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## Destination Pagoda wins support

*"In the race of life, always back self-interest — at least you know it's trying."* (Jack Lang)

The tourism value of the Gardens of Stone region lies in its scenic pagoda landscapes of stone pinnacles, slot canyons, waterfalls and extensive cliff lines, associated with highly diverse plateau and tableland forests, rare plants, nationally endangered swamps and windblown sand dunes from the last ice age. These significant natural features make up a complex and stimulating natural wonderland just two hours from Sydney that can become readily accessible by conventional vehicle.



In April 2019 the Gardens of Stone Alliance, comprising Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation and Lithgow Environment Group, launched their *Destination Pagoda* visitor plan that details the economic and community benefits that a new Gardens of Stone reserve will bring to the Lithgow region. Crucial to the proposal is declaration of a State Conservation Area over lands between the existing national park and the Lithgow urban area.

Co-authored by Ian Brown and Beth Dudley-Bestow, *Destination Pagoda* was launched to a full house at the Lithgow Workers Club, followed by successful launches in Katoomba and Sydney. Over the next ten years, it's estimated the plan will generate an economic benefit to Lithgow of over \$10 million per year and more than 100 jobs. *Destination Pagoda* has already won support in Lithgow and will clearly benefit the local community. On April 7, Communications Manager for Centennial Coal, Katie Brassil, was quoted in the Sun Herald saying that the *Destination Pagoda* initiative "is something we can support" and "we believe it is a vision we can share". Centennial Coal has the largest coal mining operations in the Lithgow area. Reservation of the Gardens of Stone forests will complete Myles Dunphy's visionary 1932 Blue Mountains National Park scheme. *Destination Pagoda* will create appropriate visitor opportunities by upgrading existing road access to a select number of pagoda vantage points and sights close to Lithgow.

Henry Gold OAM, the Colong Foundation's honorary photographer says, "Katoomba has just Three Sisters, while Lithgow has 3,000 pagodas". Madi Maclean of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society says: "The plan is a win-win-win for workers, community and the environment! And when diverse groups come together to find a common vision, history happens."

The pulling power of the pagodas' iconic beauty will grow tourism in Lithgow. Most visitors who come to enjoy the pagodas will be satisfied with the grand vistas seen from quality vantage points less than ten minutes from Lithgow town centre.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)



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

**18 MAY 2019**

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## **Destination Pagoda wins support** (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

They will then return to Lithgow and spend time and money in facilities there. This type of visitation is the 'bread and butter' of Katoomba's tourism economy, and Lithgow, with its internationally significant pagodas, can certainly have it too! Visitors to Lithgow's pagodas are more likely to stay a night, and then visit other sights in the region, like those in Capertee Valley, before returning home via the Bells Line of Road.

Dr Richard Stiles, President of Lithgow Environment Group, considers that: "Diversity is the key to a healthy regional economy and with *Destination Pagoda*, the Gardens of Stone is now ready to play its part.

Many of the roads in the Gardens of Stone are in a ruinous state. *Destination Pagoda* proposes that key roads be upgraded for use by conventional vehicles. The reservation of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area will help future-proof Lithgow. It will help Lithgow become a town that respects people, culture and country, in line with the vision of traditional owners.

Wiradjuri Elder, Auntie Helen Riley, on behalf of Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation, said: "The respect for the land is paramount to ensure not only the protection of the environment but equally Aboriginal culture. Look after the land and the rivers and the land and the rivers will look after you."

The State Conservation Area will contribute to Lithgow's lifestyle attractions and encourage new residents. It will allow both coal mining and protection of significant heritage values. It will also help de-escalate political conflict over the future of the area.

Business, unions and political parties agree that a revival plan is needed for Lithgow. The coal reserves are being worked out, climate change

policy will take effect and robotics are being applied to mining technology. While these factors will reduce employment in the coal industry, coal is part of the community, culture and the Gardens of Stone story.

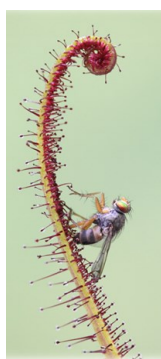
The area is already a magnet that attracts jaded city dwellers. Through *Destination Pagoda*, Lithgow can become a mecca for family recreation for those who wish to experience a bit of real Blue Mountains bushland but are reluctant to step far from their cars. These new visitor opportunities are also Lithgow's opportunity for a more sustainable future.

Images:

On page 2: Ian Brown, co author of *Destination Pagoda* and Madi Maclean, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, answering questions at recent Katoomba launch (Photo by Alan Page); Pagoda Daisies (Photo by Andrew Valja)

*Below:* Pagoda country. These pagodas are in Gardens of Stone National Park (Photo by Christine Davies)

Text provided by Keith Muir, adapted by Don Morison.



