



HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

Issue No. 435
May 2025

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.



A meritorious contribution to the work of the Society and the Conservation Cause

Caroline Williams and Angela Langdon have made significant contributions to the Society's work on key environmental issues for at least 10 years and continue to do so. They were nominated for Life Membership of Blue Mountains Conservation Society by 10 members of the Society.

At the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 5th April, Lyndal Sullivan spoke enthusiastically about their work and members present were unanimous in voting in favour of the bestowal of Life Membership.

Image: New Life Members, Caroline Williams (left) and Angela Langdon (right) with Society President Annette Cam (centre). Photo by Margaret Sleath.

Hut News Deadline

Your monthly newsletter, Hut News, is delivered to members and goes online at the beginning of the month. Deadline for submissions is the 12th day of the previous month.

Send your submissions to the Hut News Editor hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. Word limit is 400 words or by negotiation. Enquiries to Christine by email or phone 0490 419 779 (leave a message).

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

Blue Mountains Conservation Society NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

We will be at Blackheath Growers Market on
SUNDAY 11th MAY, 8 am -12 noon

This will be your last chance to buy plants before the winter break. Planting NOW while the ground is still warm gives the roots a chance to establish and, come spring, they'll be raring to go!

Our volunteers will have new plants ready for sale at the Blackheath Growers Market on 14th September.

For enquiries and to place an order, please contact Nursery Manager, Bronwyn Murphy
plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

The Gumtree Songlines Walk

The Gumtree Songlines Walk in September 2001 was organised to celebrate and promote the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage listing by walking the land. A banner, depicting a map of the whole of the World Heritage Area, bears the hand prints and names of 262 participants. Read more about it on page 7 of this newsletter.

Let's walk the land again, in this 25th year since the listing! Let's remind ourselves how special this place is, and spread the word.



Image: Celebrators gather for the concluding campfire in Blue Gum Forest, at the end of the Gumtree Songlines Walk. The "gumnut capsules", each containing coals from the walk, are lined up alongside. (Photo Ian Brown)

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

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

President: Annette Cam

president@bluemountains.org.au

Senior Vice President: Annette Sartor

2nd Vice President: Vacant

Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson

sao@bluemountains.org.au

Bushcare Officer: Peter Ardill

bushcare@bluemountains.org.au

Environmental Education Officer:

Annette Sartor

education@bluemountains.org.au

Events Coordinator: Jo Carroll

events@bluemountains.org.au

Land Use Officer: Angela Langdon

landuse@bluemountains.org.au

Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull

hhull001@bigpond.net.au

Membership Secretary:

Andrew Solomon 0408 267 078

membership@bluemountains.org.au

National Parks & World Heritage Officer:

Madi Maclean natpks@bluemountains.org.au

Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Nursery Manager: Bronwyn Murphy

plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com

Publicity Officer: Vacant

Sustainability / Climate Change Officer:

Nathalie Verellen nathalieBMCS@gmail.com

Threatened Species Officer:

Liam Ramage 0478 088896

threatened_species@bluemountains.org.au

Treasurer and Public Officer:

Elizabeth Howard 0414 090 251

treasurer@bluemountains.org.au

Webmaster: Alan Crooks

webmaster@bluemountains.org.au

Bushwalking Convenor:

Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753

dougnicholls@bigpond.com

Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson

fmatter@bigpond.net.au

Thursday Interpretive Nature Group (TING):

Christine Davies

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Plant Study Group: Meredith Brownhill

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

or **phone** 0490 419 779 (leave a message).

*Contact management committee members by phone: Please leave a message with your full contact details and reason for your call on 0490 419 779.



The Flame Robin is an altitudinal migrant in the Blue Mountains and is listed as Vulnerable. Blue Mountains Bird Observers reports show that the Flame Robin numbers are declining in the City of the Blue Mountains. Read **Birds of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area** on page 3. Photo by Mark Ley.

AGM and new Management Committee

At our Annual General Meeting on Saturday 5th April, members elected a management committee for 2025-2026. The list of names and contact details are in the box on this page.

There are two vacancies

Please look at the following descriptions and consider helping with the work of the Society for the coming year (until the next AGM in April 2026). You will be a member of the management committee and attend meetings (usually held at Lawson, 9.15am to 12.15pm, on the 2nd Saturday of the month).

Second Vice-President

- Deputises for the President as required
- In consultation with the President, takes responsibility for nominated campaigns and activities
- Takes a special responsibility for liaising with MC members in their first term including familiarising them with their roles and responsibilities
- Undertakes business arising at meetings, assists sub-committees when required

Publicity Officer

The important role of Publicity Officer has been redefined:

- 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.
- **Note that this position is a coordinating position**, using the skills of volunteers and contractors.

If you want to find out more about either of these positions, please contact the Society President, Annette Cam (president@bluemountains.org.au) or leave a detailed message on 0490 419 779

Hut News Trivia—Question 12

Are termites, sometimes called white ants, really ants?
You will find the answer somewhere in this newsletter!

