



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Darug and Gundungurra people, and pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

Stop press: Katoomba Airfield Lease Refused

A great win for the community

The application by FlyBlue for a lease to operate a commercial airfield, including helicopter flights, at Medlow Bath was refused on 22 October 2021, after FlyBlue failed to provide a valid planning pathway under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, for the airfield to be used as an air transport facility.

The company's temporary licence to access the site will also be revoked and it will be required to vacate the site within 28 days. The site will remain open to emergency services. The Society position to add the airfield to the Blue Mountains National Park stands.

For further information see https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/public/on-exhibition/proposed-lease-of-katoomba-airfield?fbclid=IwAR13qefltn494hJe-dEDkFLdXNS7Vfx-0nJlZ9Y19BdGNysQVXX-vE_I7c

Don't Raise Warragamba Dam

In October 2018, the NSW Government passed legislation to allow the flooding of World Heritage listed national parks by raising the wall of Warragamba Dam.

If the dam wall is raised, 4,700 hectares of World Heritage listed national parks and 1,800 hectares of declared Wilderness Areas will be forever scarred from sedimentation, erosion and invasion of exotic plants.

Raising Warragamba Dam will inundate 65 kilometres of Blue Mountain's wild rivers.

The Environmental Impact Statement

The [Environmental Impact Statement](#) (EIS) was released on 29 September 2021.

Submissions close on Friday 12 November. It is crucial that we voice our concerns and address the flaws in this EIS and process.

Please make a submission -

- [Here's how to make a submission online.](#)
The process has been updated and is easy to do!



Above:: The Burragarang Valley before it was flooded by the building of Warragamba Dam thus creating Lake Burragarang.

- Want to do a hard copy submission? We have guides and reply paid envelopes ready to go! We just need people to get the word out. Please contact Rachel Hall on

rachmalu@protonmail.com

- Want to do your submission with others? Join a zoom workshop at 4pm on Sundays 31 October and 7 November. Contact Tara Cameron on taracameron4@gmail.com

Helpers needed

Stalls are being set up to encourage submissions. Helpers are needed at the stalls on Saturdays - Katoomba, Lawson and Springwood. Please contact Rachel Hall on rachmalu@protonmail.com

What will raising the wall mean?

Raising Warragamba Dam Wall

The dam wall has already been raised and a spillway constructed to make the dam safe from any flood.

What is proposed now would increase the dam's storage capacity by another 50% or enough storage to fill Sydney Harbour twice.

12 metre spillway causes the most damage

A higher spillway will hold all small and medium floods behind the dam wall for several weeks. The submerged vegetation will die, leaving a scarred landscape of silt and dead trees to be infested by weeds after the waters subside.

Famous Blue Mountains World Heritage listed wild rivers will be ruined. The denuded area is revealed when water levels in the dam are low.

Raising the dam wall will push this tidemark of degradation many kilometres upstream into spectacular wilderness valleys.

Warragamba Dam already provides flood mitigation. With smarter use and no new storage

capacity, floodwater could be better managed. Raising the dam wall ignores this potential and is a waste of \$700 million.

A future government could easily use the raised dam wall to hold water permanently and increase Sydney water storage, thus ensuring that the high water mark is permanent as would be the damage.

The Impact

Current Lake Surface Area - 7,300ha
New Lake Surface Area - 12,300ha
Wilderness Area Destroyed - 1,800ha
World Heritage Submerged - 1,000ha
National Parks Lost - 4,700ha

Other Adverse Impacts

- Fragments and degrades two World Heritage listed wilderness national parks
- Degrades world famous scenery of the southern Blue Mountains
- Reduces rare biodiversity, including 40% of the nationally threatened Camden White Gum forest
- Aboriginal cultural heritage destroyed

- Loss of classic bushwalking areas, historic campsites drowned and access restricted
- Further urban sprawl on the floodplain and degradation to the Hawkesbury-Nepean River.

A better solution is to lower the full supply level for flood mitigation. This provides most of the benefits of the proposed dam wall raising and respects our international obligations to protect World Heritage.



The Kowmung River. Photo: Ian Brown

The Kowmung River will be affected

Bushwalkers are drawn to the pristine Kowmung River - a wild river that has inspired generations of walkers. Flowing through the heart of the Kanangra-Boyd Wilderness, the Kowmung is the most loved wild river in the Blue Mountains. It rises on the Great Dividing Range and meets the Coxs River just before it enters Lake Burragorang.

