

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

HUT NEWS

Nature conservation saves for tomorrow



Alternative proposal for Katoomba airfield - but no consultation?

The Society has been concerned to hear about new lease discussions for the Katoomba airfield and in September wrote to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment seeking clarification.

The response just received from the Department refers to an 'alternative proposal' from the lease applicant Fly Blue Pty Ltd 'that addresses community concerns' which would be considered 'prior to making a final decision'.

Tara Cameron, the President of the Society, said 'We are particularly concerned because the community has not been consulted about any new proposals by Fly Blue Pty Ltd.

'It appears that a decision could be made behind closed doors even though 85% of the submissions opposed the previous lease proposal and 12,000 signatures supported incorporation of the airfield into the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.'

'Putting it in the park would allow access for emergency services such as firefighting and also protect the serenity of areas such as the Grand Canyon. This is a slap in the face for the community but we will fight on.'

'How much better it would be if the Government acknowledged the value and fragility of the world heritage area by not even considering commercial joy flights over it. It is the responsibility of state and federal governments to protect the status of the world heritage area, not threaten it for the sake of private interests.'

'The Society has been fighting for incorporation of the airfield into the National Park for over 20 years. We did it with Ngula Bulgarabang (Radiata Plateau) so we can do it again', Tara said.

More information can be found on the Society's website at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/#airfield>



Vale Lachlan Garland



The Blue Mountains community is mourning the recent passing of well known local environmental advocate Lachlan Garland.

Lachlan was a passionate, committed and hardworking volunteer dedicated to defending and conserving the beautiful Blue Mountains environment, as well as actively campaigning on national environmental issues.

Lachlan was a long standing member of the Society and held various roles on the Management Committee, notably President (2011, 2012 and 2019), Membership Secretary and National Parks Officer, as well as being an active member of the Land Use Subcommittee.

Did you want to help rescue wildlife during last summer's fires?

Many members wanted to help during the last fires but were unable to do so effectively. The Wildlife Recovery Mayoral Reference Working Group is looking into better coordination and information to assist many well intentioned volunteers who wish to help and not cause harm.

WIRES is running **basic wildlife rescue training** on line, that can be started anytime [go to <https://www.wires.org.au/training>]. This training course is organised so you can complete it in whatever time chunks you have available, and it is full of interesting and useful information. It is supplemented by field workshops.

About us

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS) is an incorporated voluntary group of about 900 members helping to conserve the World Heritage Blue Mountains region. It was originally the Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society, formed in 1961.

We are governed by a management committee and much of our conservation work is undertaken by sub-committees and campaigns. We also have a native plant nursery, several bushwalking groups and a Bushcare group.

Become a member

You can become a member by

- Contacting our membership secretary, Ross Coster on 02 4739 2987
- Emailing Ross at membership@bluemountains.org.au
- Sign up on our web page www.bluemountains.org.au or scan this with your mobile:



Visit us

www.bluemountains.org.au

Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Twitter: bmcnsnw

The Management Committee

There are 22 positions on the management committee and a full list of members occupying those positions can be found on the web page at bluemountains.org.au.

The principals are:

President: Tara Cameron, taracameron4@gmail.com, 0418 824974

Senior Vice President: Madi Maclean, gos@bluemountains.org.au

Second Vice President: Susan Crick, susan@bluemountains.org.au

Contact us

- By mail at PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782
- By phone at 02 4757 1872 (leave a message)
- By email at bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

Society doings

Management Committee Monthly meeting, 17 October, 2020

The following is a summary of key topics and issues discussed at the normal monthly meeting:

- Planning day follow up; some activities have begun.
- The proposed wildlife rehabilitation centre at RSPCA facilities in Katoomba. The Society will write to the RSPCA seeking confirmation of their intentions for domestic animals and native animals.
- Susan Crick's nomination as Vice President was supported by the Committee.
- The President reported on a meeting with Trish Doyle who remains very supportive of the Society.
- The December anniversary issue of Hut News will be printed in colour.
- The widening of the Great Western Highway was discussed. The Society's position is protecting the environment and therefore no proposed option is supported.
- Applications for the campaign manager position have been received and a selection process is underway.
- Two zoom meetings about the Greater Blue Mountains will be held.
- Rebecca Knight will be appointed as publicity officer.
- The tourism subcommittee presented its revised recommendations - see below.

