG claims to be agnostic about energy sources. Yet it strongly prescribes coal-fired baseload whilst effectively hobbling renewables. For example, under the anticipated emissions reduction target, small-scale photovoltaic uptake could crowd-out large-scale renewable development. Only by strengthening the 2030 target within the electricity industry will there be sufficient incentive for large-scale renewable development and a likelihood of Australia's total emissions meeting the Paris commitment.

Nuclear power. Whenever 'renewables' are in the news, exponents of nuclear power generation (NPG), such as The Minerals Council of Australia, become vociferous. Yet, even disregarding the environmental risks associated with NPG, the economics of NPG do not make sense; sun and wind are cheaper than uranium! In the UK, the development cost of new wind farms is around £55 (~A\$93) per megawatt-hour, whereas the Hinkley Point Nuclear plant has a locked-in cost of £92 (~A\$155) per megawatt-hour. (continued on page 7)

**BLUE MOUNTAINS
CONSERVATION SOCIETY**
www.bluemountains.org.au

'Like' us on Facebook:
Blue Mountains Conservation Society
Follow us on Twitter: bmcnsnw

Stop Adani Clare Power

The Blue Mountains was well represented as part of a national day of action on October 7th, 2017 to stop the highly controversial Adani mine when over 350 people created a 'Stop Adani' human sign at the Katoomba Community Gardens. With the support of the Queensland and Federal Governments, the Adani group plans to build the world's biggest export coalmine in Queensland's Galilee basin. Concerns about the destructive impact of the mine have united indigenous owners, graziers, environmentalists and concerned citizens in a campaign which Bob Brown describes as this generation's Franklin river. While governments tout job gains and economic benefits if the mine goes ahead, critics of the mine detail the damage that would be caused to the Wangan and Jagalingou people's traditional lands, the destruction of local and regional ecosystems, the pollution of groundwater and the Great Barrier Reef and the contribution that the burning of the coal from the mine will make to climate change.

Recently 4 Corners screened an investigation into the Adani group titled 'Digging into Adani: The dubious dealings of India's corporate colossus'. In the course of their investigations in India, the 4 Corners team was detained for hours by police, prevented from filming and had footage destroyed. Nevertheless, they presented compelling evidence about the massive Adani group's financial and environment practices in India and the persistent 'wilful, and deliberate violations' of a company that is anticipating \$1billion in subsidies from the Australian Government as well as generous water rights and royalties concessions. The telling words of two of the interviewees on the program are deeply concerning: an Indian economist warned: *'here is a business group that will not stop at anything to maximise its profits'* and an Indian politician who is familiar with Adani advised: *"I think the Australian Government ought to do environmental due diligence, which it seems not to have done. It certainly has to do financial due diligence."*

In mid-October the Guardian and the Courier Mail announced that work on the Adani mine is imminent. At the same time, opponents of Adani are ramping up their opposition. If you are opposed to the Adani coalmine, now is the time to make sure that you are kept up to date on potential responses and actions by connecting with the Stop Adani Blue Mountains on Facebook, and/or the Stop Adani Alliance which includes organisations such as Get Up, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, 350.org and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

As one of the Queensland graziers interviewed by 4 corners expressed: *'To sit back and let someone who has such a destructive environmental record have free access to an international icon is just inconceivable, how can anyone of my generation stand up with any degree of pride and accept that, we should be ashamed.'*



Printed on Australian-made 100% Recycled Paper

Threatened Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area: Speckled Warbler *Chthonicola sagittata* John Farrell



I clearly remember the time I was holding a little male Speckled Warbler that was singing ever so sweetly as I put a small metal band on one leg and three distinguishing colour bands on the other. This was during my research project at Scheyville National Park some years ago. When my colleagues and I started looking at the data we realised that this species was slowing declining in numbers. We thought that one of the main causes was predation of their nests (which are constructed on the ground) by foxes or cats.