### **Upcoming event: PLANTS WITH A BITE Saturday 18 May 2019**

Come and join Australian Plants Society NSW's next Gathering on 18 May 2019 at Blaxland Community Hall, 33 Hope St, Blaxland, from 1 to 3pm.

Featuring Greg Bourke, Curator Manager of The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah, as he shares about carnivorous plants. The AGM will be held from

12.30 to 1pm.

Visitors are welcome. To help with logistics and catering, please register (you can find more information at the link at <https://aps.wildapricot.org> and pay at the door (members \$5, visitors \$10).

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION  
SOCIETY [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)**

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### **2019 Federal Election**

On the 18th May the people of Australia will elect their next federal government.

The outcome of the election will have repercussions locally, nationally and globally as it concerns action on climate change, environment laws and the status of our world heritage national parks. An election is your best opportunity to have a real say about these vital areas.

The Society's 2019 Federal Election webpages have been prepared to provide details of all candidates in the Macquarie Electorate.

The Federal Electorate of Macquarie basically consists of the state electorates of Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury plus Glenbrook and Lapstone. If you live in either the Blue Mountains City Council or Hawkesbury City Council then you are in the Electorate of Macquarie.

We have also asked each candidate a straight forward question. Profiles of the candidates and their response to our question can be found at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/elections/fe19/>

## Climate Emergency: Time to get radical before it's too late Clare Power

The Australian Conservation Foundation claims that the 2019 federal election is a turning point. Our next government must make a plan to stop burning coal and switch to clean energy. Climate damage stops with us, here, now- <https://www.acf.org.au/election>

Ongoing pressure on politicians is a critical element in climate action and there are many actions being taken by a plethora of groups in the lead up to the federal election.

For example, Get Up's 2019 campaign titled 'Driving Change for the Better' is focussing on the seats of hard right politicians who have been blocking action on climate change. One of their aims, harnessing the energy of a mass of volunteers, is to make one million phone calls into target electorates with the purpose of engaging in personal, values-based, conversations with voters.

Phone calling parties are being held regularly across the Blue Mountains in the lead up to the election - <https://www.getup.org.au/#how-we-win>

Extinction Rebellion is a relatively recent global movement that has arisen in recognition that we are facing a climate emergency and have a window of 12 years at the outside to make deep, radical significant change. <https://ausrebellion.earth/about/> The week of April 15 was dubbed Rebellion Week and perhaps by the time May Hut New is published some of their actions in Australia focussing on coal mining and exports will have occurred and been publicised. I recently met Lily Callanan, 19, who has just moved to the Blue Mountains from Brisbane where she participated in some Extinction Rebellion meetings and actions. She said one of their actions had been to hand out leaflets at the ABC studios in Brisbane demanding the ABC take greater leadership and responsibility in regular climate change reporting. This is a less radical action than many that they may undertake which will involve non violent civil disobedience and a willingness to be arrested.

Lily also mentioned another active group called Grey Power Climate Protectors who have the tagline Older Bolder, Unstoppable. They state their mission to be *'inspiring and training older Australians to take BOLD and creative nonviolent action to help change the politics of climate change for good ... We'll organise #GreyPower blocs at the school strikes and bring the kids/grandkids with us. Politicians in marginal electorates will feel our presence day after day after day. Our mission is to use our power to protect the climate now and for future generations and our #GreyPower uprising will demand the real change needed to address the climate emergency. We are political but nonpartisan. We will target the political parties with the worst climate change policies the most, but will still push other parties to do better. We do not support or promote any political party.'* <http://www.climateprotectors.earth/greypower/climate-emergency-challenge/>

Another approach being taken is by Darebin Climate Action Now who have published a comprehensive action oriented handbook 'Don't mention the emergency' - <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/DontMentionTheEmergency2018.pdf>

Long time political activist and founder of 350.org, Bill McKibben, wrote a piece for The Guardian (10<sup>th</sup> April, 2019) titled 'Glaciers and Arctic ice are vanishing: Time

to get radical before it's too late'. Discussing two recent studies into the exponential melting of glaciers world wide and Arctic Ice and the frightening consequences of this, McKibben states: "no one should be shocked when Extinction Rebellion activists engage in mass civil disobedience. No one should be annoyed when school kids start leaving class en masse ... The respectable have punted; so now it's up to the scruffy, the young, the marginal, the angry to do the necessary work. Their discipline and good humor and profound nonviolence are remarkable, from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to Greta Thunberg. They are what's left of our fighting chance. ... In fact we should be deeply grateful: these activists, and the scientists producing these reports, are the only people on the planet who seem to understand the scale of the problem".