Recommendations from the Tourism Committee

That the Society promote its mission statement to protect and conserve the environment by:

1. Consistently acting as the voice of the environment by lobbying all levels of government to carefully regulate tourism so as to protect the interests of the environment over those of tourism.
2. Recommending to all BMCS that they carefully consider their personal complicity in the environmental impact of tourism and ways in which they might limit that by more carefully regulating their own tourist travel.
3. Recommending revenue and pricing models for tourist entry by bus or motor vehicle to the Blue Mountains national parks to support the environment and minimise the impact of tourism and visitation. Exploring other models of pricing entry to national

parks within Australia and overseas and considering how funds could be administered.

4. Encouraging the development of new models of sustainable and regenerative tourism, which aim for the traveller to leave their destination better than they found it.
5. Developing, as part of its regular surveys of candidates for local, State and Federal elections, a suite of questions designed to determine each candidate's attitude to the impact of tourism on the local environment.
6. Establishing contact and forming liaisons to exchange experiences with comparable conservation societies facing environmental challenges as a result of industrial level tourism in Asia, North and South America, Europe and Africa.
7. Regularly publishing reports from these liaisons and exchange experiences in the Hut News in order to raise consciousness and raise the profile of the environmental threat posed by the continuation of industrial level tourism.

Welcome to new members

A warm welcome to our new members who are as follows:

Jan Campbell
 Julianne and Neill Grill
 Geoff Barnes
 Sharyn Croke
 Garry, Ruby and Georgia GAO
 Noel Willis
 Rene and Rodney Provis
 Ron Macefield

There are 891 members.

December issue of Hut News

The December issue of Hut News will be a special edition to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the listing of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

It will consist in contributions from key people who were instrumental in achieving the listing and who have a special perspective on the future of the area.

The issue will be printed in full colour and delivered to members as close to the anniversary date, 29 November, as possible.

Opinion

Peter Green

Issues like the covert reassessment of the Katoomba airstrip commercial lease proposal, the refusal of the NSW government to consider freight rail improvements instead of a widened GWH through Blackheath, the selection of manufacturers for the replacement interurban trains, the design of said trains, various issues with Newnes Plateau collieries (like the EPA's completely inadequate emissions licence for Clarence Colliery's discharge of pollutants into the Wollangambe River) and even the federal government's cavalier treatment of the EPBC review, have variously caused alarm, angst and disbelief for many Mountains residents. So, it's an appropriate time to review the rules of the game, as determined by the state and federal governments.

1. Community consultation is a 'tick-and-ignore' process.
2. Commercial entities, having deeper pockets, lure of profits, and more patience than concerned citizens, will react to a development refusal by biding their time, then trying again. Repeatedly, if necessary.

Photo: Pink five corners, *Styphelia triflora* in flower now at Linden. Alan Page



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

Eventually, they hope, their adversaries will run out of money or energy, and stop fighting. A quiet word in the ear of government about the enigmatic Jobson Grothe also does wonders.

3. The promise of jobs always trumps environmental preservation or community health.
4. When a proposed development is granted, but with a restricted approval, before the ink is dry on the approval the proponent will start the quest for variations, ideally finishing up with the proposal as originally envisaged.
5. Overwhelming community rejection, for example by weight of submissions, is an irrelevancy.
6. Defund. When the EDO won the case against the Warkworth colliery expansion, the state govt defunded it. Now, with the Australian National Audit Office having exposed the federal sports and community grants rorts, it too has been defunded.
7. Abolish. When the work of the Climate Commission became a thorn in the side of the federal government, they abolished it. Much to their chagrin it was reborn as the community-funded Climate Council. It is reminiscent of King Henry II and Thomas Becket ("Who shall rid me of this turbulent priest?").

There is a widespread belief that in a democracy like ours such behaviour is too egregious to be acceptable. But therein lies a delusion, for we don't live in a democracy; rather a plutocracy, government by the rich for the rich.

Are you concerned about environmental damage or a development related activity in your neighbourhood but don't know who to contact?

The Society's Planning & Development Resource Kit may help you.

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml>

Xanthorrhoea

Christine Davies



Bright green new growth of the *Xanthorrhoea* (or “Grass Tree”) is one of the first signs of regeneration in the blackened landscape after a wildfire. And, the following spring, every mature *Xanthorrhoea* in the burnt areas will send up spear-like spikes and burst into flower.

