



# HUT NEWS

March 2025  
Issue No. 433

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*

2025 marks the 25th anniversary of the inscription of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area on the UNESCO World Heritage List. As a testimony to the love and respect we have for this amazing and unique land, we will take the time to understand, connect with and seek to protect it.



## The role of Eucalypts in World Heritage listing

Eucalypt forest, woodland and mallee shrubland cover 95% of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area's (WHA) one million plus hectares. The WHA is recognised as a centre of eucalypt diversification, with an impressive total of 101 eucalypt species and subspecies (around 10% of all eucalypts) confirmed as occurring within the WHA. Read "The extraordinary diversity of eucalypts in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area" (Judy Smith and Peter Smith) on page 5.

Image: *Angophora costata* (Peter Smith)

## Annual General Meeting Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 2pm

Mid Mountains Community Centre, Mavis Woods Hall  
7 New Street, Lawson (See Notice of AGM on page 10)

Please come along and support your Society. Vote for a management committee to serve the Society in a voluntary capacity for the coming year. Learn what the Society has been doing in the past year and what is planned for the coming year. And remember, this is your Society! Ask questions if there is anything you need to know. After the formal part of the meeting, and a short break for a cuppa, we will hear from our guest speaker, Andy Macqueen..

## Walnuts to World Heritage: how to grow a million hectares - Andy Macqueen

Historian Andy Macqueen will tell the stories of the Blue Gum Forest campaign and other events that eventually gave rise to World Heritage recognition of the Greater Blue Mountains. Who were the people behind it all and what drove them? (Read more on page 8)

## Council Cliff Drive Plans: Threat to Flora and Fauna

A Blue Mountains City Council plan for "Active Transport" on Cliff Drive, between Merriwa Street and Cahills Lookout, poses a threat to the escarpment ecology through removal of vegetation, increasing paved areas and altering drainage. It could also require pedestrians to share space with cyclists, E-bikes and scooters. There are viable alternatives which could slow motor traffic and allow sharing between all modes of traffic without increasing the paved footprint.

To express concern about this, go to the Blue Mountains City Council website to look at Council's proposals and contact your Ward Councillors. —Don Morison.

## Brumby control in Kosciuszko NP

The NSW Government has announced adoption of all recommendations of an Upper House Committee enquiring into feral horse suppression in Kosciuszko National Park. This paves the way for aerial culling of feral horses to take place when necessary and follows years of campaigning by environmental activists. —Hut News Team

## EVENTS . . .

**Bat Night:** Saturday 15th March, 6pm-8.30pm  
Cultural Centre, Katoomba. (PAGE 3)

**Wildlife Real Estate: Building Homes for Nature:** Saturday 22 March, 2- 5pm. Lawson  
Community Centre, 7 New St Lawson (PAGE 6)

**AGM:** Saturday, 5th April, 2pm, Mid Mountains  
Community Centre, Lawson (PAGE 1)

## BMCS NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

Native plant sales at the Blackheath  
Growers Market on **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March  
2025** (8am to 12 noon). For  
enquiries and to place an order, please  
contact Nursery Manager  
[plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com](mailto:plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com)

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

## From the President



There is much to do in 2025 to keep our natural areas safe. Our mission is “to help protect, conserve, and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.”

This month we continue our focus on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and its unique flora. There is a splendid item from Judy and Peter Smith about the eucalypts which, along with their ecological communities, form the basis of the criteria for inscription of the GBMWA.

Our Management Committee is making new links with environment groups in other Local Government Areas that also border the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. One of these LGAs includes Bilpin and we will be joining the Hawkesbury-Nepean Landcare Network at the Bilpin Environment Day at Bilpin Oval on 10 May 2025. By joining forces with other conservation organisations, we can increase our impact. Bilpin lies along the Bells Line of Road which also transects the Blue Mountains National Park to the north of the Great Western Highway. The work being done in this area is also of great importance to maintaining a healthy World Heritage Area.

In early February, while outside cleaning the tiles on my back deck, I noticed a bird flitting about in the rather large 4m tall bottlebrush at the side of my yard. It was capturing insects that were flying amongst the leaves. The rich rufous colouring of the bird caught my eye and, looking more closely, I realized it was a Black-faced Monarch (*Monarcha melanopsis*)! How lovely! I haven't seen one in my yard for many years.



Black-faced Monarch (C)John Barkla 2023  
birdlifephotography.org.au

These flycatchers migrate from north-eastern Queensland to coastal south-eastern Australia from August-September to March-April each year to breed. They inhabit damp gullies in rainforests and eucalypt scrubs. A harbinger of a good year to come perhaps?

*Hope to see you at some of our events across the year – make sure you check out the Society's Events Page on the Website!*

—Annette Cam, President

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

**Membership:** Join the Society online [www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml) or phone 0490 419 779 (leave message). Members receive our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post and online. Tick the box for a hard copy of the newsletter.

## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

**Post:** PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782  
**Phone:** 0490 419 779 \* (leave message)  
**Email:** [bmcs@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bmcs@bluemountains.org.au)  
**Website:** [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)  
**Facebook and Instagram:** (see website)

**President:** Annette Cam 0450 215 125  
[president@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:president@bluemountains.org.au)

**Senior Vice President:** Tara Cameron  
[taracameron4@gmail.com](mailto:taracameron4@gmail.com)

**2nd Vice President:** Madi Maclean  
[natpks@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:natpks@bluemountains.org.au)

**Administration Officer:** Jeanette Robertson  
[sao@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:sao@bluemountains.org.au)

**Bushcare Officer**  
Peter Ardill [pa13424soc@proton.me](mailto:pa13424soc@proton.me)

**Environmental Education Officer:**  
Annette Sartor [education@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:education@bluemountains.org.au)

**Events Coordinator:**  
Jo Carroll [jocarr2014@gmail.com](mailto:jocarr2014@gmail.com)

**Land Use Officer:** Angela Langdon  
[landuse@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:landuse@bluemountains.org.au)

**Meetings Secretary:** Heather Hull  
4739 1493 [hhull001@bigpond.net.au](mailto:hhull001@bigpond.net.au)

**Membership Secretary:**  
Andrew Solomon 0408 267 078  
[membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

**National Parks & World Heritage Officer:**  
Madi Maclean 0412 428 202  
[natpks@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:natpks@bluemountains.org.au)

**Newsletter Editor:** Christine Davies  
[hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

**Nursery Manager:** Paul Irwin  
[plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com](mailto:plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com)

**Publicity Officer:** *vacant*

**Sustainability / Climate Change Officer:**  
Nathalie Verellen [sustain@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:sustain@bluemountains.org.au)

**Threatened Species Officer:**  
Liam Ramage 0478 088896  
[threatened\\_species@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:threatened_species@bluemountains.org.au)

**Treasurer and Public Officer:**  
Elizabeth Howard 0414 090 251  
[eh.mistover@bigpond.com](mailto:eh.mistover@bigpond.com)

**Webmaster:** Alan Crooks  
[webmaster@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:webmaster@bluemountains.org.au)

**Bushwalking Convenor:**  
Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753  
[dougnicholls@bigpond.com](mailto:dougnicholls@bigpond.com)

**Bushfire Representative:**  
Hugh Paterson 0427 512 303  
[fmatter@bigpond.net.au](mailto:fmatter@bigpond.net.au)

**Thursday Interpretive Nature Group:**  
Christine Davies [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

**Plant Study Group:** Meredith Brownhill  
[mountains@westnet.com.au](mailto:mountains@westnet.com.au)

If you want to volunteer to help with the work of the Society, in any capacity:

**email** [bmcs@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bmcs@bluemountains.org.au)  
or **phone** 0490 419 779 (leave a message).

# BLUE MOUNTAINS BAT NIGHT 2025

Saturday 15th March, 6.00 pm – 8.30 pm  
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street, Katoomba  
**FREE EVENT!** (Entry via Katoomba St or Coles car park)

Bats ... they are not blind, do not get caught in your hair and do not suck your blood! Bats are a very misunderstood species, yet are crucial to life on earth.

Come and learn more about bats at the Blue Mountains Bat Night. There will be bat talks, lots of fun batty activities for all; learn about flying foxes and our fascinating microbats. Why not come dressed as a bat! Katoomba library is also going batty, staying open late and having even more batty activities. This really is a Bat-Fest!

The only true flying mammal, there are over 1,200 bat species in the world making up almost a quarter of the world's mammal species. Australia has around 90 different species of bats. At this event you also will be able to hear microbat calls after dark live via a bat detector and meet a Flying Fox!

Enjoy a bat talk with local ecologist Marg Turton and flying fox expert Tim Pearson as well as other bat scientists and aficionados. There will be the popular Bat Cave for kid's activities such as mask-making and more.

Activities will run from 6.00 pm till 8.30 pm



White-striped Free-tailed Bat (*Austronomus australis*)

Photographer: Bruce Thompson

in all weather.

This event is proudly supported by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Blue Mountains City Council, Blue Mountains Library and the Australasian Bat Society.

## The Bodington Hill zoo and hotel development is back!

In July 2023 time expired on the previous proposal for a hotel and zoo development on Bodington Hill, Wentworth Falls. The proponent didn't lodge the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Development Application (DA) by the due date and the proposal lapsed. This meant that a new application to the NSW Department of Planning for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) would be required. The SEARs outline the issues to be addressed in the EIS.

In mid-January 2025, Society members were notified that a new application for SEARs had been lodged with the NSW Department of Planning. The documentation can be found on the Department's major projects website:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/blue-mountains-wildlife-park>

### What's new in this 'new' proposal?

The 'new' development is largely unchanged from the 2021 and 2023 proposals. However, there are some major changes from the 2023 proposal:

- No traffic light intersection at the site entry; left-in, left-out highway access only.
- Car parking moved entirely underground, beneath the hotel and wildlife buildings.
- No crocodiles, at least in these new preliminary plans.
- Additional recreational activities: a chairlift and toboggan track have now been added to the high ropes course and zip-line.