Due to the heroic commitment of Greta Thunberg the school climate strikes have become a global phenomenon. If you haven't listened to her profoundly eloquent TED talk yet, then I encourage you to put aside 11 minutes to do so [https://www.ted.com/talks/greta\\_thunberg\\_the\\_disarming\\_case\\_to\\_act\\_right\\_now\\_on\\_climate?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate?language=en)

### 'Flying Shame'

The Flying Shame movement emerged in Sweden and is spreading. Its aim is to increase awareness and hopefully reduce the carbon emissions that result from plane travel.

Most of us are aware of the polluting effects of mining and campaigns against companies such as Adani are well supported by environmentalists. However while we march, contribute money and sign petitions against these high profile polluters many of us blithely hop on planes to an ever growing number of exotic destinations to fulfil that Hollywood manufactured dream of the 'bucket list'.

And when we do that we are contributing to one of the fastest growing sources of carbon emissions globally.

Air travel accounts for about 5% of the world's total carbon emissions. According to the International Air Transport Association, aeroplane passenger numbers are expected to double in the next two decades.

Scientists have warned that to keep within the two degree global warming threshold each person has an average carbon allowance of about two tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. But a Melbourne to London flight creates carbon emissions of 16.8 tonnes per person.

The average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per air kilometre is 285 grams per person compared with 185 grams for cars and 14 grams for trains. So ticking off that bucket list and flying carelessly is a very costly exercise for the environment. The fact that Australia is a nation built on migration makes it difficult for Australians to choose not to fly.

The sensible advice is to cut back on flying. Perhaps try to go at least a year without flying and, where possible, travel by train.

Cathy Cavanagh

References: <https://jamescnorman.com> [www.france24.com](http://www.france24.com)

Worth a read: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/jan/26/why-i-only-take-one-holiday-flight-a-year-climate-change>

## HELICOPTERS and KATOOMBA AIRFIELD—HAVE YOUR SAY!

Katoomba airfield is a small parcel of Crown Land located near the end of Grand Canyon Road, Medlow Bath, totally surrounded by the national park, and adjacent to the Grand Canyon bushwalk. See map on page 1.

Since the previous article on this issue (Hut News, October 2018) an application for a long term commercial lease of the airfield site by 'direct negotiation' was received by Crown Lands.

We still have no specific details of this proposal. We do know it involves upgrading the airfield for use as a helipad for tourist helicopter flights. Whatever 'routes' these aircraft fly, they will be landing and taking off in the middle of the national park.

**With increasing pressures placed on our bushland and wilderness, the protection of public land, rather than its commercialisation, is more important than ever.**

In the US national parks such as Yosemite and the Grand Canyon, there is now legislation to protect the "natural quiet and experience of the park". But, in our part of the world, frequent helicopter overflights occur in the Bungle Bungles in WA and around the Twelve Apostles along the Great Ocean Road. The airspace over our World Heritage Areas should also be regulated!

**What about the impacts on wildlife?** The US National Parks Service says: "Wildlife rely on natural sounds for survival. When noise covers up natural sounds, the entire natural area shows the affects. Animals use their hearing to detect predators and prey as well as to find mates."

Here in the Blue Mountains the annual migration of over 200,000 Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, and other species, is likely to be affected. This honeyeater migration is a world-recognised phenomenon of great significance. See link below for details of the 2018 count which indicates the negative impact of helicopters on migrating flocks.

**Emergency airfield:** The airfield has had significant use by emergency services over the years and this could continue if it is managed by the NPWS, as it does in other national parks in NSW. Under commercial leases, compensation for lost income can be claimed by the lessee for each day the airfield is used by an emergency service agency.

**HAVE YOUR SAY! We ask you to join our campaign to support the incorporation of Katoomba airfield into the Blue Mountains National Park, to be managed solely as an emergency airfield.**

As awareness of the potential impact of this proposed commercial helicopter operation grows, so does the call for the inclusion of this Crown Land in the National Park estate. Community groups have formed since February 2019 in Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Katoomba. These groups are collecting signatures to take a petition to the floor of the NSW Parliament. Details of where you can sign the petition and keep up to date on their activity can be found at [www.ourblueys.org](http://www.ourblueys.org). The Society is also busy writing letters to the relevant government agencies and



politicians and contacting environment and bushwalking groups. See our website for letters and responses.