At that time researchers at the Australian Museum were doing some great work on nest predation using motion sensing cameras to pinpoint the culprits. So we decided to give it a go. We also wanted to recognise individuals (thus the three colour band combinations), find out who was shackled up with whom (males have black eye brows while females have a chestnut one) and delineate their territories. We used numbered tomato stakes to grid the study area – this was before reliable handheld GPS units were readily available and affordable. We could then map their territories and locate and mark the location of their nests. Anyway, after completing all this lead-up work we couldn't find our birds. They had disappeared and to my knowledge haven't returned. We were too late!

But all is not lost. Speckled Warblers, although threatened, still remain in many areas west of the Blue Mountains and have been located within both Wollemi and Yengo National Parks. They can also be seen on the southern parts of the Cumberland Plain around Picton.

Speckled Warblers frequent open woodlands where they feed on the ground so searching for them in the gullies across the mountains will yield little success. Best to try the open wide valleys like Megalong. Happy 'hunting'!

Photo of Speckled Warblers by Darryl McKay.

The energy conundrum!

(continued from page 5)

Similarly, despite all the uncertainties associated with predictions, US data suggest that the costs of solar photovoltaics and on-shore wind power compare favourably with nuclear generation, do not have very long outages when breakdowns or accidents occur, and do not encounter the intense opposition from local populations. Unsurprisingly, NPG's contribution to total power generation is predicted to steadily decline as many OECD countries adopt policies which cap it or phase it out.

Australia has at least got it right in relation to prohibiting nuclear power generation. In this context, the views of the Commonwealth Grants Commission (the independent body which carves up the GST pie) are extremely concerning. It has indicated that failing to develop a state's resources (e.g., coal-seam gas) could become a basis for reducing a state's GST reimbursement; the possibility has received endorsement by Mathias Cormann and could equally be applied to a state's ban on mining uranium.

My conclusion. Despite contrary assurances³, the government has seemingly abandoned promoting renewables and meeting Australia's international commitments. The manipulation associated with release of the NEG involves a skilfully managed stratagem, the extent of which may only become clear when/if the NEG is implemented; perhaps akin to Turnbull's version of the NBN! It is regrettable that short-term political expediency may once again trump long-term evidence-based planning, not least because, after years of nightmarish uncertainty, people and business are prepared to clutch at straws!

¹ The fully referenced article is available from <http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/articles/>

[TheEnergyConundrum.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/articles/TheEnergyConundrum.pdf)

² October Hut News pp5-6 at http://www.bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/1710_Hutnews.pdf

³ <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/path-cleared-for-release-of-turnbulls-reliable-energy-package-20171012-gyzhu4.html>

NSW Government legislates to pollute Sydney's drinking water

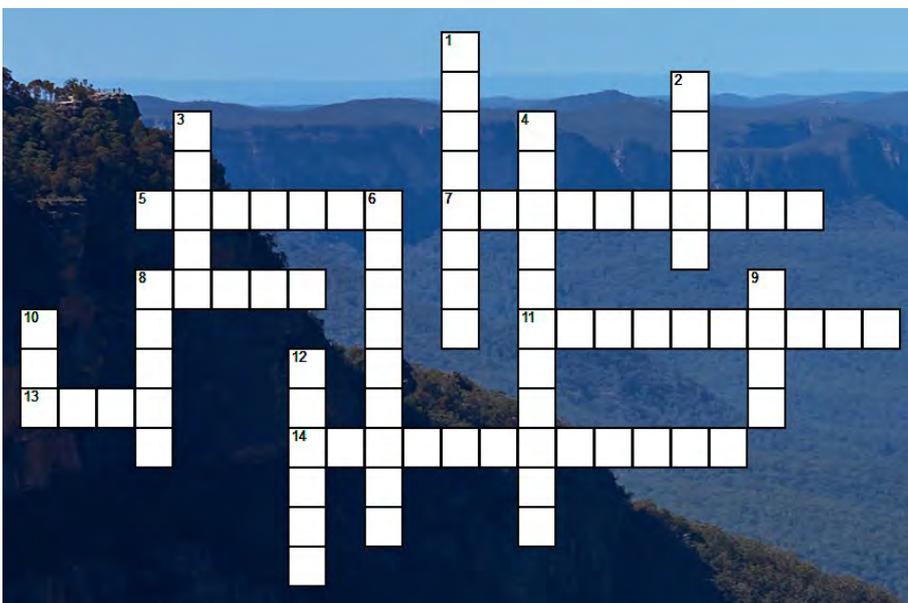
In September Hut News, Madi Maclean reported on the successful challenge by environment group 4Nature in the NSW Court of Appeal to protect Sydney's drinking water catchment from the impacts of Springvale coal mine. Centennial Coal, which operates the mine, has been sending millions of litres of highly saline, polluted water into the Cocks River which runs through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and into Lake Burragarang. The decision was celebrated as a great win for the environment.