Birds of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

Changes to reporting rates of some Blue Mountains birds within the City of the Blue Mountains

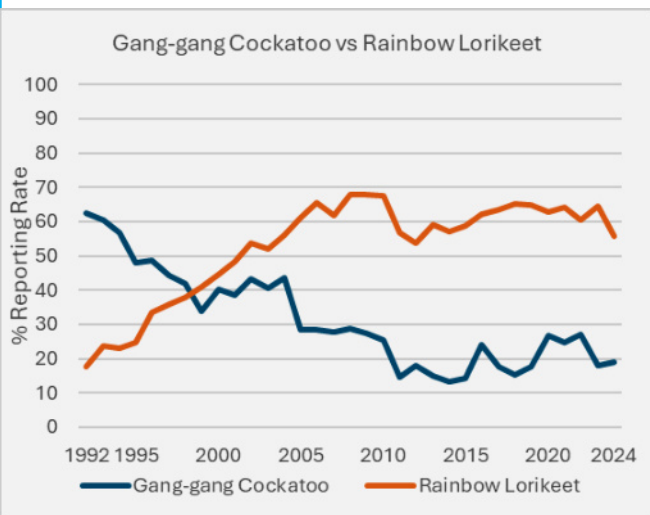
— Mark Ley

Blue Mountains Bird Observers (BMBO) has existed alongside BMCS for many years. We share many members and conservation principles, with BMBO focused on our avian wildlife. BMBO has been collecting data from our members since 1992 and has amassed a fantastic database of over 16,000 monthly sighting lists from across the Blue Mountains Local Government Area.

Our records are restricted to the LGA, not the whole World Heritage area. With this data we can look at the reporting rate of each species and identify where changes are occurring, within the City of the Blue Mountains.

The City of Blue Mountains is often described as the “City within a National Park” and as such much of the natural habitat surrounding our towns and villages remains largely intact. The majority of our birds have fared OK, not just common garden birds like **Crimson Rosella**, **Red Wattlebird** and **Satin Bowerbird**, but also birds more commonly seen only in the bush like lyrebirds, scrubwrens, thornbills, whipbirds and whistlers. Even less commonly encountered species with restricted or specific habitats, such as **Southern Emu-wren** and **Glossy Black-Cockatoo**, remain stable across the region.

Probably the most obvious negative change is the decline of the now endangered **Gang-gang Cockatoo**. Once common right across the LGA, they have become very hard to find in the lower and mid-mountains, being a bit more common in upper parts. At the same time, the appearance and spread of **Rainbow Lorikeets** has mirrored the loss of the Gang-gang. Many newer mountains residents will be surprised to know that Rainbow Lorikeets were absent from all parts except the lower mountains until the mid to late 1990s when they started to spread quickly and in large numbers. The graph shows the contrasting reporting rates of these two species since 1992. Fortunately, both graphs have levelled somewhat over the last decade.



Threatened Species

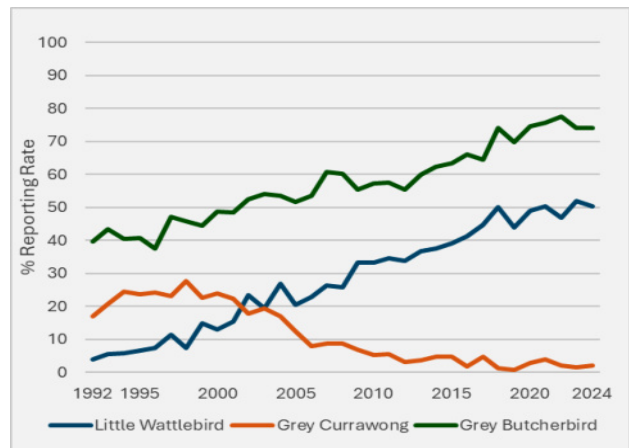
The Blue Mountains is home to a number of species listed nationally or in New South Wales as Endangered or Vulnerable. BMBO records show that, of these, the Gang-gang and the **Flame Robin**, an altitudinal migrant, are declining. One vulnerable species, the **Square-tailed Kite**, appears to be increasing across the Blue Mountains. See the table below.

Increasing	Steady	Declining
Square-tailed Kite V	Glossy Black-Cockatoo V	Gang-gang Cockatoo E
	Pilotbird V	Flame Robin V
	Varied Sittella V	
	Dusky Woodswallow V	
	Scarlet Robin V	

(The Powerful Owl is another local vulnerable species, we have no specific data but anecdotally steady).