**Community consultation is expected to take place in May and June.**

We are concerned that the Department of Industry's 'community engagement' process may attempt to limit discussion around the specific commercial plans of a developer with no consideration of the option to return it to the National Park. The community has a right to have a say on the future use of OUR public land.

By the time you receive this Hut News, the "consultation" may have started. If you would like to participate, we urge you to do so by emailing or ringing and ask to be included. Contact: Mr Mark Maloney, Crown Property Services, NSW Department of Industry-Crown Lands & Water ([mark.maloney@crownland.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mark.maloney@crownland.nsw.gov.au) or phone 9842 8346)

We also ask you to write to the two relevant State Ministers at GPO Box 5341, Sydney NSW 2001: **The Hon Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing**, and **The Hon. Matt Kean MP, Minister for Energy and Environment**,

or you can email our local member, **Trish Doyle MP** ([bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au)) and ask her to forward it to both these ministers

We suggest you make these points:

- **Object** to any plan to lease Katoomba airfield for commercial purposes
- **Ask** that the process of issuing a lease be stopped immediately
- **Ask** that you be considered a key stakeholder in the upcoming community consultation
- **Ask** that the consultation considers the option of incorporating the airfield into the surrounding national park

*Katoomba Airfield Subcommittee*

More information: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/hutnews/hutnews-1905-helicopters-in-national-parks.pdf>

## STOP ADANI CONVOY IN SYDNEY



Members of the Society were at Parramatta on 20<sup>th</sup> April to welcome the Stop Adani convoy, on its way from Hobart and Melbourne to protest at the Adani coal mine site in Queensland.

Anne A (a member of our TING group) wrote:

*It was a good, if sombre, rally today ... 700 plus gathered to welcome the Bob Brown Foundation convoy to Sydney and to herald their important, iconic and peaceful protest against the Adani coal mine. In attendance were a number of famous people, media and politicians.*

*Bob Brown, Adrian Burragugga (Galilee Basin traditional landowner), Doctors against Adani and others gave eloquent and impassioned speeches. Unfortunately the future looks bleak for all of us on this planet if the greedy, dangerous and selfish among us do not heed our increasingly urgent calls for restraint and critical life-changing self-regulation.*

*After the speeches we farewelled the 80 vehicle strong convoy on its journey north to the mine site, next stop Coffs Harbour. Leading the convoy there was a good representation of electric cars, with Bob Brown in the lead car and members of the Tesla car owners' club.*

*On a lighter note you might recognise a fellow TING member and elder taking her protesting duties seriously. I myself, happily volunteering as an "assistant choreographer" (this role involved distributing props, various signs and corflutes amongst the crowd), thought that Rosemary, along with her fellow compatriots, did a sterling job holding that sign up for an hour and a half.*

*Rosemary said: I haven't heard Bob Brown speak before in person and I found it very moving. Listening to him speak made me want to join the rally and go with them to confront the set up in Queensland. Adrian Burragubba was very passionate about the damage the mining would do to the water supply of that part of Queensland. For me, to make the effort to go to the rally was really worthwhile and rewarding.*



Photos:

Top: Bob Brown speaking at rally

Left: Rosemary (right) and other enthusiastic supporters stand up for the environment

## Wild Life in Blackheath

During a recent walk around the township of Mount Victoria, all other sounds were drowned out by the constant calls of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. It was only when they paused briefly that I realised that, even in the park beside the highway, we had not even heard the trucks—not something I often complain about.

These cockatoos are also in Blackheath. They arrived on this side of the ridge sometime in the last 15 years and are my least favourite parrot. The others I love.

I find the call of the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo a delight. They sometimes come to the garden and chew on the banksia cones.

The King Parrots come in the summer when the wattle seeds (*Acacia longfolia*) are on the bush but are still soft. They pick a seed pod and hold it while they chew along its length then drop it.

Crimson Rosellas seem to be around all the time. They feed on various seeds and they bite the Correa flowers off the bush and chew the tops of them. At present there are many young (green) rosellas who have yet to gain their adult plumage.

I sometimes see a pair of Galahs in the Eucalypt—always together.

We once saw Gang Gangs more often but now they are a rare sight. In late April we were thrilled to hear them in the bush near the old airfield (now a dog off-leash area) in Hat Hill Road. We eventually saw a group of five—one of them a youngster being fed by its parent and at least one colourful male. That really made my day!

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 WELCOME  
Phone Karen 4757 1929

Blue Mountains' volunteer bushcarers, professional bush regenerators, land managers and conservationists will be interested and pleased to know that on March 1, 2019, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the *UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration*.