### The main issues and concerns continue to be:

- Encroachment of development into the C2 Environmental Conservation zone on the site.

- Environmental impact of vegetation removal on the western half of site for excavation, terracing, hotel buildings, outdoor exhibits, landscaped parkland/picnic areas, internal roads and Asset Protection Zone.
- Threat to the hanging swamp and creek on the site and the national park downstream due to groundwater flow interference from deep excavation and potential sediment and nutrient pollution.
- Biodiversity impacts, including on the local wombat population and wildlife corridor/tunnel under the highway.
- Impact of highway access on traffic flow and safety in a high-speed, high-volume traffic environment on a steep hill.
- Visual impact of vegetation clearing and buildings in a 'Land Between Towns' Protected Area.
- Bushfire risk in a highly bushfire prone area.
- Impact on adjoining residents and aged care facility.

### What happens next?

The new SEARs were issued on February 11<sup>th</sup>. The proponent will now have two years to lodge a DA and EIS, which will go on public exhibition.

There is no opportunity for public input at this stage, but the proponent will hold community consultations. Keep an eye out for notices in the Gazette and Society weekly emails.

For more details go to <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/crocpark/index.shtml>

### Land Use subcommittee

# The extraordinary diversity of eucalypts in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

Eucalypt forest, woodland and mallee scrubland cover 95% of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (WHA). The WHA is recognised as a centre of eucalypt diversification, with an impressive total of 101 eucalypt species and subspecies (around 10% of all eucalypts) confirmed as occurring within the WHA.

The illustrated eucalypt list is a combined effort from Judy Smith, Peter Smith, Jacqueline Reid and Ian Brown. Ian Brown took the background photo at Batsh Camp in the Bindook Highlands. The eucalypt list has been compiled from a number of sources.



# The extraordinary diversity of eucalypts in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

— Judy Smith and Peter Smith

The Greater Blue Mountains area was granted World Heritage status in 2000 solely because of its superb natural values, which met two criteria for World Heritage listing: the area is outstanding at a global level for (i) *examples of ongoing evolutionary processes* and (ii) *biological diversity*.

Eucalypt forest, woodland and mallee shrubland cover 95% of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area's (WHA) one million plus hectares. The eucalypts (the related genera *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia*) exemplify the above two criteria for listing: The eucalypts are believed to have evolved from ancient rainforest plants when Australia was connected to Antarctica. As Australia drifted north, they gradually adapted to drier climates, weathered soils and fire-prone landscapes and became a dominant and iconic feature of the Australian flora. Within the WHA, the exceptional complexity and diversity of habitats found within a relatively small area have resulted in the evolution of a very high level of eucalypt diversity.

At a glance, the WHA appears like a carpet of eucalypts. Closer inspection reveals intricate patterns of many different eucalypt communities of varying structural and floristic composition. The 101 individual eucalypts are equally variable. Rather than just "gum trees" we have stringybarks, peppermints, ironbarks, mahoganies, apples, ashes, sallies, bloodwoods, boxes, scribbly gums, red gums, blue gums, mallees and more. Widespread and common Sydney Peppermint *Eucalyptus piperita*, Grey Gum *E. punctata* and Red Bloodwood *Corymbia gummifera* contrast with lesser known and locally restricted species such as Small-leaved Stringybark *Eucalyptus tenella* and Slaty Red

Gum *E. glaucina*. Seven local eucalypts are listed as threatened (*Eucalyptus* species *aggregata*, *benthamii*, *cannonii*, *corticosa*, *fracta*, *glaucina* and *macarthurii*), as are a number of local eucalypt communities, such as the Critically Endangered 'Turpentine-Ironbark' and 'Shale Sandstone Transition' Forests.

Eucalypt identification involves looking at a range of characters including structural form, bark, fruits, flowers, buds, leaves (juvenile, intermediate and adult), seeds, even the smell of freshly crushed leaves. The propensity of some eucalypts to hybridise adds to identification challenges, with the 16 or so stringybarks being extra tricky. The number of "confirmed" eucalypts in the WHA will likely fluctuate as eucalypt taxonomists continue to make revisions, either splitting or combining currently recognised species. There are also several additional species that possibly occur in the WHA but require further field surveys for confirmation.

The eucalypts are outstandingly beautiful and inspiring and provide a wide range of essential functions including: providing food, shelter and nesting sites for vertebrate and invertebrate fauna; supporting fungi and mistletoes; providing shade; storing carbon and emitting oxygen; providing fuel for wildfires; stabilising hillsides and river banks; slowing stormwater run-off; and more. They are a clear example of the WHA's outstanding natural values. The greatest current threat to the WHA's eucalypts and other biodiversity values is, without doubt, rapid human-induced climate change which unfortunately does not respect World Heritage boundaries. The Conservation Society is well placed to lobby long, loud and widely in support of policies and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Images:

Noisy Friarbird feeding at Red Bloodwood (*Corymbia gummifera*)

Greater Glider on Ribbon Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*)

(Photographs by Peter Smith)

## Environmental weeds and their Impacts

— Peter Ardill, Bushcare Officer

### *Buddleia (Buddleja) davidii* Butterfly bush

In the accompanying illustration, Butterfly bush is encroaching on a fern grove located near the Grand Cliff Top Walk, south Katoomba (2025). This environmental weed prefers damp areas and can degrade the protected ecological community, *Blue Mountains Swamps*, and the riparian zones of local streams.