Traditional Owners

Mirrigan and Gurangatch

A local Gundungurra Aboriginal creation story tells of two dreamtime spirits Mirrigan - a large tiger cat, and his quarry Gurangatch - a part fish, part reptile who lived in a lagoon where the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee Rivers meet.

During a long cross-country battle in the Dreaming (Gunyangalung), the deep gorges of the Burragorang Valley were gouged out. It was this valley that was flooded when Warragamba Dam was built.

[Source: [Water NSW - early history](#)]

The Gundungurra

The Gundungurra traditional owners resisted the taking of their lands and, relying on various laws of the colony at the time, continually applied for official ownership.

Although their individual claims failed, in some kind of recognition of the significance of the designated tracts of land claimed, six Aboriginal Reserves (under the control of the NSW Aboriginal

Protection Board) were formally declared in the Burragorang Valley.

Even after these reserves were revoked, many of the traditional owners remained, quietly refusing to leave their traditional homelands. Finally pushed into *The Gully*, a fringe development in West Katoomba from about 1894, the Gully community stayed together for more than 60 years. They were then dispossessed of the Gully by the then Blue Mountains Shire Council so that a group of local businessmen could develop a speedway that became known as the Catalina Race Track.

The Gully people kept talking about areas of land they had walked in as children - the nearby Megalong and Kanimbla Valleys and the Burragorang Valley. They knew of the profound significance of these valleys for their parents and grandparents.

The Gully was declared an Aboriginal Place on 18 May 2002. It became the largest Aboriginal Place in NSW.

Raising the Warragamba Dam wall will be catastrophic for our Blue Mountains wilderness.

Christine Davies and Don Morison

You have until 12th November to make your voice heard about the recently released Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for raising the Warragamba Dam wall. The EIS is an appalling attempt to justify destroying the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area to satisfy Sydney's floodplain developers.

You can make an electronic submission or a hard copy submission. Flyers to assist you with points in a hard copy submission can be picked up from the Paddy Pallin shop at 190 Katoomba Street, Katoomba (southern most of their two stores), along with reply-paid envelopes that will let you send your submission to Colong Foundation to

bundle and forward to the State Government. If you are using this option please do it as soon as possible.

You may also have received in your letterbox by now a letter from former Local Member and Environment Minister, Bob Debus, the current chairman of the Colong Foundation, making additional suggestions about submissions.

Or it will take you as little as 90 seconds to make a submission using the user-friendly form that allows you to email your submission directly to the NSW Planning Department. The link is <https://www.giveadam.org.au/submission>



*Left: The wildflowers were amazing at McMahoons Point - carpets of pink and white; Waratahs and flannel flowers in profusion. Looking out over Lake Burragorang, it was hard to contemplate the damage that would be created by another 15m added to the dam wall.
Photo copyright Katriona Herborn.*



The Blue Mountains City Council Election will be held on Saturday 4 December.
Pre-poll voting opens on Monday 22 November.

The Society is presenting everything you need to know about the election from an environmental perspective. We will be sending all lead candidates and independents a questionnaire that asks where they stand on key Blue Mountains environmental issues. The responses to the questionnaire will be posted on the Society's Council Election website on 17 November. The candidates' responses will be presented for each ward, to make it easier to assess your local candidates.

At the 2016 election we were delighted that all lead candidates responded. As in the past, we will not be recommending candidates, but we may comment on their responses.

For information about the election, go to our Council Election webpage - <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/elections/bmce21/>

Silent Sentinels

Ross Bridle

They stand as if they're On Parade,
Along the ridge and in the valleys -
Those trees, bushes, shrubs and vines
Defining tracks and shaded alleys.

But, lo, they stand to watch us pass -
An endless stream of critters.
Laughing from behind an upheld branch
At this bunch of noise emitters.

Attired in gear not found in Vogue,
Would-be Bushies and the City Slicker -
In conversations hard and fast -
That ferny glade is but a flicker!



Photo right. Yellow bloodwood, Corymbia eximia, Ian Brown.

Ramblings

Alan Page

Existential

"existential" is one of the many words I think I know the meaning of, but I look it up and I'm still unsure. The Oxford Concise Dictionary has "*connected with human existence*".

A recent Sydney Morning Herald article on existential threats raised the endless question "*what's the meaning of life*"? I immediately answered "*to experience the wonder of nature*".

What? Where did that come from Alan? He thinks, and then nods his head and says "*that's pretty good*".

Exhibit A, your honour. A photo I took recently of a Sydney Boronia (*Boronia ledifolia*), is below.



Photo: Alan Page

Just look at that image. Yes, the flowers are usually redder - but I've seen white ones. The wonder of nature indeed. The only thing missing was the fragrance – cameras don't have that feature - yet.