"We are pleased that our vision for a dedicated decade has become reality," said Lina Pohl, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, a regional restoration leader. "We need to promote an aggressive restoration program that builds resilience, reduces vulnerability and increases the ability of systems to adapt to daily threats and extreme events."

Restoration of 350 million hectares of degraded land on the planet between now and 2030 could generate USD 9 trillion in ecosystem services and take an additional 13-26 gigatons of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.

*Ecological restoration* is an established method of restoring degraded ecosystems, such as swamps, woodlands or stream areas. Natural regeneration, rewilding, reforestation and intensive management of introduced flora and fauna species may play a role in the planned restoration process.

Blue Mountains' volunteer bushcare activities share many of the attributes and techniques of ecological restoration: positive valuing of natural ecosystems, use

of natural regeneration, planting local flora and removing weeds. The main difference between the two activities is that ecological restoration always embodies an intention to achieve restoration of full ecological function on a site at some time in the future; this may or may not be possible on the various bushcare sites in the Blue Mountains.

Bushcare is certainly one of many effective ways to combat global warming. Restored native fauna habitats provide more local species with a chance to adapt to changing global conditions. Healthy bushland stores carbon, promotes diversity and sustainable ecological communities, and protects riparian areas and other valuable water resources. Most of all, bushcare activities and sites are often located on the fringes of mountain villages and so buffer and shield the complex ecosystems located within the World Heritage Area from weeds, habitat destruction, sediment flows and erosion, allowing them an opportunity to adapt to climate change at their own pace. Great work!

References and further reading:

[www.seraustralasia.com](http://www.seraustralasia.com);  
<https://theconversation.com/how-we-can-help-nature-adapt-to-climate-change-54241> ;  
<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/new-un-decade-ecosystem-restoration-offers-unparalleled-opportunity>

## Going batty and having fun

The night had arrived, the volunteers, alongside Marg and her husband, held our breaths as the storm overhead sent lightning and thunder and rain pouring down on our time for setting up. It was intense but did not last long so when it had passed we started the work of setting up for Bat Night.

With many hands the work was made easy and fun. We put up a marquee to turn into the bat cave, another marquee for the sugar gliders to be seen. We had tables for activities set up while the RFS fired up the bbq for what was to be the first time that bat night was being held at the Cultural Centre in Katoomba.

The Conservation Society was co-hosting the event so we were set up for everyone to see us as they entered the centre; we were also able to guide all the little bat enthusiasts and their parents to what they were able to do and see.

There were sugar gliders on display, bat tattoos were very popular. There were T-shirts and badge making. A puppet show was a highlight. The volunteers had turned a marquee into a cave with lots of things to do in the dark, with only a touch of torch light. Along with the face painting I think the next most popular activity was the wonderful food from the RFS bbq. My highlight was the cupcakes with bats on the top.

Katoomba library was wonderful and stayed open for the event with a treasure hunt and things to do in the not so quiet library.

## Phoebe Coster, (former) Events Coordinator

When the doors opened at 6pm there was a constant flow of traffic by young people and grownups, with 100's of people filing through the event all night till about 8pm. There were many wonderful outfits worn by people and it was a delight to see them getting into the theme of the night.

The event was a big success, with many laughs and fun had by all. The volunteers were all exhausted by the end of the night, but we are all looking forward to helping Marg Turton with the next Bat Night in 2020. See you all next year.

Photo: In the Bat Cave (Phoebe Coster)



## Cleaner Greener Airport?

During the current period of state and federal elections coming and going I have had a lot of conversations with politicians and their staffers about Western Sydney airport. In one recent meeting with Susan Templeman, I was able to re-state our position:

**The airport is not acceptable, no arrangement of flight paths will ever be satisfactory, and construction can and should stop immediately.** We believe that building air-pollution-belching infrastructure today is madness, and that east coast high speed rail is a far better major infrastructure project for Australia, which would achieve similar objectives:

- Increased employment in Western Sydney
- Easing congestion at Kingsford Smith Airport
- Reduce rather than increase air pollution

We then discussed how to make the proposed airport less damaging to the environment and more bearable for the people of Western Sydney.

Our first ask is, of course, a curfew so that flights over homes and national parks are not operating 24 hours per day.

We also discussed:

- Rail access for passengers and freight from day one of operation
- Fuel pipeline for delivery of millions of litres of jet fuel from day one (not thousands of trucks!)
- Mass plantings of endemic native plants at the site, on areas not used for aviation, to restore habitat
- Use of electric vehicles (buses, cargo handling, aircraft tugs) at the site to minimise air pollution
- Purchase of 100% renewable electricity for all airport operations
- Flight paths should be designed to avoid:
  - ◆ Schools during school hours
  - ◆ Homes at night
  - ◆ Hospitals and nursing homes at all times
  - ◆ Wilderness areas at all times
  - ◆ Tourism sites at all times

We discussed, in some detail, air pollution from the proposed airport and associated traffic, including PM2.5, PM10 and ozone, all incredibly dangerous to human and animal health.