Other Worrying and Surprising changes

Generally, most resident species have remained stable or experienced only minor fluctuations. However a number have suffered worrying declines over the years. These include **Grey Currawong** and **Satin Flycatcher**, which are mainly mid-upper mountains birds, and **Peaceful Dove**, from the lower mountains. **Galahs** too have declined significantly. Conversely, several have shown significant increases over the past 30+ years. The **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**, now present in all townships in large numbers, is an obvious example, while the incidence of species like **Little Wattlebird** (which was almost totally absent when BMBO records began) and **Grey Butcherbird** have increased quietly and steadily over time. The graph below highlights the rise of the latter two species compared to the decline of the Grey Currawong.



Migratory Species

The Blue Mountains hosts a number of spring/summer breeding migrants which face challenges along the whole length of their range. Of these, only the previously mentioned **Satin Flycatcher** is obviously declining. **Rufous Whistlers** are being reported more often, as are **Sacred Kingfishers**. The other migrants, including the large cuckoos, **Channel-billed** and **Eastern Koel**, and the smaller, **Black-faced Monarch** and **Rufous Fantail**, all remain steady.

Bat Night 2025: A Celebration of Connection and Conservation

Bat Night 2025 was alive with excitement as flying foxes and their carers engaged with the crowd.

The flying foxes demonstrated their inquisitive personalities even attempting to "borrow" a carer's phone as she reached for a photo. The event offered talks on flying foxes, microbats, their range, habitat and ecological importance including for pollination and pest control. This all fostered a deeper understanding of the importance of bat conservation. Families and children were thrilled by the range of activities, with face painting and visits to the bat site more popular than ever.

The Conservation Society's stall became a hub for meaningful conversations with community members: teachers conducting bat studies with their students; residents undertaking weed management; bio acoustic consultancy work; the 25th Anniversary of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage listing; and the ongoing challenges of maintaining the ecological integrity of Blue Mountains' ecosystems. Also discussed were campaigns relating to the Gardens of Stone mine waste pollution, the NSW Housing Reforms, weeds, the no curfew flight paths planned for Western Sydney Airport, and the reappearance of the proposal for a Wildlife Park (aka "The Croc Park") on Bodington Hill.

Overall, the evening afforded attendees opportunities to connect with ideas that support conservation, and it was inspiring to witness families and children forging connections with nature—and each other—in such a joyful way.

— **Annette Sartor, Education Officer**



Volunteers Lyndal, Elizabeth and Annette with members of the public



Sarah and Haley from Sydney Bats (Photos by Annette Sartor)



Will the Wombat

This story has many parallels – a devoted group of volunteers caring for wombats, orphaned, injured and, most importantly, those affected by mange which, if not treated, is a killer.

The photo of Will was taken by Anna Culliton, my longtime neighbour in Kanimbla Valley. Will was recently released, cured of mange, after nine weeks in care. Anna works with Kanimbla Wombats. The group can be found on Facebook.

Anna's volunteer work with wombats became full time after the 2019 fires. And full time in her case

means full time, including getting up at all hours to give small orphans their bottles. Most days she goes out on short or long trips to check out reports about mangy wombats having been seen on various properties. She has made trips to the wildlife vet at Dubbo Zoo but fortunately has found someone nearer home, at Camden, who can help with treatment for injured or sick animals. Many volunteers do the same.

Mange is caused by the *Sarcoptes scabiei* mite, brought to Australia 200 years ago by white colonists. The mite buries itself under the skin, causing extreme irritation and itchiness. Foxes are often seen with mange, which they can spread to wombats. Foxes have some resistance but wombats have none. The wombat scratches itself with its sharp claws and the wounds become infected. The wombat frequently becomes blind, is unable to feed and eventually dies of malnutrition or starvation.

You will sometimes see these usually nocturnal animals out in daylight trying to find food.

But the good news is that, if it is caught early enough, the mange can

be treated.

After about three months in care, if the wombat is sick enough to be caught, a complete cure can be affected, as it was in the case of Will.

Wombats not that sick can be treated with mange flaps, hung in burrow entrances. This is a small container set in a wire frame which tips up and spills as the animal goes in or out of its burrow, tipping a dose of moxidectin, an insecticide, onto its back.

All of this is expensive and requires many hours of volunteer effort. A cost of about \$200 per wombat is estimated to cover the cost of treating the mange. This includes the equipment – mange flaps, wildlife cameras and batteries, blue dye for marking active burrows, moxidectin and anti bacterial sprays - but doesn't take into account the kilometres driven by volunteers to multiple properties around the central west.

The organisation to contact if you see a sick or injured wombat is the Wildlife Carers Network, Central West.

<https://www.wombatprotection.org.au>

-- **Rosemary Butler**

Over 11,000 call on NSW Parliament to Repeal Wild Horse Heritage Act – a message from Jack Gough, Acting CEO, Invasive Species Council

Thank you so much to the 30 people who, at very short notice, came to NSW Parliament to hand over the petition calling for the repeal of Barilaro's feral horse protection act (Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018).