The Dalai Lama was once asked "*what is the purpose of life?*". His answer was "*to be useful and have fun.*"

Mistletoe

Mistletoes (*Amyema* sp.) are an "aerial stem-parasitic shrub" that you often see high in eucalypts – possibly without realising it. They're



Amyema pendula subsp. *pendula* (Drooping Mistletoe)
Photo: Alan Page

easily recognised as a denser clump and their leaves are a different shade of green from the eucalypt host

There are three *Amyema* species in the greater Blue Mountains -

Amyema cambagei (She-oak Mistletoe)

Amyema miquelii (Box Mistletoe)

Amyema pendula subsp. *pendula* (Drooping Mistletoe)

The host for the She-oak Mistletoe, as the name implies, is *Allocasuarina* and *Casuarina* species. The hosts for the other two are *Eucalyptus* and several *Acacia* species.

Mistletoes were a casualty of the Black Summer and the drought before that. You could sometimes see a dead eucalypt with a withered mistletoe in its branches.

On a walk along Rocklily Ridge recently I felt joy at seeing pieces of a mistletoe flower on the track. I couldn't see the mistletoe itself, but the joy to me was reminiscent of seeing the regrowth on banksias, eucalypts and geebung early last year as they recovered.

I'd be interested in hearing of any sightings of the She-oak Mistletoe. I'm delighted to report that a cousin of the mistletoe, Louisa's Mistletoe (*Atkinsonia ligustrina*) is also recovering and has flower buds

99 not out!

Alan Page

There are currently 99 eucalypts in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA), with a further 11 species that may be found within the GBMWhA and/or are awaiting formal description.

This count was the result of a recent analysis performed by the author using published papers and the Royal Botanic Gardens PlantNet system. It should be noted that the term “eucalypt” refers to the species of *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia* of the family Myrtaceae. When counting the number of species, a species with two subspecies (such as *Eucalyptus mannifera*) counts as two species.

In 2000 the Greater Blue Mountains gained its world heritage listing due to its flora and fauna diversity and the number of eucalypts. The 1998 nomination document listed 90 eucalypt species.

In 2010 Tim Hager and Doug Benson produced a “definitive list” of 96 eucalypt species that have been recorded within the GBMWhA.

In 2020, an Australian Government State Party Report noted three additional species –

- *Angophora subvelutina*
- *Eucalyptus dealbata*
- *Eucalyptus expressa*

and that brought the total of eucalypt species to 99.

This is the current definitive list.

The classification of flora species is by no means static and species are continually being reclassified. Some seven species have been reclassified since the Hager and Benson’s 2010 paper.

The method used was to take this definitive list and compare it with a PlantNet extract of eucalypts in the eight GBMWhA reserves.

There are some considerations in doing this including –

- The locations of some plants have been obfuscated or generalised in an effort to avoid plant

theft or tampering – especially of threatened species.

- Since the listing of the GBMWhA in 2000 some 40,000ha have been added to the eight reserves, but not to the GBMWhA.

So it’s difficult to deduce whether some recorded locations of plants are within a reserve **and** within the GBMWhA itself.

The analysis lists the 99 eucalypts and includes a link to the PlantNet entry, the reserve where a species has been found and its common name. The six threatened species include a link to the relevant NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act (BCA) and/or the Commonwealth’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) webpage.

The 11 species possibly in the GBMWhA are listed with their PlantNet entry, the reserve where a species may be found and its common name. The list also includes some details about the reason it should be considered as possibly in the GBMWhA.

The analysis can be found on the Blue Mountains Nature website

<https://bmnature.info/docs/flora-fauna/gbmwha-eucalypts-2021.pdf>

It would not have been completed without the generous advice and encouragement of Margaret Baker, Judy and Peter Smith and Ian Brown.



Eucalyptus deanei, Mountain Blue Gum, Photo: IanBrown

Emergence from lockdown is a sustainability crossroads

Don Morison

Who wants things exactly the way they were before Covid 19 and why do they want that?

These are questions that environmentalists need to ask as we watch politicians who have never been in this kind of situation before declare their priorities.

Importing commodities and skills

Lockdown was partly spent in consumers buying things from the far corners of the Earth and having them delivered. Some countries' ports still have dozens of container ships queueing to unload or pick up millions of items desperately wanted by people on the other side of the world, far from where they were manufactured.