In a follow-up letter I also raised the idea of offsetting all fuel used at WSA. Jet fuel produces 3.15kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e per litre burned in a plane engine, WSA will be using a billion litres per annum in 2030, resulting in 3.15 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030, rising eight times to 2063.

**Offsetting 3.15 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e will cost \$47 million per annum, require the planting of 3.15 million trees on over 1,200 hectares of degraded land, each and every year, rising eight times to 2063.**

It is my belief that the major obstacles to stopping the airport are political, in particular:

- The current Federal Government has been wedded to this crazy project ever since Tony Abbott announced it
- The current Federal Opposition is also in favour of the project
- Anthony Albanese, as a possible future Federal Infrastructure Minister, will likely push hard for the project

to be completed, as his electorate is badly affected by aircraft noise and pollution from Kingsford Smith Airport

- The Greens, despite opposing the project, are not interested in actively campaigning against it, nor in making 'No Western Sydney Airport' a condition of any future co-operation with an incoming Labor Government
- The voters of Western Sydney are completely oblivious to the impacts that they will feel (and hear and breathe) in 2026 and beyond, and have failed to 'rise up' in opposition to the proposed airport

Ross Coster

Convenor – No Western Sydney Airport Sub-Committee  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

[nwsa@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:nwsa@bluemountains.org.au)

## RAIN IN THE MOUNTAINS

The valley's full of misty cloud,  
Its tinted beauty drowning.  
The Eucalypti roar aloud,  
The mountain fronts are frowning.

The mist is hanging like a pall  
From many granite ledges,  
And many a little waterfall  
Starts o'er the valley's edges.

The sky is of a leader grey,  
Save where the north is surly,  
The driven daylight speeds away,  
And night comes o'er us early.

But, love, the rain will pass full soon,  
Far sooner than my sorrow,  
And in a golden afternoon  
The sun may set tomorrow.

Henry Lawson, 1889

This poem is evocative of the granite tors around Hartley Historic Village, a few kilometres from the burial place in Hartley Vale cemetery of Henry's father, Nils Hertzberg (Peter) Larsen.

## 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**, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm

**Magpie Market**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

[nursery@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:nursery@bluemountains.org.au)

Students' global strike targets climate (SBS) 'Outrage is justified' David Attenborough backs school climate strikes (The Guardian) Blue Mountains high school students strike for climate in Sydney (Blue Mountains Gazette) Minister lashes student climate strikes (Newcastle Herald) **ADELAIDE SCHOOL STRIKE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE (THE ADVERTISER)** School strikers won't be bullied (Green Left Weekly) *Generational conflict comes to a polling place near you (SMH)* NSW TEACHERS ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO SKIP SCHOOL (DAILY TELEGRAPH): CLIMATE CHANGE STRIKES ACROSS AUSTRALIA SEE STUDENT PROTESTERS DEFY CALLS TO STAY IN SCHOOL (ABC NEWS)

## SCHOOL – IT WORKS WELL IN NATIONS THAT RESPECT THE EDUCATED

Don Morison

Quite some years ago, I was teaching in a high school near Penrith. During a free period doing preparation in my staff room, I noticed that a young teacher in the classroom next door was having to give multiple time-outs to a girl she found obstreperous. I interrupted the third or fourth altercation in the corridor to point out that a private study desk had been set up outside the staffroom door which was kept open and I was available to ensure the student's safety if she preferred to study privately till the end of period bell.

Since I was now nominally supervising this pupil, I listened to the further comments she wished to make. I had in mind that I was a temporary teacher, being paid at the school executive's pleasure. The young girl in question was articulate and I summarised her argument: because she was below school leaving age, the principal, head teachers, other teachers,

prefects and her fellow school-goers were imposing an environment where she could do nothing worthwhile. At the time, I thought I was presenting a version of everyone being out of step except her on behalf of my bosses but the girl quickly agreed that I'd summed up how she felt.

Greta Thunberg, a Swedish schoolgirl who has become internationally famous for inspiring school strikes for action on climate change, is about the same age as the girl outside my staffroom was when I spoke to her.

The role of school students in the climate change debate has been politically and socially divisive in Australia. But the most telling comments made have been in response to reactionary demands that the young people stay inside their schools and prepare themselves to be responsible citizens.