The seed of Butterfly bush is spread by wind and water and a plant can grow to several metres and reach flowering stage in just months!

*Buddleia* is a BMCC Local Priority Weed. For management techniques, consult *Blue Mountains City Council Priority Weeds Handbook 2024*. BMCS members who require advice or assistance with treatment of Butterfly bush are welcome to contact the BMCS Bushcare Officer [pa13424soc@proton.me](mailto:pa13424soc@proton.me)

Send in your contributions! Photographs must clearly display the environmental damage being caused by a Blue Mountains environmental weed. Photographs do not have to be technically excellent. Forward to BMCS Bushcare Officer [pa13424soc@proton.me](mailto:pa13424soc@proton.me) as a JPG attachment.



Buddleia, Grand Clifftop Walk. (Peter Ardell)

**Hut News:** Send your contributions to the Hut News Editor: [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au) or PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. Word limit is 400 words or by negotiation. Deadline is the 12th day of the previous month (March 12 for April). Enquiries to above email, or phone message to 0490 419 779.



Australian Owlet Nighjar,  
Mutawintji NP, 2004  
Photographer; Peter Smith



## Wildlife Real Estate: Building Homes for Nature

— Elizabeth Howard

We are all too aware of the housing crisis facing the Blue Mountains and the pressure being put on our land and natural resources. With ever increasing land degradation and habitat loss caused by an expanding metropolis, it's not just our communities that are suffering but our local fauna too. What about all those creatures of the night, the birds in the sky, and those lizards basking in the sun - their kids are facing an uncertain future as well.

Have you noticed a decline in some species in recent years? Less squawking and chirping during the day, rustling of branches or tramping on the roof at night, or fewer sounds of someone scurrying away as you walk around? Do you think you have animals in your area who may benefit from some additional accommodation?

Unsure what you can do about it?

Join us for **Wildlife Real Estate: Building Homes for Nature**.

- Wildlife accommodation experts from Hollowhog and Habitat Innovations will be sharing their skills with you - creating tree hollows and installing nest boxes.
- Mountains for Wildlife and the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mt Tomah will be sharing their expertise about installing hollows, what inspired them, how they did it, and what issues we need to be aware of.
- We will also hear about birds and their needs and how schools and families can be involved to bring the natural world into our everyday life.
- Meet the animals that are looking for homes, with Me&Zoo. Some of those lizards will be there to check YOU out. Come and meet them!

Where: **Lawson Community Centre 7 New St Lawson**

When: **Saturday 22 March, 2- 5pm.**

Free event - bookings required

<https://events.humanitix.com/habitat-information-session>

## Blue Mountains Conservation Society - 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)

# The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Recognition of the Value of Biodiversity



The GBMWHA recognises and preserves the rich ecosystems and biological diversity of this spectacular region. There are roughly 1500 plant and 400 vertebrate animal species found within the World Heritage Area and as such it forms an important part of the Forests of East Australia Biodiversity Hotspot.

A significant driver of the high biodiversity of this region is the underlying geology and soils of the Sydney basin, in particular the infertile sandy soils derived from the sandstones that we are all familiar with. This landscape of low fertility has acted as an island for evolution over the eons and is the centre of diversity for many plant families in Eastern Australia, most notably Myrtaceae with 150 species (including 101 eucalypts), Fabaceae with 149 species and Proteaceae with 77

species. The wide range of rainfall, elevations and landforms across the region has given rise to interconnected communities and ecosystems which have remained resilient to climate change and allowed for the survival of relics including the ancient Wollemi Pine and Dwarf Mountain Pine.

The protected areas of the GBMWHA are globally important to preserve the biodiversity, threatened species and uniqueness we have inherited. So we need to maintain strong conservation efforts into the future against human pressures and global changes.

— **Liam Ramage, Threatened Species Officer**

Images: Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) one of the many species of Proteaceae in the Blue Mountains; Floral display on sandstone cliff ledge. (Photos: Liam Ramage)

## Literary Luminary Confronts Pragmatic Pollies Opinion by Don Morison

In 1974, I sat in a large audience in the Concert Hall of Sydney Opera House which had been booked for an election rally in favour of Gough Whitlam. Amid much fanfare, the late Nobel Laureate, Patrick White, rose and reminded the admittedly sympathetic audience just how wonderful Gough was. Times moved on and another of White's contemporaries, Bob Hawke, became politically successful, but White didn't take to Hawke the way he had taken to Gough, comparing Hawke to a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo in unflattering terms.