In one fell swoop, the NSW Government has changed the rules so that the pollution can continue. Special legislation, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sydney Drinking Water Catchment) Bill* was pushed through the NSW Parliament in two days as a matter of urgency.

While we may have lost the battle, we are starting to win the war. The special legislation may have reset the baseline used for the water quality test in Sydney's vast drinking water catchment to be the same as it was before our court case, but only for extensions to existing developments. The water quality test will now be interpreted more strictly for all development. After June 2019, water from the Springvale mine will be piped and treated as cooling water for Mt Piper Power Station. If a Labor government is elected, they've promised to restore the water quality protections. Thanks to the widespread publicity, including the lead story on ABC TV News in NSW, millions of eyes are now watching the Springvale mine.

"Now's the time to protect the stunning Gardens of Stone area in a new conservation reserve," said Madi Maclean, BMCS president. "Promoting attractions on Lithgow's doorstep and developing clean energy is a critical step for transitioning a town with a declining coal industry towards a vibrant sustainable economy."

Andrew Cox, President 4Nature, thanks all those who supported 4nature with this important two-year court case and campaign: "The relentless campaigners in Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation, Lithgow Environment Group, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Lock the Gate, NPA of NSW; and especially members of our legal team at the Environmental Defenders Office.



HUT NEWS CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 5 short-legged, muscular quadrupedal marsupials
- 7 popular village in Blue Mts
- 8 a nuisance during picnics
- 11 a Katoomba peninsula
- 13 a secluded narrow valley
- 14 Meehni, Wimlah and Gunnedoo

DOWN

- 1 ground-dwelling Australian bird
- 2 these snakes are highly variable in colour
- 3 second largest carnivorous marsupial in Australia
- 4 large, conspicuous insects often found close to fresh water
- 6 native evergreen tree
- 8 plants that reproduce via spores
- 9 eusocial insects of the family Formicidae
- 10 a wetland
- 12 *Acacia pycnantha*

Crossword supplied by Louise Bennett. Answers on page 12.

Commemorating Charles Darwin in the Blue Mountains by Jim Smith

PART 1 OF 2.

Doctor T.P. Anderson Stuart, Professor of Physiology at the University of Sydney, in his 1894 Anniversary Address to the Royal Society of New South Wales, made this proposal:

“The mention of the name of Darwin leads me to commend the suggestion that some noteworthy feature in the mountains which he visited, should bear his name. I have had a talk with the Hon. P.G. King, M.L.C., a shipmate of Darwin in the *Beagle*, and who rode with him as far as Penrith, and Mr. King has promised to help in the matter. It must be some feature worthy of the name, and it is not easy to find such now. Still, perhaps, someone may make a suggestion—preferably of some place which Darwin actually visited or saw, for Port Darwin he never was near.”