We had an amazing event with Wagga Wagga (Independent) MP, Joe McGirr, formally receiving the petition and joined by Labor Minister and Member for Monaro, Steve Whan MP, Labor Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Trish Doyle, Liberal Shadow Environment Minister, James Griffin MP, Sue Higginson from The Greens and Jeremy Buckingham from Legalise Cannabis. (See photo.)

All the MPs spoke strongly in favour of action on the horses, repeal of the Act and the impact of our campaign. (Wagga Wagga and Monaro are the two electorates most concerned with Kosciuszko National Park.)

Finally I just want to say a massive thank you to Linda Groom and Peter Conroy for their incredible effort in organising this petition – 75 volunteers, 50 locations, thousands of conversations and thousands of hours of hard work.

To register your interest in attending the parliamentary debate at 4pm on Thursday 15th May please contact Linda Groom lbroom@gmail.com.

Feral Horse Control: The Next Step

On May 15, the petition about feral horses will be debated by the Lower House of the NSW Parliament. The petition calls for the repeal of the "Barilaro" Law that currently gives heritage status to the (at least) 3,000 feral horses roaming in Kosciuszko National Park, even after a major culling exercise. It is now time to reflect on the history of feral horses in NSW in past centuries and the continuing threat to native species, water quality and environmental management that both large and small feral species pose in many parts of NSW.

The Real Historic Lessons from Feral Horses

In the Greater Blue Mountains, feral horses have had the highest profile in the catchment of the Coxs River from near Lithgow downstream to its confluence with the Wollondilly River, now inundated by the waters of Lake Burrangorang. The prevalence of feral horses in the Jenolan region of the Coxs catchment occurred from the 1830s to the 1890s. Kanimbla Valley born Bernard O'Reilly (1903-1978), famed as a chief instigator of Queensland's Lamington National Park, drew on anecdotal evidence from his relatives and neighbours for the descriptions of human interactions with feral horses in his book "Cullenbenbong", published in 1949.

Of feral horse stallions, O'Reilly writes: "Their mares were replenished when inbreeding threatened. Like the bad brigands which they were, they swooped down from their mountain eyries at night while the peaceful settlement slept ... before the settlers could take their Sniders (rifles) down from the racks they'd be gone, carrying off valuable mares back to their strongholds."



Receiving the petition to repeal Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018



Two of the species threatened by feral horses—*Ranunculus anemoneus* (Anemone buttercup) and Northern Corroboree Frog.

A later era in the Coxs catchment was depicted in the feature length documentary movie, "The Man from Coxs River", released in 2014. This depicts the capture and attempted rehoming of about two dozen feral horses which were threatening the quality of the Lake Burrangorang water supply, some dragged for kilometres by ropes around their necks at a cost to taxpayers of more than \$20,000 per animal. Some feral horses and other large ferals have since returned to the Coxs catchment and their management is an ongoing challenge.

How Alpine Feral Horses Gained Notoriety

Banjo Paterson (1864-1941) stayed on "Kiley's Run" at Adjungbilly NSW as a young man. This is now radiata pine plantation country. His poems, "The Man from Snowy River" and "On Kiley's Run" portray a similar relationship with feral horses to that in the works of O'Reilly. The farmers of marginal grazing country were inconvenienced by feral horses and wanted all horses domesticated. The ancestors of feral horses now roaming in near wilderness such as Kosciuszko National Park and the Burrangorang catchment may have fled there to escape the harassment of settlers, whose carelessness and indifference may have enabled feral horses to escape from domestication in the first place.

In view of all of the above, it is puzzling that a major challenge for 21st century environmentalists is to undo the efforts of politicians who want to see feral horses canonised. But that is our reality and the Invasive Species Council and its supporters deserve a full public gallery for the Parliamentary Debate on May 15.

— Don Morison



Gregg Borschmann in conversation with David Lindenmayer and John Walmsley at the Blue Mountains Music Festival, 2025

Review by Jo Carroll

(left to right)
David Lindenmayer,
John Walmsley and
Gregg Borschmann.

It was good to hear a couple of experienced conservationists tell it like it is in a presentation at the Blue Mountains Music Festival on 15 March 2025.

David Lindenmayer and John Walmsley were in conversation with Gregg Borschmann about the state of the environment. It was refreshing to hear the presenters discuss the actual state of the environment without sugar coating it and while sprinkling it with a few suggestions of what we can do.

There is so much environmental science out there now that tells us which direction we should be taking and by and large politicians and others in powerful positions are not acting responsibly. But we also have a strong contingent of everyday people who are understanding the need for new directions and who are fighting to turn our trajectory around, just look at the Rising Tide Movement.

From Lindenmayer consider:

- The importance of changing prescribed burning regimes. They are mostly making things more flammable – this is the science.
- The need to tax billionaires – after they have their first billion they should be hit with a levy of some cents in the dollar and that money is put toward paying for environmental restoration.
- The need to stop logging of native forests is crucial and must happen immediately. Our tax dollars subsidise this inefficient industry. We must demand our governments stop the logging.
- We need to use technology to stop wildfires before they even get a hold in the bushland and we have the drone technology to do this.