What is the role of school in nations where the contributions of educated people are constantly attacked? Whether the topic is climate change, electric cars or feral animals like brumbies in natural areas, the opinions of the scientifically qualified are repeatedly being howled down by some elected politicians and large sections of the media.

School teachers should be more than just baby sitters. I could not honestly speak to a school student now and dispute that many of those currently in charge of our education system are deliberately wasting young people's time. We do have enough of a free press for us to know that opinions on a wide range of political questions vary sharply according to the age of the voter.

School as an institution won't work in our nation if the most rampantly anti-intellectual politicians and commentators keep telling the young to stay in their schools, not discuss inappropriate topics and behave themselves. What a difference it can make to a school-goer – and to the future of all species – if some of the school-goers' peers and teachers are permitted to join together in practical action to protect the environment.

## 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](http://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](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

## A Talk by the Bushexplorers: Michael Keats OAM, Brian Fox & Yuri Bolotin

Stories of adventures in the bush, how to access exciting walks that are off the beaten track and the fascinating human and natural history of the Wollemi and Newnes

**Saturday 25 May, 2 pm**  
**Katoomba Library**

A free talk, bookings essential, call or visit any Library branch or book online at [library.bmcc.nsw.gov.au](http://library.bmcc.nsw.gov.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.



## Bright adventure spotlights high country land management:

Christine Davies and Don Morison

Eleven “TINGers” gathered at Bright, Victoria, in February. Our accommodation was in cabins at the Bright Holiday Park.

An early start next morning and a steady climb (by car) took us to near the top of Mount Buffalo, in Mount Buffalo National Park, with several stops and short walks along the way to admire beautiful wildflowers, magnificent granite tors and extensive swamps. Seven people continued the journey to the top on foot.

“Mount Buffalo has sheer cliffs, imposing granite tors, tumbling waterfalls, snow gums and stunning wildflowers. The park features over 90km of walking tracks, panoramic scenery, waterfalls. In summer, wildflowers are plentiful and the park is a cool retreat from the heat of the lowlands. In winter the park is ideal for cross-country skiing.” (Parks Victoria)

It was inspiring to visit a mountain environment where sensible restrictions had been placed on hard hooved animals. Now that horses and goats are causing trouble in the Greater Blue Mountains, we are at a crossroads of decision-making for New South Wales. In the NSW alpine regions, the issues of starving brumbies attacking campers near Kosciuszko and fouling the Canberra water supply call for urgent action.

At Bright we were a few weeks too early for the autumn colours and the crowds who flock to see them. It is a pretty town with magnificent avenues of trees. The old railway bridge at Bright is part of a rail trail and a seat has been placed near its centre where you can sit comfortably and watch birds flitting over the surface of the Ovens River below. Near a small reservoir on the outskirts of the town, we spied a bower where a male Satin Bowerbird had added a pair of blue gloves to the collection that would charm his lady. Some local must have cold fingers.

Wandiligong lies just six kilometres south of Bright with a combination of pine plantations and natural bushland surrounding it. The whole town is registered with the National Trust as a classified landscape with historic buildings. The shop at the apple orchard exudes a mission to supply local provenance and contribute to healthy living. We followed a walking track to the Chinese swing bridge which pays tribute to the large number of Chinese who lived in the Wandiligong area during its gold rush days in the mid-1850s.

Photos:

On the summit of Mount Buffalo, (from left) Liz, Cathy, Paddy, Don, Heather, Bob and Jenny. (Bob Reyswoud)

Sylvia on Chinese Swing Bridge, Wandiligong. (Christine Davies)



## **58. OLD REHABILITATION PROJECT, State Mine Gully**

"If I wanted to get there, I wouldn't start from here" is the punchline of an ancient joke about an Irishman giving directions to a tourist. Almost as ancient are the laudable objectives on this signboard about the 1995 project which could yet be the jumping off point for the transformation of the southern Newnes Plateau into one of Australia's finest and best presented natural area experiences – a project aptly named *Destination Pagoda* in its new incarnation (see article, page 2).

If you want to get to the finest views of pagodas in the Lithgow district, there's no choice but to start from State Mine Gully. On a school holiday Wednesday in April 2019, Hut News noticed steady traffic which included standard two-wheel-drive vehicles making their way up and down the shockingly deteriorated escarpment road that connects the Newnes Plateau with State Mine Gully. Many of the drivers were protecting their vehicles by taking ten minutes to do one kilometre.

But this is the only viable access route for most of the plateau's scenic delights that does not cross private property. It is the only route that truly allows the community of Lithgow a sense of ownership of the most ecologically and geologically diverse part of the town's hinterland.