The first memorial to Charles Darwin’s visit to the Blue Mountains was a tree planted at the site of the Weatherboard Inn, Wentworth Falls, on 17 January 1936 by the entomologist Walter Froggatt, President of the Naturalists’ Society of NSW. This commemorated the hundredth anniversary of Darwin’s visit to the Inn. Dr Mary Booth O.B.E., President of the Anzac Fellowship of Women, conceived the idea for this celebration. She, together with Mr Maiden, Clerk of the Blue Mountains Shire Council, located the site of the long-forgotten Inn. As well as members of the Naturalists Society, local MLA Joseph Jackson and Shire councillors, there were representatives from the Royal Australian Historical Society and the Australian Museum. The group came up on the ‘Caves Express’ and assembled under Peter Mulheran’s elm tree beside the station. As it was raining during the tree planting, the speeches were given in the School of Arts. The speakers included Mary Booth, Charles Anderson, Director of the Australian Museum, Joseph Jackson and the author Miles Franklin.

The 80-year-old non-deciduous Holm Oak tree (*Quercus illex*), which was donated by the Sydney Botanic Gardens, has thrived and can be admired by taking a short walk from behind the Wentworth Falls School of Arts. As no plaque was put on or near the tree, its association with Darwin’s visit was not obvious. This was not remedied until 2009, when two interpretive panels were provided. Unfortunately, it is not easily possible to hug the tree or have a picnic under it, as a fence was put around it to protect the archaeological remains of the Inn. The tree, sometimes called ‘Darwin’s tree’ is on the State Heritage Register (together with the archaeological site). This is the highest level of heritage protection available under state legislation.

Surprisingly, it was some 70 years after Anderson Stuart’s speech before the first place in the Blue Mountains was named after Charles Darwin. An unprepossessing street in Lapstone was named Darwin Drive in the early 1960s. This was hardly a “feature worthy of the name”. Some years later Council approved the name Darwin Avenue on the north side of Wentworth Falls.

The first plaque acknowledging Darwin’s association with the Blue Mountains was installed outside the Blue Mountains City Council meeting room, announcing that

the art display in the foyer was in the ‘Charles Darwin Gallery’. Soon afterwards, on 18 January 1986, local residents organised another plaque, beside Jamison Creek, commemorating the sesquicentenary of Darwin’s first walk along the creek. Local actor Tim Elliot dressed as Charles Darwin and delivered the words Darwin had written about the view. There were actually two ‘Charles Darwins’ at large on the day, as bushranging historian Edgar Penzig, in period clothing, led a group from Gardners Inn hotel to Govetts Leap, commemorating the walk that Darwin did on the day after his Jamison Creek trek. A room in the hotel was named the ‘Charles Darwin reception room’.

When Blue Mountains City Council completed the constructed track beside Jamison Creek in late 1986 it was officially named Darwin’s Walk, although this name had been in use for some years previously. It is also sometimes called Charles Darwin Walk. I recall that Winsome Gregory, one of the great early conservationists of our society, was adamant that it should have been called ‘Darwin’s Pathway’. It had taken over 90 years for Professor Anderson Stuart’s suggestion, that some place in the mountains “which Darwin actually visited or saw” be named after him, was adopted. Later, two interpretive signs were put at the start of the walk, in Wilson Park. One of these has an outline of Charles Darwin’s life. Unfortunately, the portrait of Darwin on this is now unrecognisable.

Some years later, when it was decided that each Blue Mountains village needed a slogan for its ‘town entry’ signs, the one adopted for Wentworth Falls was ‘Where Darwin Walked’. This has always seemed odd to me. It is not exactly an exclusive claim to fame, considering the multitude of places where he walked in his long lifetime.

Continued in December/January Hut News.

Scenic Eastern Escarpment Draft Master Plan – Public Exhibition

Blue Mountains City Council has prepared a Draft Master Plan for the Scenic Eastern Escarpment. The Plan will have great significance for public lands in the Glenbrook and Lapstone areas.

The Draft Master plan will be on public exhibition until 4 December and can be viewed at <https://www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/seemasterplan>

The public exhibition period provides an important opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Master Plan prior to its adoption by Council. The Land Use Subcommittee is coordinating our Society’s input.