It is fair that the great minds of any era form their likes and dislikes among politicians, as most of us do. But, a couple of report cards made out by intellectuals of the present on various current politicians (but most of all Prime Minister Albanese) have caught my eye.

Richard Flanagan, a highly decorated fiction and non-fiction author from Tasmania, wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald on January 15, 2025. Barry Jones, a former parliamentarian and also one of the great minds of the past century, published in The Saturday Paper of February 1, 2025.

Flanagan's piece is of particular interest to environmentalists, both because he regards an urgent improvement in environmental performance as crucial for Albanese's legacy and because of his very rich use of

environmental imagery in describing what he deplors about Albanese's relationship with corporations.

Flanagan is deeply concerned about the fate of a rare species, the Maugean skate, in Macquarie Harbour, Tasmania, where salmon farming has allowed effluent equivalent to that of a city of one million people to flow into previously high quality habitat for such a rare species. More recent comments by the Prime Minister have added to fears for the Maugean skate. Flanagan expertly uses this scatological example to illustrate how politicians in general defer to corporations that seek to pollute the planet.

Barry Jones is equally passionate in wishing that more politicians would be resistant to corporate overriding of policies that could protect the public interest.

Publicly prominent intellectuals have contributed a great deal to the better environmental policies developed over recent years. It always saddens me that politicians who display idealistic vision about protecting the environment have too little support among their parliamentary colleagues. But I'm glad that some of the best minds of the present are speaking out in favour of the environment. I hope that they find more allies among serving parliamentarians sooner rather than later.



## Adelina's Mailbag

Dear Adelina, Over recent weeks in our garden we have seen a pair of rainbow lorikeets in the Christmas bush outside the kitchen window, a pair of gang-gangs having a drink from the bird bath and yellow-tailed black cockatoos in the pines at the back of the yard.

We have a wonga pigeon who frequently spends the day with us. He likes to sit on the mat at the back door. As well we have the usual king parrots, magpies, currawongs, crimson rosellas, red wattle birds, sulphur crested cockatoos and bower birds around all the time.

We haven't seen any crested pigeons for some months.

— Beverley Thompson, Wentworth Falls

**Hut News Trivia Question 10:** Aboriginal engravings of Emus can be found in the Blue Mountains, but live Emus do not appear to exist in the Blue Mountains. Were Emus ever present in the Blue Mountains? The answer can be found in this newsletter.

**Question 10B:** Have you seen wild emus in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area? Please tell Hut News if you have - [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

## Walnuts to World Heritage: how to grow a million hectares

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area didn't just happen. It was inscribed after decades of campaigns by all sorts of people, in the face of threats from mining, dams, forestry, farming and other pressures.

As early as 1879, the whole Grose Valley was reserved from freehold acquisition because a surveyor proclaimed that it was a "national spectacle". Before that, in the 1850s, the pioneering landscape photographer Robert Hunt was so impressed by the Grose Valley and its gum trees that he took photographs of them. The early explorers Francis Barrallier and George Caley both took the Blue Mountains landscape to heart and, for millennia before that, the First Nations owners undoubtedly placed immense spiritual value in their mountainous country.

Nevertheless, the seminal event that eventually led to the WHA was the reservation of Blue Gum Forest. A group of bushwalkers so loved the place that they raised the money to stop a lessee from chopping down the trees to - as the story goes - grow walnuts.

In his talk to the Society at the AGM of 5 April, historian Andy Macqueen will tell the stories of the Blue Gum Forest campaign and other events that eventually gave rise to World Heritage recognition of the Greater Blue Mountains. Who were the people behind it all, and what drove them?

## BMCS Publicity Officer

The important role of Publicity Officer is currently vacant.

The Publicity Officer co-ordinates publicising the activities of the Society through various media including social media, newspapers, items for the website. The officer will liaise with the other officers on the Management Committee, various Society members and other organisations as required.

If you want to find out more, please contact the Society [bmcs@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bmcs@bluemountains.org.au) or phone 0490 419 779. Please leave a message detailing what you are interested in. A member of the management committee will contact you.



Jeff Rigby, son of the 1931 Blue Gum Forest activist Alan Rigby, speaks passionately about his father's role at the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reservation, in 2022. (Photo Ian Brown)

## The Struggle for Humanity's Future 30 March 2025, 12.30 to 3pm.

A talk by Dr Mark Diesendorf, Honorary Associate Professor in the Environment & Society Group at UNSW Sydney. UWS Lithgow Campus, Lithgow Transformation Hub, Lecture room.

RSVP by 20<sup>th</sup> March. [lithgowenviro@gmail.com](mailto:lithgowenviro@gmail.com)

## The Great White Whale - documentary film One night only on Sunday 16 March 2025 at 7:30pm. Glenbrook Cinema.

Q&A session afterward, with the multi-award winning filmmaker Michael Dillon.

The epic story of a group of intrepid adventurers seeking to climb Big Ben (Australia's highest and loneliest mountain) on Heard Island in Antarctica, in the 1960's. Original footage, amazing soundtrack.