At the site of the old rehabilitation project, you are confronted with numerous expensive changes that would still need to be made to convince the visitor that this is one of Australia's most significant natural area gateways. The broom and blackberry plants, along with other weeds, need to disappear. The hardy Mountain Ash trees need their retinue of Banksia and Leptospermum understorey to swell. The discarded sleepers and rails from the old branch line need to be incorporated into the generally well-kept railway museum. And the picnic benches need to look capable of accommodating modern-sized posteriors without fracturing. It's fortunate that *Destination Pagoda* has harnessed such experienced and dedicated activists – all our energy will be needed.



### **Images:**

The intended picnic area underlines the wild and non conforming mood of State Mine Gully.

Broom plants and other weed species advance towards the Eucalypt forest at the Gardens of Stone gateway.

A sign lists noble aims of a project which, due to lack of government spending, has fallen far short of its potential.

(Photos by Christine Davies)



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

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) Saturday Walks page for details)

May 11 **Govetts Leap to Perrys Lookdown via Bluegum Forest.** Leader **Mike 4757 3660.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, 8.30am. 9.5k, Gr3. Map Katoomba.

May 18 **Twin Heads Gardens of Stone.** Off track, spectacular pagoda country. Leader **Emanuel 0419773906.** Ring Leader for details & to book in. 10k. Gr 4. Map, Cullen Bullen.

May 25 **Gardiners Gap, Off track.** Part exploratory. Protective clothing recommended. Leader, **Hugh 0423 309 854 or [huespe47@gmail.com](mailto:huespe47@gmail.com)** for details and to book in. GR 3, Map Cullen Bullen

Jun 1 **Burra Korain Ridge.** Some off track. Leader **Harold 0409010737** Ring Leader to book in. 12k. Grd 3/4. Map, Mt Wilson

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, 04111 62345, [keithdor53@hotmail.com](mailto:keithdor53@hotmail.com)

May 13 **Blue Gum Swamp and Grose Mountain Lookout Springwood.** Circuit walk round Shaws Ridge and Blue Gum Swamp with steep hill to Lookout and return. 12km. Springwood Station Carpark 9am. Car Pool, \$2. Ros King 0417 261 465. Grade 2/3.

May 20 **Kings Tableland Aboriginal Site and other rock areas off Tableland Road Wentworth Falls.** Also other rock platforms close by affording views to the East and West, 4km easy walking. Wentworth Fall Station Car Park 9-30 am. Dave Ph. 0416 109 141. Grade 2.

May 27 **Greenwich Pt. Harbour Circuit walk.** Meet Top of escalators Central Station 9-15am. Maurice 4739 4942 or 0402 402 783. Grade 1.

Jun 3 **Lions Head track, off Tableland Road Wentworth Falls.** Leading through heathland out to the Kedumba edge of the tableland, and then along the ridge to the Lions Head. About 7km. Meet Wentworth Falls Station Car Park 9-30 am. Dave Ph. 0416 109 141. Grade 2.

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

May 16 **Duck Hole, Glenbrook. Large pool in Glenbrook Creek.** Meet Glenbrook Station carpark (east) 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4738 4942. Take lunch. Grade 2.

May 23 **Nepean River Walk, Emu Plains.** Easy 7k walk along the river with lunch at O'Donoghue's Pub. Meet Emu Plains Station south side 9.30am. Leader Keith 0411 162 345. Grade 1

May 30 **Berghofer's Pass, Mount Victoria.** Constructed 1907-1912 as an easier grade than Victoria Pass. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Doreen 6355 2371. Car pool. BBQ lunch at Doreen's. Bring meat to barbecue and a plate to share. Grade 2

Jun 6 **Pope's Glen Walk, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Leader Tracy 0435 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Jun 13 **Glenbrook Lagoon, Mount Sion Park and Lennox Bridge.** Local History Walk. Meet Glenbrook Station Car Park (east) 9.30am. Leader Maurice 4739 4942. Take lunch. Grade 2

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

### Welcome to new members

Karl Vass  
Chris McKenzie-mcharg  
Sally Rasmussen  
Sage Rasmussen  
Iluka Rasmussen  
Merekee Rasmussen  
Indigo Rasmussen

Brenton Sephr  
Maggie Davidson  
Paul Pippen  
Kenneth Poon  
Lorraine Neill

### 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](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml)

**For information about PLANT STUDY GROUP and TING (Thursday Interpretive Nature Group) -** Go to our website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) and click on "Activities"

### 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 Blue Mountains Conservation Society".