Right now, in the upper Blue Mountains, we are experiencing one of Nature’s miracles as the bush regenerates and the *Xanthorrhoea* flower. Each long flower head has hundreds of individual flowers, rich in nectar. At a time when food is scarce, it provides a feast for a wide variety of native animals - birds, insects and mammals – which feed on the nectar, pollen and seeds. In return, they pollinate the flowers and help to spread the seed.

The *Xanthorrhoea* has adapted to Australian conditions over tens of millions of years. It is a slow-growing

Photos by Christine Davies

Above: Xanthorrhoea flower spikes adorn the already magnificent Grose Valley view from New Point Pilcher Lookout, Medlow Bath.

Right: Xanthorrhoea are plentiful in some areas on the outskirts of Blackheath on the Grose Valley side of the Blue Mountains ridge. Many have developed multiple crowns and put up multiple flower spikes. The Xanthorrhoea in the foreground has eight flower spikes.

plant and can take 20 years to put up its first flower spike. It can survive drought and countless wildfires and develop a trunk which can branch into two or more heads.

For Indigenous people, living where *Xanthorrhoea* grow, they were (and remain) a resource of great importance, providing food, drink, fibre and materials for making implements and weapons. Early colonists found a use for the resin which seeps from its trunk. But while resin can easily be collected from around the trunk of the plants, early settlers carried out wholesale removal of plants.

Xanthorrhoea occur in fire-prone areas. Plant communities containing them are becoming more limited in extent due to land clearing, illegal collection, changes to fire regimes and phytophthora fungal disease. There is little protection for those outside our national parks where development is expanding.

Blue Mountains national parks provide habitat and protection for a huge number of native species, including the *Xanthorrhoea*. Go into the burnt bushland where the *Xanthorrhoea* reign. Stay on the tracks so as not to compact the soft soil or crush tiny seedlings. We can enjoy and admire the *Xanthorrhoea* in its natural surroundings and rejoice. Perhaps we can be inspired to better protect those near the towns.

Recommended reading: Article by John Patykowski, Plant ecologist, Deakin University <https://theconversation.com/grass-trees-arent-a-grass-and-theyre-not-trees-100531>, *The Conversation*.



Blue Trail Village Scenes No 7

Trees of Glenbrook Park

Don Morison (copyright)

The landscaped spaces of the mountains contain native trees of many ages. The older eucalypts are especially represented in Glenbrook Park – a major gateway to our region.

There are many reasons to stop at Glenbrook Park. It has one of the best visitor information displays. It's our Australia Day park and hosts other community events. Coming from Sydney, it makes you feel you're not in the city ... and it's the first rest area, petrol and toilets after the freeway. Within the park is the theatre used by the indefatigable Glenbrook Players dramatic troupe.

In 2016, Council contemplated major changes. The levels of the park surfaces were thought by some to pose a flood risk to surrounding properties. A draft plan canvassed the expendability of many of the older trees and buildings. Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Glenbrook District Historical Society and many others came to the defence of the ambience of

Glenbrook Park and its trees. That's probably why the park still looks as it does.

In this park, the trees are an opportunity to have a conversation about how the hollows and other features of the older specimens are vital for the welfare of multiple lifeforms. These, of course, include mammals, birds and insects.

It's very useful that visitors' first chance to pause when entering a new region gives them a true sense of place. The subtle changes that have been made to the park and the retention of so many old trees allows Glenbrook Park to do that. It's one of the few mountains towns to convey a sense of a village green or common. To retain these functions, in coming years, new native trees will need to be planted.

Meanwhile, the park is a place that residents and local organisations can take pride in.



Photo above: Signage and sculpture complements natural elements within the village atmosphere. (Neil and Jennifer McGlashan)

Photo above right: A picket fence protects one of the oldest large eucalypts and safeguards members of the public who might stray under drooping branches. (Christine Davies)



Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the World Heritage listing for the Greater Blue Mountains

Hear about Native Fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains

The Society is very pleased to host local ecologists, Judy and Peter Smith, talking about the native fauna of the Greater Blue Mountains on the very day the World Heritage listing for the area was decided back in 2000.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is home to a remarkably diverse native terrestrial vertebrate fauna (currently 434 species) of international significance. The World Heritage listing

recognises the region's globally significant natural values including its biodiversity.