Tickets \$20. Bookings <http://www.glenbrookcinema.com.au>



# Agapanthus

By Roberta Johnston

This garden is a museum of weeds, a seasonal resource and a shelter for native fauna. The structure of this 'old fashioned' established garden gives opportunity to infill with native shrubs and ground covers, with sunlight and shade in equal measure.

Its Victorian era plantings, rock walls and made shelters hold safe places for birds, Blue Tongues and other smaller skinks and, seen once only, a Water Dragon. Bees, moths, flies, butterflies, dragonflies (including Giant Dragonflies), red and brown Ladybird beetles and a myriad of other insects are attracted to the garden's limited habitat and resource.

During a recent week of burning-hot heat, the magnificent Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, a local pair with a fledgling youngster, took to the high vantage point of the neighbour's Cedar of Lebanon tree while keeping a watchful lookout over this garden. It was the tall birdbath they were interested in. To my great surprise they visited over three consecutive days, drinking from the birdbath while the youngster flapped around clumsily in the pear tree, calling its parent constantly. Since then they have used the bird bath in cooler weather. Seeing them so close, it is remarkable how big they are, and oh such elegant drinkers.

In this mid January rainy weather I have noticed the added interest of frog spawn in a shallow water bowl. Tiny lead-pencil sized elongated blobs with incredibly long fine hair-like tails. At night the possums use the neighbour's trees and our roof to traverse across into richer domains, gathering choicer foods than this garden offers. Bush rats bite through into the thick plastic compost bin, eating food scraps. The cicadas have all but ceased their raucous summer drumming, leaving empty shells littered over the garden.

In late winter up pop daffodils and snowdrops, followed by sweet scented violets. Roses, lavender and salvia attract the pollinators, as does the buddleia - its temporary value is a magnet for many species of butterfly. The May bush provides safe nesting and shelter for two species of Thornbills. A mature pear tree feeds the Mountain Lowry (Crimson Rosella) family who wait till the pears have ripened and take what the



Sulphur Crested Cockatoos have left, while the Satin Bowerbirds tear at the young quince blossom and fruit.

A tangle of jasmine and privet (next door) has overcome a dead tree trunk. This is where the Eastern Spinebills nest. They announce their presence every summer as they tweet "danger danger approaching" in their treble end calls.

A group of acrobatic King Parrots fly in, perch inquisitively on the gutter above me, then depart at speed. They are followed closely by their attentive fledgling young, who tailgate the mature birds' every movement, squeaking keen with hunger and daylight learning.

But the weeds, left unattended, will overcome the garden with its promise and existing habitat value, along with my aim to add native shrubs and pollinator attracting species. But first, there's the agapanthus ...

**Continued next month.**

Image: Crimson Rosella, adult, sometimes called the Mountain Lowry. (Roberta Johnston)

## Hut News Trivia Answer to Question 10

Yes, Emus did exist in the Blue Mountains. The explorer Blaxland noted in his journal that Emus were seen when his party were finding a way across the mountains. The noted naturalist and ornithologist, Alec H. Chisholm, wrote in a chapter of "The Blue Mountains", ed. by Patricia Rolfe, that emus were found at times throughout the mountains and on the Bathurst plains. They were also found east of the mountains and noted by the town named "Emu Plains".

The Tasmanian, Kangaroo Island and King Island Emu subspecies became extinct after the European settlement of Australia.

## Proof Reader for Hut News

Thank you to Sue Nicol who has been a valuable member of the Hut News Team. Sue has moved away from the mountains and is already sorely missed.

Among Sue's many skills is being a brilliant proof reader - not much escaped Sue's sharp eyes and red pen.

If a member of the Society can help with proof reading Hut News, please contact Christine at [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

## What can YOU do to help the natural environment?

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has been working to help protect the Blue Mountains natural environment for 64 years. Visit our website: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au>

**Blue Mountains Conservation has around 900 members and together we can make a difference!** Members will be voting for a new management committee at the AGM on 5th April. Find out more: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/agm/bmcs-mc-position-descriptions-latest.pdf>

**There are many ways you can help.** What are your interests? Do you want to join a subcommittee, grow native plants, take publicity photographs, help with clerical work, write submissions, help out at some of our events or market stalls, help with Hut News? Or nominate for Publicity Officer —a job description is on page 8.

**Find out more!** Please email or phone the Society. [bmcs@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:bmcs@bluemountains.org.au) or phone 0490 419 779. Please leave a message detailing what you are interested in. A member of the management committee will contact you.



## Plant Study Group at Ikara Ridge

Ikara Head track can be accessed via Victoria Falls Road, however the track beginning can be difficult to locate.

The track initially heads through thick forest dominated by plants from the Proteaceae family of plants such as Persoonias, Hakeas and Telopeas, before transitioning to more open conditions dominated by the Fabaceae family which includes Acacias and pea flowering plants. This group of plants are often first responders after a bushfire.

After the 2019 bushfires and decent rain, Ikara Ridge in 2020 was a good place for spotting pink flannel flowers.