Adelina's Mailbag



Dear Adelina,
To my surprise, I discovered a galah being attacked by a python in a large plane tree in my Faulconbridge backyard.

On investigation, the python won. In the morning there was no evidence of the evening's drama.

— Maria Porter



John Walmsley and David Lindenmayer, before the event

More information <https://fennerschool.anu.edu.au/people/david-lindenmayer>

From Walmsley:

- The media misinterprets the science and often misleads us in this important discussion.
- As a mathematician he follows the data and says we have little time to turn the environmental situation around and we need to be active now.

More information <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2022/10/australian-geographic-society-gala-awards-2022-lifetime-of-conservation-john-wamsley-oam/>

Gregg Borschmann is an Oral Historian, Writer & Radio Producer

Photos by Karen Viggers.

INTO THE WILDERNESS 1-18 May GONDWANA & BEYOND 10am to 4pm Thursday—Monday

An exhibition of works by
Robert Brindley & Allan Coker
Gallery NWC, 188 Katoomba Street, Katoomba

This exhibition presents two artists with diverse artistic styles whose aim is to draw attention to the beauty and ecological importance of World Heritage wilderness areas including the remnants of the Gondwana super continent, the unmatched beauty of Tasmania, and beyond.

The opening event is on Saturday 3rd May between 4pm and 6pm. Refreshments will be served.

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

Celebrating World Heritage, 2001-style

“ Would you like to walk this land in celebration of this great honour which the World community has bestowed? Sure, you can walk it any time and probably have, but how about walking it to tell the world what a super special place it is?”

So said ecologist Wyn Jones in his call for bushwalkers to join the 2001 Gumtree Songlines Walk, to celebrate and promote the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage listing by walking the land. It would draw particular attention to the eucalypt-dominated biodiversity, and pay tribute to all those who'd walked the country through the millennia.

Commencing on 1 September 2001, bushwalking parties commenced in far-flung corners of the Area, proceeding in relays to ultimately converge at a gathering in Blue Gum Forest in the Grose Valley three weeks later. Community campfires were held along the way at relay points. Nearby communities were invited. The largest such events were held at Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp) and Newnes Plateau.

The walkers recorded gumtree species and other flora and fauna of interest. For my part, I walked for seven days with five others from Ganguddy to Glen Davis via a circuitous route through the Wollemi. We logged 17 eucalypt species, and had endless discussions about several others we weren't sure about!

A fun part of the exercise involved the symbolic transfer of a sample of coals from every campfire along the way. Samples from every fire ended up in a ceremonial fire at Blue Gum. Clay tiles were baked on that fire for all those present, as a memento. The coals themselves were carried along the way in wooden capsules fashioned in the shape of various gumtree fruits.

The Blue Gum celebration also involved theatre and music, with many people either coming for the day or camping the night at Acacia Flat. The group Didgeridoo Dingo provided the highlight of the evening entertainments.

Meanwhile, a large (8 metres long) banner made its appearance at Blue Gum Forest and at the community events. It depicted a map of the whole World Heritage Area; people were invited to make a hand print on it, with their name, near the map location where they gathered at the time. The banner, which carries 262 legible names, was displayed at the Conservation Society's 2025 AGM.

The Gumtree Songlines Walk almost came to be overshadowed by world events. While some of the walkers were out in the bush, the Al-Qaeda terrorists brought down the Twin Towers, in what became known as September 11. The first several pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the following Saturday were dedicated exclusively to the tragedy and its repercussions—except for a good news story about the coming celebration in Blue Gum Forest. Nature shone through!

How about walking the land again, in this 25th year since the listing? By yourself or with an organised party. Deep in the wilderness or simply on the edge. Remind yourself how special this place is, and spread the word. Maybe join others in Blue Gum Forest on 2 September (the anniversary of the reservation of the Forest), to celebrate how it all began.

— Andy Macqueen

The page 1 image by Ian Brown shows celebrators gathering for the concluding campfire in Blue Gum Forest, at the end of the Gumtree Songlines Walk in 2001.

Richard Delaney photographed the banner.



Wildlife Real Estate event: Habitat conservation and innovation

Our event “Wildlife Real Estate – Building Homes for Nature”, held at Lawson on Saturday 22 March, was a huge success attracting community members of all ages. The afternoon provided an engaging and educational opportunity to learn about the critical role of tree hollows and habitat conservation in protecting native wildlife.

We saw a steady flow of visitors with families, conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts exploring displays and exhibits; while children were captivated by a diverse collection of live animals, including spiders, snakes and other fascinating creatures provided by Me & Zoo.

Experts from Habitat Innovations and Management, Hollowhog, Mountains for Wildlife and Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah shared insights into the types of homes that are critical for our native wildlife.