In Australia, there is a swelling chorus of voices calling for a huge increase in skilled migration. Also, Australians have never got into the habit of picking and harvesting our own agricultural produce from the orchards and fields where it grows. For years, only backpackers and "guest workers" have been willing to do it for the wages and conditions offered. And so, during a bumper season for agriculture, much produce is rotting on the ground for want of workers.

No doubt, it is extremely radical to ask if this is the time to educate many more Australians to operate the industries that we really need. Doesn't plugging gaps with permanent or temporary migrants mean continuing decades of under-investment in developing vocational skills for people who are already in Australia?

White elephant infrastructure

Many politicians favour a "fluoro vest" economic recovery. New motorways, tunnels and airport all designed to extend the use of fossil fuels, are at the top of their shopping lists.

At least, NSW Opposition Leader Chris Minns, in his speech in reply to now Premier Perrottet's most

recent budget, foreshadowed dropping the multi-billion dollar motorway tunnel to the northern beaches. There are further white elephant projects that should be similarly targeted.

Other critics of state and federal governments point out that not enough has been done to develop infrastructure for electric vehicles or facilitate renewable energy input to the power grid. Public money should be invested in sustainable projects that will contribute to reaching the world's climate goals.

Global tourism

Australia and New Zealand have a post lockdown opportunity to grow a domestic tourist bubble. Being impatient to allow tourists to travel halfway around the world – inbound or outbound – is disastrous for climate and sustainability.

The decisions that governments and individuals make about things that should **NOT** go back to the way they were before lockdown will have profound effects on the sustainability of our civilisation.



Wallerawang power station. In 2007 it was producing coal-fired power but in 2021 it has been mainly a prop for a reality TV program. In the post lockdown period, are infrastructure decisions going to be forward looking or backward looking? (Source: Andy Mitchell (Amitch) - Own work CC BY-SA2.5, 2007)

Report on the Management Committee meeting of October 2021

The following is a summary of matters discussed or decisions made:

- The EIS for the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall has been released. Submissions are due on 12 November although an extension has been requested. The Protected Areas subcommittee will write our submission with help from Keith Muir. Submissions being encouraged and a guide offered. Society working with Colong Foundation. Information about it being communicated using various media.
- Council election questionnaire being finalised.
- Planning Day to be held to coincide with next MC meeting on 20 November.
- Support for further involvement in Bell Quarry rehabilitation agreed.
- Online stakeholder survey about 'Keeping cats safely at home' to be completed and community consultation survey to be distributed.
- Shanes Park National Park proposal discussed with concern. To be monitored by the Protected Areas subcommittee.
- Katoomba Airfield campaign - report to be distributed.
- Mayoral Reference Group meeting attended. Continuing concern about the future of the highway, airport and dam.
- Submission about changes to management of Kosciusko National Park. Workshop about this on 20 October.
- Council's Bushfire Recovery Group - An app. is being developed to advise volunteers to help wildlife but progress is slow.
- DA for wildlife recovery centre at Katoomba RSPCA to be released for comment soon.

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 <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/sales-map.shtml>

Are you concerned about environmental damage or a development 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>

Survey Seeking Input for RSPCA NSW Project - Keeping Cats Safe at Home



Blue Mountains City Council was recently selected as one of 10 successful councils to participate in the project which will be delivered primarily by RSPCA NSW with support from Council.

The project will provide up to \$90,000 in incentives for cat owners which may include free or subsidised desexing, cat enclosures and behaviour enrichment advice. Project activities and incentives will be offered from March 2022 and will be determined by the outcomes of extensive community consultation with stakeholder groups, particularly the cat owning community. The outcomes of this consultation period will also help to structure a tailored behaviour change strategy for Council.

The Blue Mountains City Council has asked the Society to promote their online survey and would

appreciate it if members could help them by completing the survey by 15 November 2021. See [online survey](#).

For further information contact **Holly Nettle**, Environmental Science Cadet at hnette@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Walks program November 2021

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

Saturday walks

Saturday walks are usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator Harold Thompson. Phone 0409 010737. Email harold.thompson@bigpond.com

November 6

Ruined Castle via Golden Stairs, 12km. Map Jamison. Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet Katoomba station at 8.30 am. Grade 3.