This most recent visit by the Plant Study Group happened on a very warm Saturday, 8th February, and was an opportunity to see mistletoe (most likely *Amyema* sp.) in flower on *Eucalyptus racemosa*, and the spectacular fruit of *Hakea pachyphylla*.

The Plant Study Group's 2025 programme is up on the website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/psg/index.shtml>, so if you are interested in learning about our Blue Mountains flora do contact Meredith at [mountains@westnet.com.au](mailto:mountains@westnet.com.au)

Image: Mistletoe, likely *Amyema* sp.

## Celebrating an outstanding achievement by Banksia Park Bushcare Group!

Since 2010, the members of BMCC Banksia Park Bushcare Group have been restoring degraded Banksia Streamlet tributaries and sedge vegetation located to the east of Katoomba High School. This is ecologically sensitive work, as weed propagules have potential to become established on the downstream Jamison Valley escarpment and within the World Heritage Area.

The environmental advocacy and restoration efforts of the bushcare group have been so effective that BMCC environmental scientists recently inspected the site and reassessed the vegetation community, at that time classified as *Modified Vegetation*. A significant proportion of Banksia Park bushcare site and also an adjoining national park section, home to NPWS Gun Gun Bushcare Group, were reclassified as protected ecological community, *Blue Mountains Swamp*.



Banksia Park swampland—photo by Peter Ardill

What an outstanding outcome! Congratulations to all who have worked on the Banksia Park site and particularly to long-term nature restorationists Kerry (convenor), Adam, Michael, Nick and Peter. Congratulations also to all BMCC environmental managers and bushcare officers who have contributed to this great result. The Banksia Park Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday afternoon of the month, and new members are always welcome. See <https://www.bushcarebluemountains.org.au/groups/> - **BMCS Bushcare Officer**

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**

**1 March 2025**

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Society to be held at Mid Mountains Community Centre, 7 New Street, Lawson, at 2 PM on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Business will include receipt of reports, adoption of annual accounts, determination of structure of Management Committee, election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders and appointment of auditor.

Other Business: Appointment of Life Members.

**By order of the Management Committee  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc**

### New Saturday walkers welcomed

We need new walkers to explore with us on a Saturday. Our walks vary in length and degree of difficulty. There is something for most people. We walk in the Blue Mountains and the Gardens of Stone.

Recently we enjoyed the newly opened *Lost City* Walk in the Gardens of Stone. This impressive area is now accessible and paths take the walker right into the centre of dozens of pagodas. If you haven't been, you're missing out on a spectacular area right on our doorstep. We are returning on the 8th March to the Western side of the Gardens of Stone.

If interested in trying a walk with us, please phone Harold (0409 010 737) or Alice (0425 738 766). Our detailed walking program is on the Website <https://www.bluemountains.org.au>

You will be assured of a warm welcome.

— Alice, Saturday Walkers



## BUSHWALKING:

Enjoy the bush, learn about the Blue Mountains natural environment and find out why bushwalking has been a popular pastime in the Blue Mountains for more than 100 years. Our bushwalking convenor is Doug Nicholls [dougnicholls@bigpond.com](mailto:dougnicholls@bigpond.com) phone 0455 850 753.

Walks are graded and generally suitable for walkers of average fitness but may vary in degree of difficulty. Participants need to be aware of their own capabilities and can discuss with the bushwalking convenor, group coordinator or leader.

Underneath is a brief summary of walks and leaders for this month.

**Please check our website for detailed walks program and program changes.** <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml>

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short day walks 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Melanie Lawson 0431 214 687. [melanielawson@outlook.com.au](mailto:melanielawson@outlook.com.au)

Mar 10 **Walls lookout and Rigby Hill.** ~4.6km. Wayne 0407 643 512

Mar 17 **Terrace Falls** 6km 240m ascent/descent. Lyn 0432 352 850

Mar 24 **Narrow Neck Trail.** ~8km. Lois & David 0427 184 165

Mar 31 **Castle Head lookout and return** 4.2 km. Marian 0411 658 562

Apr 7 **Hat Hill to Bald Head and return** 6km. Barbara 0428 962 460.

**TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS:** 'Medium Day' walks suitable for walkers of average fitness, 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea/lunch/adequate water. Coordinator: Phill Cox (0415 449 174 [mrpacox@hotmail.com](mailto:mrpacox@hotmail.com))

Mar 11 **Radiata Plateau** G2/6K, Maurice 0402402783.

Mar 18 **Rocky Point & Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway \$5 / 1hr tour.** Lyn Blane 0407 498 397 & Roger Glane 0449 902 774. Gr1. 5km.

Mar 25 **Lost City Trail, Newnes.** Sharon Cox 0404 622 515. Gr3. 5-6km. ~ 180 m ↑↓

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS** are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 [denfenella12@bigpond.com](mailto:denfenella12@bigpond.com))

Mar 13 **Nature Trail, Wentworth Falls, 3.3km loop with gentle hills but many steps.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2  
Mar 20 **Hornes Point and Boronia Point, Mount Victoria.** Ros 0417 261 465. Gr 2.