BMCS Planning & 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

Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Bells Line of Road, Mount Tomah 30th Birthday

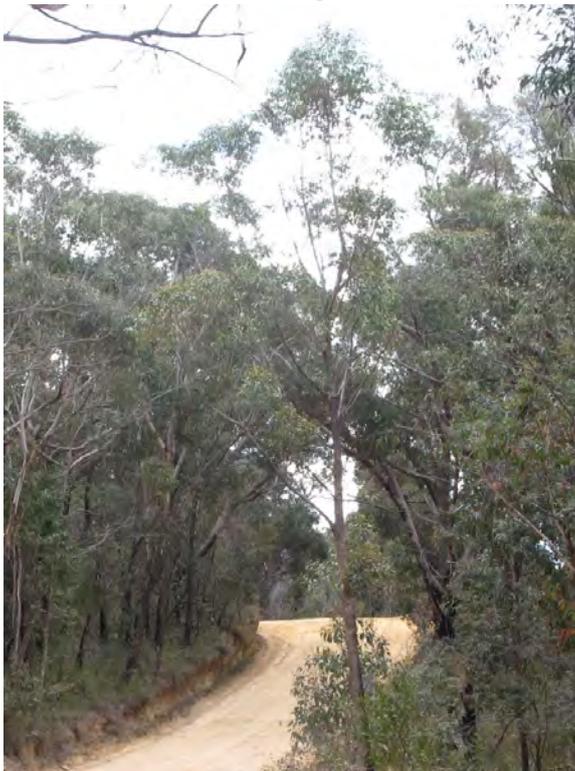
Blue Mountains Botanic Garden is celebrating its 30th birthday in November. I went there nearly 30 years ago. There were lovely old native trees. But the recent plantings were still small and the garden looked bare. I imagined that the Garden would look good in, say, 30 years, not thinking that during that time I would visit often and watch it grow to become the beautiful Botanic Garden that it is today.

There will be special events in November to celebrate the Garden's 30th birthday. These include a **Botanica & Birdlife Exhibition** featuring depictions of flora and birdlife of the Blue Mountains (Nov 1-30, 9.30am-4.30pm) and **The Garden of Earthly Delights 2-day Festival** (Nov 11 & 12, 9.30am-5.30pm). Entry is free. (More information: <https://www.bluemountainsbotanicgarden.com.au/>)

Blue Mountains Botanic Garden focuses on the conservation of cool climate plants and is home to 21,000 plants and 900 species. One species is the Wollemi Pine which does well there. One of my favourites is the bog garden with carnivorous plants which have lovely flowers in the spring. The top 100 metres of Mount Tomah consists of a layer of basalt, a volcanic rock which weathers to form a rich soil. Basalt has fine vertical cracks, called 'columnar jointing', which form when the rock cools. These joints trap rain water in a natural underground reservoir which provides a water supply for the garden. Hexagonal basalt blocks are used in walls around the garden.

Christine Davies

Giant Dump Plan (continued from page 1)



This beautiful narrow bushland drive is currently used only by residents and the occasional tourist. 30 heavy trucks each way each day could use it for more than a decade if the dump goes ahead.

A copperhead snake basking in the vicinity of the controversial disused sand quarry (Photos by Christine Davies)

Page 1 photos:
View from the rim of the old sand quarry.
(John Turner)
In October, the bushland along Sandham Road has masses of flowering Waratahs ... a sight to behold! The waratahs photographed are adjacent to the old quarry.
(Christine Davies)



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

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.

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".

Tassie Devils find sanctuary at Lithgow

Diana Levy

What kind of future should a female Tasmanian devil have after she has fulfilled her breeding duty for a conservancy? Secret Creek Sanctuary at Lithgow felt she should be shown all care and consideration in her senior years. Trevor Evans, owner of the sanctuary, took charge of precious cargo from Devil Ark several months ago, as I mentioned in my article in the July Hut News. A friend and I went to visit the 'retirees' in mid-July, and were very interested in what the Australian Ecosystems Foundation is doing for these and other endangered species.