November 13

Burra Korain 12km. Map Mt Wilson. Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet at Blackheath Station car park 8.30am. Grade 3

November 20

Kamarah Ridge to Wilkinson Hill, 11km. Map Mt Wilson, Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet at Mt Victoria Station car park 8.30 am. Grade 3

November 27

Springwood to Martins Lookout via Sharks Head Cave, 12km. Map Springwood. Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet at Springwood Station car park 8.30 am. Grade 3

December 4

Redledge Pass to Devils Hole, 9km. Map Jamison. Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet at Katoomba Station car park 8.30 am. Grade 3

Monday walks

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 162 345 keithdor53@hotmail.com

November 1

Fortress Ridge track, Leura. Meet at Leura station car park, 8.30 am. Car pool \$5.00. Mave Roberts 4784 2691. Grade 3

November 11

Martins Lookout Loop, Springwood. Steep descent to Glenbrook Creek, then walks past pools and waterfalls., return to starting point.. Meet at Westpac car park, Springwood. 9.00am. Colin Ford 0421 502954. Grade 3

November 15

Blue Gum Swamp and Bees Nest Hill, Winmalee. 13 km with 270 m ascent/descent, otherwise all on track with some minor creek crossings. Meet at Springwood Station car park, N side. 8.00 am. Car pool. Angela Berry 0427 133327. Grade 3

November 22

Singles Ridge Lookout, Yellow Rock, Springwood. Views into Fitzgerald Creek Gorge and Penrith. Meet at Springwood Westpac car park. 9.20 am. Car pool. Maurice Kerkham 0402 402783. Grade 2

November 29

Fairy Bower, Cox's Cave- Grotto-Fairy Bower, Mt Victoria. 5km Meet at Mt Victoria Station 9.50 am. Pat Whitehead 0429 003639 Grade 2.

Tuesday walks

Medium day walks of 3-5 hours. Suitable for walkers of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator Susan Nicholls, phone 4754 1516. Email suerosn@bigpond.net.au

November 2

Chapman Ridge, Faulconbridge. 6 km Easy- medium, grade 2 Meet at Westpac car park, Springwood 9.00 am. Doug Nicholls 0455 850753.

November 9

Hazelbrook mystery walk. Meet at Hazelbrook Station, 9.00 am Judith Dyer 0419 780640 or 4758 6310. Grade to be advised.

November 16

Walk 1. Springwood- Lawsons Lookout, 2.5 km, easy to medium, grade 2. Walk 2. Springwood history walk, 4 km, easy, grade 1. Meet at Westpac car park, Springwood 9.15 am, Colin Ford 0421 502954

November 23

Glenbrook Link Track to Red Hands Cave, 4.5 km easy grade 2 120 metres climb, medium. Meet at Glenbrook Station car park 9.20 am. John Blanche 0402 906161

November 30

Cathedral of Ferns walk, Mt Wilson, 5 km, easy grade 1. Meet at Mt Victoria Station 9.41 am then travel by car (Fare \$7). Marilyn Savic 0409 924663

December 7

Florabella Pass to Pippas Pass, 7 km, medium grade 3. Climb 330 m down and 280 m up. Meet at Warrimoo Station 9.01 am, finish at Blaxland. Roger Blane 0449 902774.

Thursday walks

Thursday walks take 2- 3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Bring morning tea and lunch. Coordinator Beverley Thompson. Phone 4757 2076. Email denfenella12@bigpond.com

November 4

Gordon Falls, Leura. Meet corner The Mall and Megalong St. 9.30 am. Chris 0413 107 912. Take lunch. Grade 2

November 11

Cranebrook Waterways. 4 km Morning tea at Whitewater Kayaking Cafe. Meet Glenbrook Station Car Park 9.30 am Carpool. Maurice 0402 402 783. Take lunch. Grade 2

November 18

Wentworth Falls Lanes to picnic area and Short Cut Track Meet Stockyard Car Park 9.30am. Carpool. Beverley 4757 2076. Take lunch. Grade 2.

November 25

Hyde Park, Hartley with a swim in River Lett. Meet Mt. Victoria Station 9.50am. Carpool \$5. Tracy 0434 362611. Take lunch Grade 1

December 2

Part of Six Foot Track, Megalong Valley. Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45am. Carpool. Tracy 0434 362 611. Take lunch. Grade 2

December 9

Cathedral of Ferns and Wynnes Lookout, Mount Wilson. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Carpool \$5. Tracy 0434 362611. Take lunch. Grade 1.

About us

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

Contact us

- Call the Membership Secretary, Ross Coster on 0418 462576
- By mail at PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782
- By phone at 02 4757 1872 (leave a message)
- By emailing bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

Visit us

www.bluemountains.org.au
 Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation Society
 Twitter: bmcsnsw
 Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/blue_mts_conservation_society/

Become a member

You can become a member by

- Contacting our Membership Secretary, Ross Coster on 0418 462576

Emailing Ross at membership@bluemountains.org.au

- <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml> or scan this with your mobile:



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