Mar 27 **Frank Walford Park (The Gully), Katoomba.** Ros 0417 261 465. Gr 1.

Apr 3 **Sun Valley Fire Trail.** Mary 0410 691 396. Gr 1.

Apr 10 **Warrimoo Lookouts.** Ros 0417 261 465. Gr 2.

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson 04090 10736, [Harold.thompson@bigpond.com](mailto:Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).

Mar 8 **Lost City West.** Harold 0409 010 737. Gr 3-4, 6km. Map Lithgow

Mar 15 **Mount Banks.** Lotti 0418 291 814. Gr 3, 10km. Map Mt Wilson

Mar 22 **Blue Gum Swamp to Grose Head South via Shaws Ridge Loop.** Mike 0414 681 370. Gr 3, 9-13km. Map Springwood.

Mar 29 **Kamarah Ridge and Koombanda Ridge.** Harold 0409 010 737. Gr 3-4, 7km. Map Mt Wilson

**NOTE TO ALL BUSHWALKERS:** Meeting places and times are not given because sometimes there are changes to the program. Please check with the walks leader.

Visit the Saturday walks facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks?fref=fb>

## 25 years of living near the bush (Part 2)

-- Christine Davies

In 2000, I mulched the lawn of my new home and began to replace exotic plants with local native species. As the new garden matured, little native birds arrived. The garden provides food and shelter. Eastern Spinebills and White-browed Scrub Wrens take up residence during the warmer months and raise their young. One year the scrub wrens' nest, hidden among the leaves of a *Lomandra longifolia*, was raided by a Pied Currawong. In the past two years, a pair of Rufous Whistlers have come in the spring and, for two or three days, the male aggressively threatens his perceived competitor in the glass windows and doors.

There are blue wrens and thornbills and occasional visitors like the Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Yellow Robin and Rufous Fantail. An Eastern Whipbird came and stayed for a while after the fires. There are always Crimson Rosellas and Satin Bower Birds. Both species include nectar in their diet. Red Wattlebirds feed on nectar and insects and gather insects and other microfauna from the vegetation to feed their chicks.

The bird bath is in the garden near a glass door so I can watch the birds. The White-browed Scrub Wrens love the bird bath. At first there are two and then six or seven! The whole family will splash and wallow in the bath for ages. The Eastern Spinebill dives in and out in a flash. Each species has its own technique. I once saw a young Yellow Robin doing laps! The Scrub Wrens eat small spiders from around the windows of the house. Numerous Honeyeaters come to feed when the nectar is in the Banksias.

In the autumn there are little flocks with mixed bird species travelling together, safety in numbers but each species has different food preferences and they are not competing. It is always a thrill when the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos come. They feed on the Banksia and Hakea seeds.

We are so fortunate to live in this "City Within a National Park", an area so rich in wildlife. *To be continued ...*



Images: White-browed Scrub Wren enjoying a bath. (Christine Davies)

*A page for keen nature observers of all ages ...*  
**What to look for this autumn in the Blue Mountains**

## Gum Trees (Eucalypts)

If you read pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter, you will learn that there are 101 different species of Eucalypt in the Greater Blue Mountains and how important they are to the environment and our World Heritage Listing. These trees don't grow just anywhere, they have their own special requirements.

The bush immediately out the back of my home has mostly Sydney Peppermints and Scribbly Gums. I have noticed that the Scribbly Gums don't all flower at the same time of the year, so there may be two different species of Scribbly Gum.

Which species of Eucalypts grow in the bush near your home? See if you can find out what they are?



Leaf-curling Spiders protect themselves from predators by hiding inside a curled leaf. They sit in their cylinders with only the legs showing, feeling for vibrations of an insect when it is captured in the web.



## Lyrebirds

Lyrebirds breed in the winter. In order to attract females, the male lyrebird dances to display his magnificent tail feathers and sings a repertoire of his own song and songs of many other birds of the forest.

At the end of winter, in September, he loses his tail feathers and begins to grow new ones. This can take three months.

In February, bushwalkers at Wentworth Falls reported seeing two lyrebirds (at Lyrebird Lookout) and photographed this third one near the Conservation Hut, scratching the soil for food.

From now until winter, male lyrebirds will practice their song and dance routines. You might be lucky enough to witness a performance!

## Lots of Fungi

Mushrooms and other fungi are abundant after rain. They can be found in all shapes and colours.

How many colours and shapes of fungi can you find in the bush?

## Birds:

March has a high diversity of bird species. Some migrating species begin their journey to Queensland and further north. Currawongs flock together.

You might see a group of birds with several different species travelling together. There is safety in numbers. They are able to warn one another of danger.

If you notice a mixed flock, see how many different birds you can identify.

Images: Christine Davies.

***Adelina.***

**? What did you see during March in the Blue Mountains - in your garden or during your favourite bushwalk? Please tell Hut News!** Please send your stories, photos or drawings to Adelina at [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au) or post to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.