Representatives from Blue Mountains Bird Observers and the Saving Our Species program spoke about current conservation efforts for Gang-gang Cockatoos and Glossy Black Cockatoos, including population monitoring and a potential collaborative project in the Blue Mountains to support them. Our Society could be involved in this project so watch this space!

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society thanks all speakers, exhibitors and attendees for making the event a success and for their commitment to supporting native wildlife in the Blue Mountains.



Image: Wildlife Real Estate, Kate Lawrence Jaci Tebb with Matt Stephens of Hollowhog. Credit Rob Linigen.



Image: P. Ardill

Environmental weeds and their impacts:

Japanese Honeysuckle, a wildlife habitat and biodiversity trasher

Taken at Katoomba Creek, north Katoomba, in November 2024, the accompanying photograph portrays introduced vine, Japanese Honeysuckle (cream flowers), spreading over a glorious Crimson Bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*). Unless treated, the honeysuckle will eventually overwhelm the bottlebrush.

Japanese Honeysuckle is a BMCC Local Priority Weed. Large infestations of this plant can completely smother and destroy indigenous vegetation communities, including Blue Mountains Swamps, riparian vegetation and even forests.

Is this plant growing in your garden? Please try to remove it, as the seed can be distributed long distances by birds, stormwater and streams, and deposited in healthy bushland.

For identification and management advice, see <https://weedsbluemountains.org.au/weeds/japanese-honeysuckle/>. BMCS members requiring management assistance - contact bushcare@bluemountains.org.au.

Contributions to this series are very welcome.

— **BMCS Bushcare Officer.**

Plant Group Visit the Australian Botanic Garden

The Australian Botanic Garden is located in South Western Sydney on Dharawal country and contains the National Herbarium, Plantbank, the Australian Institute of Botanical Science and a memorial to the stolen generations as well as some 4,000 species of plants. Dr Peter Cuneo, previously manager of the Seedbank and Restoration Research, led our group through the woodland walk containing Cumberland Plain vegetation such as *Eucalyptus tereticornis* (pictured), *Eucalyptus moluccana* and *Eucalyptus crebra*.

The transformation of what was once agricultural land into a site preserving this critically endangered ecological community, plus a site for showcasing a wide variety of native species from around the country, is an impressive achievement. This was enjoyed not only by the Plant Study Group but by locals such as a goanna, a red bellied black snake and some musk lorikeets. There is so much more to explore here. What a fantastic day.

Plant Groups 2025 programme is 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

— **Janice Hughes**



Eucalyptus tereticornis (Forest Red Gum)

A tribute to Denis Kevans at the Blue Mountains Music Festival, 2025

Blue Mountains poet, Denis Kevans, known as the “Poet Lorikeet”, is commemorated in the **Denis Kevans Bushland Garden**, near his former home at Wentworth Falls. Denis passed away 20 years ago.

At the Blue Mountains Music Festival, 2025, poets paid tribute to Denis Kevans. Wyn Jones launched a book of poetry by mostly local poets “**Poet Lorikeet ... witty voice of a humane generation**”.

A 20 Year Old Poem Denis Kevans (1939-2005)

On a platform seat
or in a bus shelter,
maybe waiting for a cab,
even
sitting in back of the audience
at a folk club,
Denis would wait patiently.

Was he waiting for
one of his many friends to come
along, pass the time?

No matter,
someone always did.

Mind-enriching conversation,
he could say “Mate!”
with total impunity,
so proudly,
as if only he deserved that right.

I saw him just before
he caught the last bus

and pray that he made
his destination,
with his spirit intact.

On Yer, Mate!

— **Brian Bell**

Hut News Trivia: Answer to Question 12

No! Research in recent years has confirmed that termites are a social kind of cockroach. They have been moved into the cockroach order, called Blattodea. DNA testing indicates termites split from cockroaches 150 million years ago.

Unlike cockroaches, which are usually solitary creatures, the termite evolved a highly stratified social structure, including a king and queen, workers and soldiers. It also evolved to subsist on its favourite food: wood.

Malcolm Turnbull plants 29th tree in the Prime Ministers’ Corridor of Oaks



Malcolm Turnbull received a bipartisan warm welcome from serving Macquarie MP Susan Templeman and former Macquarie MP Louise Markus as well as the representatives of Blue Mountains City Council present at his tree planting.

The former Prime Minister, who has emphasised his concerns about climate change, made clear that he was gratified that quite a number of young people from the Blue Mountains were in attendance.

In Mr Turnbull’s preliminary speech, he told his audience that our law for compulsory voting and preferential system of deciding the result give young Australians an excellent opportunity to engage with fellow citizens on political issues most affecting our future because discussion is pushed towards the political centre.

After placing his tree, the 2015-2018 Prime Minister took quite some time to engage in a small group with some of the school students who had witnessed the event. Clearly, Malcolm Turnbull has energy to steer the emerging generation of custodians of Australia’s environment and society away from the cynicism, populism and divisiveness that has afflicted too many once great Western democracies.