All the animals are kept on 10 hectares within their own spaces, inside a well-engineered fence which runs into the ground. The two devils have big dens and a swimming hole to cool off in the warmer weather. Lithgow is a suitable climate for them, being 1,000 metres up and therefore somewhat Tasmanian. Although they're creatures of the night, one of them poked her nose out of her den briefly to check us out.

The Australian Ecosystems Foundation's mission is to breed endangered species at the sanctuary, including species that were common to our area before the advent of European settlement. They have been breeding quolls, both the eastern *Dasyurus viverrinus* and the spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus*. I was thrilled when I saw the spotted-tail female, sunning herself. She was pregnant. She moved slowly away from my gaze and my camera. After hearing about this quoll for 20 years, and musing on the Gurangatch and Mirragan songline of the Gundungurra nation, this is only the second quoll I've seen. *Dasyurus maculatus* is rare in the mountains.

On our first visit, Trevor talked about the little floor-dwelling mammals that are 'forest engineers', including bandicoots and bettongs. He said that bettongs were once numerous in our area. A species of bettong is bred at Secret Creek and also at Mulligan's Flat in the ACT, following a very similar model. They have had remarkable success there by first building a fence, clearing the grassy woodland of exotic pests such as foxes, cats, rabbits and hares, and then introducing bettongs (miniature kangaroos).

Trevor showed us another ground-dwelling species, the bush stone curlew, inside a large aviary. It is a night bird and eats insects. Grassy box woodland is its habitat.

The Australian Ecosystems Foundation is not-for-profit and relies upon input by volunteers. It was founded by Trevor, who is currently its secretary. Briefly, the sanctuary also performs other functions such as hosting scientists. They're building accommodation for researchers which is a miracle of recycling, reflecting the values of "conserve".

We returned to the sanctuary in mid-August, and all the quolls had pouch young. Over lunch at the vegan café there, Trevor said, "We are about educating people about what they're missing out on because of foxes and cats". The leek soup that my friend ordered was magnificent, my tea was great, and the bill was modest. This place is looking to the future in more ways than one. Lithgow has more to offer than coal-based industries. Here is one example of a local leading the way.

Find out more about the Secret Creek Sanctuary at <http://www.secretcreeksanctuary.com.au/>

Wilderness artist Robyn Collier at The Hub, Springwood, 2pm, Sunday 19 November.

Robin will share her love and experiences of the awe-inspiring Burratorang Valley and after a pictorial presentation will sign purchased copies of her newly released book – 'Paintings from Burratorang the Lost Valley'. Presented by The Turning Page Book Shop.



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.



44. RUSTIC CHARM, Richlands District

When you travel along the western fringe of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, the interaction between natural environments and traditional European-style agriculture is frequently visible. The romanticised vision we have of the family farming lifestyle fits well with the highly beneficial ideas and energy that members of farming communities have contributed to ecological sustainability.

These images, captured near the south-western section of Blue Mountains National Park, feature elements of country life many have idealised. There are windbreaks, old gates, tasteful exotic ornamental plantings and, of course, a faithful Border Collie. In the last picture, taken on a different land holding from the remainder, worrying elements like gully erosion and the spread of weeds are also rearing their heads.

Pictured are BMCS member Marilyn Kraus and a friendly local resident. Photographs by Christine Davies.



VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

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.

Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

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. You can buy a map on the society's website at

www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

Society Bushwalks on facebook:
Visit <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>

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)

- Nov 11 **Berghofers Pass and Lockyers Track circuit.** Leader: Harold 0409010737. Map Hartley. Walkers should contact leader to book in and for more details.
- Nov 18 **Urella Lookdown.** Leader: Bob 0408947325. For further details and to book in contact leader.
- Nov 25 **Lions Head.** Leader: Harold 0409010737. For Further details and to book in contact leader.
- Dec 2 **Darks Cave and Fortress Ridge.** Leader: Eddie 47842691. To book in and for all the details contact leader.
- Dec 9 **Vera and Hippocrene Falls.** Leader: Mike 47573660. Map Katoomba. Walkers should contact leader to book in and for more details.
- Dec 16 **Walford Wall.** Leader: Bob – 0408947325. For further details and to book in contact leader.