Judy and Peter will talk about the fauna of the GBMWSHA as it stood at the time of publication of their book (October 2019) and then look briefly at what has happened to the fauna since.

Join us as we mark this important anniversary!

WHEN: 4pm Sunday 29 November.

Register before 29 November to receive the link to the ZOOM meeting at gos@bluemountains.org.au.

Walks program

The three month walks program appears on our web page: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml>

Monday walks

Monday walks are short day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. The Group Coordinator is Keith Dorrian 0411 162345

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
2 November	Wentworth Pass Loop Track , via Wentworth Falls, Slack Stairs, Valley of the Waters and Overcliff/Undercliff tracks; some rough sections and lots of stairs. Shaded most of the way. 6 km loop with 400m descent/ascent. 4-5 Hours	Lyn Bevington 0432 352 850	Start at Falls Rd Car Park, end of Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls 8.30 am. If you need a ride from the station ring Lyn 0432 352 850.	3
9 November	Meanderings in Michael Eades Reserve Nth Katoomba . Come and explore the lovely bushland in this Reserve on mostly flat tracks.	Beth 0424732287	Meet our Leader Beth on the corner of Third Ave and Wattle Tree Rd, North Katoomba at 9.45 am	2
16 November	Pippa's Pass and Florabella Pass, Blaxland Station to Warrimoo Station . 6km.	Barbara Crighton 0428 962 460	Blaxland Station Car Park 9-15am	2
23 November	Birdwood Gully & Madoline Glen Springwood	Dave Atmore 0416 109 141	Springwood Commuter Car Park (north side) 9am	2
30 November	Warrimoo Lookout	Maurice 47394942	Warrimoo Station 8-40am	2
7 and 14 December	No set walk. See website for further information			

Tuesday walks

Tuesday walks are medium day walks of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Co-ordinator: Sue Nicholls phone: 0434 258242 email: suerosn@bigpond.net.au

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
3 November	Wilson Glen Loop Walk. Med 4K	Ken Robinson 4751 4534	Woodford Station South Side 0900	2
10 November	Birdwood Gully – Lomatia Park. Med 6K	Sharon Cox 0404 622 515	Springwood Station 0900	2/3
17 November	Sublime Point L/O, Lillians Bridge, Gladstone L/O, Moya Point L/O. Med 10K	Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753	McLachlan Rd, Leura near Fairmont Resort 0930	2/3
24 November	Peggys Pool. Med 4K	Ken Robinson 4751 4534	Faulconbridge Station 0850	2

Thursday walks

Thursday Walks are walks of 2 - 3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch. Co-ordinator: Beverley Thompson, phone: 4757 2076, email: denfenella12@bigpond.com

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
19 November	Braeside Walk, Blackheath Take lunch	Tracy 0434 362611	Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am	2
26 November	Rickard Rd., Warrimoo to lookouts overlooking Long Angle Gully. Take lunch	Bronwyn 0455 507772	Warrimoo Station, north side 9.10 am	2
3 December	Frederick Falls, Lawson Take lunch	Beverley 4757 2076	Lawson Bowling Club 8.45 am	2
10 December	Gordon Falls, Leura	Beverley 4757 2076	Cnr The Mall and Megalong St., Leura 9.30 am	2
17 December	Christmas Party at Ori Cafe 112 Macquarie Rd., Springwood. Limit 20 people	Beverley 4757 2076 Or Maurice 4739 4942		

Saturday walks

Saturday Walks are usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Co-ordinator: Harold Thompson phone: 0409 010737 email: harold.thompson@bigpond.com

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
14 November	Wollangambe River 12 Km Map Mt Wilson and Wollangambe	Harold 0409 010737	Mt Vic Station Car Park. 8.30 am	3
21 November	Waratah Gully Ck and Koombanda Ridge 9km Map Mt Wilson	Geoff 4758 9113	Mt Vic Station Car Park. 8.30 am	3
28 November	Canyon Mine Kamarah Gully and Canyon 10km Map Mt Wilson	Harold 0409 010737	Mt Vic Station Car Park. 8.30 am	3
5 December	Lockley Pylon and Yardley Cave 9km Map Katoomba and Mt Wilson.	Collin 0431 707137	Leura primary school roundabout	3