— **Don Morison (Image by Ron Hyslop)**

Walking with Denis Kevans

Such a lovely month, August 1997, with a succession of frosty nights followed by balmy days with clear blue skies. Near the beginning of the month I led a walk to Walls Cave, Blackheath, a delightful walk with bright golden Sunshine Wattle scattered through the woodland, banksias dripping nectar and birds, hundreds of them.

We crossed a little bridge over a bubbling mountain stream where Denis Kevans entertained us in verse describing the surrounding bushland and the things we had seen. On a sandy beach near Walls Cave, Denis recited his poem “Ah Brother, Have you any Sacred Sites?” and as he spoke his voice echoed in the cave, coming back to us like murmurs of agreement from the Ancients.

We call ourselves the TING bushwalkers and continue to walk today though some of us are growing old. But none of us have forgotten that special day when we ... **Walked with Denis Kevans.**

— **Christine Davies**

How to Join the Society

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary organization of more than 900 members. Our goal is to protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains. Join online at www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml or phone 0408 267 078. Membership includes our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post or by email. **Please tick the box if you want a newsletter to be posted to you.**

It's A JUNGLE OUT THERE

Autumn is the time for currawongs
threatening, arriving in force,
descending on my backyard
like Mafia hoods
swaggering into a 2-hat restaurant
pushy and confident
they'll not have to pick up the tab —
everything on the house for this mob.

Or am I too hard?

Maybe it's just the Currawong TAFE College,
the first day of Semester,
the parents turning up too
along with their offspring -
all eager young Apprentices
watching their instructor's every move,
keen to hone the skills of their trade:

Forage.
Locate.
KILL.

And so studious too —
practising each day,
as long as there is light,
on all manner of prey:

bulldog ants and beetle larvae;
stick insects and stinkbugs;
wee worms and grubs
quietly going about their business
among the grass;

and little long-legged nymphs
just now hatching from cicada eggs,
left in early Summer —
humble, self-effacing little buggers,
wanting to avoid the limelight,
desperate to burrow down
into the dark underground,
aspiring only to seven years solitude;

even the pretty Blue Wren's
fledglings and nestlings
on the menu
if they be found.

Like I said, these currawongs
they could be the Mafia.

But the more I look,
those long beaked jaws and unblinking eyes
remind me of John Wayne,
winning the war on his own
in The Sands of Iwo Jima,
and They Were Expendable:

learning to kill or be killed,
'cause it's a jungle out there.

— Paddy Cavanagh,

March 2025

Climate Change rattles our gate

The waves spraying up over the breakwater at the little lighthouse (photographed) are rarely as big as on Tuesday 1st April, some officially measured at 5 to 6 metres. We were there around mid-tide. At midnight there was a yet higher tide and a stronger swell, something that would have been truly spectacular, lit fairly well by the Belmore Basin (old harbour) streetlights.

It was Tuesday midnight when the worst damage occurred along perhaps half the NSW coast. You may have seen reports from Newcastle Ocean Baths, as well as Bronte, Coogee and Bondi. It seems the Illawarra coastal structures fared better, although people around here have not seen in 40 years the ocean push in so high as to meet the decking of the shared pathway bridge here over Hewitt's Creek entrance.

Rocks nearly half a metre across were rolled up over the metre high wall now surrounding Black Beach at Kiama and deposited on the grass! It was astounding how high the waves were crashing up against Blowhole Point, but the higher ocean choked the Blowhole itself. And finally, the



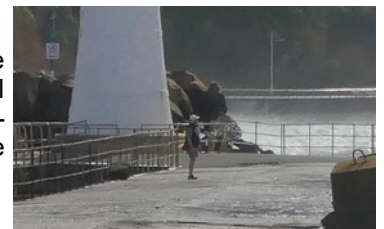
delightful Ocean Pool at Ulladulla (TING's lunch stop en route to Merry Beach last year) lost part of its seawall and much of its fencing and will be closed for quite some time.

A week later, Anne and I walked back from Wombarra Station along beaches and rock shelves. We noticed mostly just lowered sand levels on all the beaches and a lot of huge seaweed collections, no real damage.

Meanwhile, the ocean remains a balmy 23 to 24 degrees, soon with me in it!

— Geoff Dernee, Wollongong

Geoff confirms that the unidentified figure standing near the little lighthouse was well protected by the breakwater when the photograph was taken. Midnight might have been another story. Editor.