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

- Nov 13 **The Three Brothers, Medlow Bath.** Approx 6km. Meet Medlow Bath Station, south side, 8.30 am. Eddy Roberts 4784 2691. Grade 3.
- Nov 20 **Popes Glen to Evans Lookout, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.40 am. Car pool. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 3.
- Nov 27 **Terrace Falls, Hazelbrook.** Streams, forests and waterfalls. Some steep rough sections, steps and four creek crossings. Approx 6 km. Meet Hazelbrook Station car park, south side, next to vet clinic, 8.45 am. Car pool to start. Susan Jalaluddin 0450 358 579. Grade 3.
- Dec 12 **Empire Pass, Lawson.** Walk to Frederica Falls and then along creek to Dantes Glen, Fairy Falls, Echo Buff and return to Lawson Station. Meet Lawson Bowling Club car park 8.40am. Lyn Bevington 0432 352 850. Grade 3.
- Dec 11 **Katoomba to Wentworth Falls via Scenic Lookouts.** Starts Kat. Station then via Kingsford Smith Pk, Apprenticeship Bridge, Leura Pk, Prince Henry Cliff Walk, Golf Links Lookout, Fairmount Resort, Lilian's Bridge, Edinburgh Castle Rock, Conservation Hut, Darwin's Walk and W'Falls Village. Long day, some steep sections and steps. 12 Km. Meet Katoomba Station commuter car park 8.30 am. Car shuttle fee \$5. Bob Taylor 4784 1060, 0468 398 810. Grade 3.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella12@bigpond.com

- Nov 9 **La Perouse Walk.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Coastal Walk with chance of swim. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Nov 16 **Mount Wilson Walk.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2
- Nov 23 **Rushcutters Bay, Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo.** Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Rose 9420 2103. Take lunch. Grade 1
- Nov 30 **Bus trip to Oatley Park.** Book and pay Tracy \$12 0434 362 611. Meet Springwood Car Park behind Westpac Bank 8.15am. Leaders Alan and Jeanette 0414 956 060. Take lunch. Grade 2. Chance of a swim at completion of the walk.
- Dec 7 **Warragamba River. Steep 2kms return.** Meet Eastern Commuter Car Park Glenbrook Station 9.20am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Grade 2/3
- Dec 14 **Christmas Party in Doreen's Studio.** Ring Doreen on 6355 2371 for details. Please bring either a salad or dessert, whatever you wish to drink and a wrapped gift to the value of \$10 for Naughty Santa. Phone Beverley on 4757 2076 if you need a lift from Mount Victoria Station.

Welcome to new members

Mark Hocking
Margaret Buchanan
Margaret Sky
Rhona Rhodes
Margery Smith
Wendi Timms

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 5 wombats, 7 Blackheath, 8 flies,
11 Narrowneck, 13 glen, 14 Three Sisters
DOWN: 1 lyrebird, 2 tiger, 3 quoll,
4 dragonflies, 6 Sassafras, 8 ferns, 9 ants,
10 bog, 12 wattle

North Katoomba wins Local Government Award for restoring the Minnehaha Falls pool

This year at the annual NSW Local Government Awards, the Blue Mountains Council and the local North Katoomba community was recognised for its outstanding work over many years for the project to return the "Bottomless Pool" at the base of Minnehaha Falls in Yosemite Creek, North Katoomba which had filled with sediment.

Key to the success of the project has been the long term involvement of a number of Bushcare and Landcare groups in the broader Katoomba and Minnehaha Falls Creek. The work of the Minnehaha Falls Bushcare Group needs special mention for its unfailing commitment and the positive results it has been able to achieve in significantly improving the health of the bushland and aquatic habitat of this stream.