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, 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.
 May 5 **Nellie's Glen and Devil's Hole Circuit.** 10km, 534 ascent/descent. Gr4. Melanie 0431 214 687
 May 12 **Neates Glen Loop via Braeside Fire Trail and Evans Lookout.** 7.5km approx. Lois 0427 184 165
 May 19 **Darwin's walk, undercliff/overcliff and nature track loop.** 10.3km. Gr3. Mike 0414 681 370
 May 26 **Lost World** 6.2km. Gr3. Lyn 0432 352 850
 Jun 2 **Fortress Ridge trail** 7.4km. Gr3. Melanie 0431 214 687.
 Jun 9 – no walk scheduled due to Public Holiday

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)
 May 6 **Olympic Park, Kronos Hill region (many birds & water views).** Train/bus. Judith Dyer 0419 780 640. Gr1, Easy 6 km.
 May 13 **Blue Gum Swamp Circuit.** Gr2. 10 km. Bobby Hunter 0429 708 393.
 May 20 **Malabar Headland Walk to Maroubra Beach.** Train/Light rail/bus. Roger Blane 0449 902 774 & Lynne Blane 0407 498 397. Gr2, Medium 6½ km.
 May 27 **Sea Cliff Bridge, Coalcliff (Lunch at Scarborough Hotel).** Trains. Doug Nicholls 455 850 753. Gr2, Easy 4 km.
 Jun 3 **Castle Head, Narrow Neck Trail.** Phill Cox 0415 449 174. Gr2, Medium 4½ km, 150 m ↑ ↓ **PLB REQUIRED.**

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 denfenella12@bigpond.com)
 May 8 **Colo River Lookout.** Easy. 3km. Carpool \$5. Maurice 0402 402 783. Gr 1.
 May 15 **Bell Perimeter Walk.** Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2
 May 22 **Darwins Walk, Wentworth Falls.** Beverley 4757 2076. Grade 2
 May 29 **Darks Common and The Bluff.** Maurice 0402 402 783. Grade 2
 Jun 5 **Glenbrook Lookouts, Lennox Bridge and Old Quarry Circuit.** Ros 0417 261 465. Grade 2
 Jun 12 **Minnie Ha Ha Falls, Katoomba** Steven 0412 412 712. Grade 2

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson 0409 010 737, Harold.thompson@bigpond.com).
 May 10 **Kamarah and Kombanda Ridges.** Harold 0409 010 737. Gr 3-4, 9km. Map Mt Wilson
 May 17 **Hat Hill Ridges and Pagodas.** Harold 0409 010 737. Gr 3-4, 6km. Map Katoomba
 May 24 **Liversidge Hill.** Alice 0425 738 766. Gr 3, 10km. Map Mt Wilson
 May 31 **Springwood to Glenbrook and Sassafras Gully.** Geoff 0497 638 033, Gr 3, 11km. Map Springwood.

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=nf>

Overnight trip to Rylstone/Kandos area

On the 3rd & 4th April, 10 Society members travelled to the Rylstone and Kandos area for an overnight stay.

On day 1, the group visited the very interesting Kandos museum where we were given an informative account of the history of the Kandos cement factory. This was followed by a visit to the Rylstone Air Park where Maurice gave an account of how the park was developed. The final visit for the afternoon was an easy stroll along the banks of the Cudgegong River in Rylstone where there had been reports of platypus activity. Sadly, nothing to spot this day.

Day 2 commenced with a half hour drive out to Dunns Swamp on the Cudgegong, within the Wollemi National Park. Here, three of the party took to the water in their kayaks while the remainder explored the various walking tracks in and around the swamp. A great two days was had by all, complimented by superb weather.

It might be noted for future trips to be considered by other members, that the road to Dunns Swamp is now sealed all the way.

— Maurice Kerkham

(Image: Kayakers at Dunns Swamp, by Mary Fell)



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



Autumn flowering plants:
Wattle—*Acacia suaveolens* (left)
Little orchid—*Caladenia picta* (above)

Photos by Sue Nicol.

Fungi: Puffballs are a type of fungus featuring a ball-shaped fruit body that (when mature) bursts on contact or impact, releasing a cloud of dust-like spores into the surrounding area.

? What did you see in the Blue Mountains - in your garden or during your favourite bushwalk - during May? Was it something that wasn't there last month? Please tell Hut News! Send your stories, photos or drawings to Adelina at hutnews@bluemountains.org.au or post to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782.

Orphaned Wombat Joeys

The three wombat joeys were orphaned and looked after by wildlife carer Anna in the Kanimbla Valley until old enough to be released into the wild. They are just friends not related. Wombats are solitary animals, but it is easier for a foster carer to raise wombat joeys when they are “buddied”.

Wombats are marsupial mammals. The newborn joey is born furless and weighs as little as 0.32 grams and is less than 2cm in length. When it is born, it has to crawl from the birth canal into the mother's pouch.

The pouch faces backwards, which protects the joey while the mother is digging. The joey's fur does not begin to grow until it is 4-5 months old.

The joey stays in the pouch for 8 to 9 months. After emerging from the pouch it will stay with its mother for another year or more.

You will rarely see wombats in the wild because they are nocturnal. Sadly, there is a very high wombat mortality rate on roads on the Northern Tableland.

Photo by Anna Culliton.

