



HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

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Visitors enjoy sweeping views over the Grose Wilderness

The Blue Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in New South Wales, welcoming 7.8 million visits last financial year. Up to 250,000 visitors a year come to Govetts Leap Lookout. Hidden in the valley is a patch of majestic blue gums which were saved by early bushwalkers for future generations.



Walnuts to World Heritage: how to grow a million hectares

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area didn't just happen. It was inscribed on 29 November 2000 after decades of campaigns by all sorts of people, in the face of threats from mining, dams, forestry, farming and other pressures.

Nevertheless, the seminal event that eventually led to the World Heritage Area was the reservation of the 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 Conservation Society at the Annual General Meeting on 5 April 2025, historian Andy Macqueen told the stories of the Blue Gum Forest campaign and other events that eventually gave rise to World Heritage recognition of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is comprised of seven national parks: Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Nattai, Kanangra-Boyd, Gardens of Stone, Thirlmere Lakes National Parks, and the Jenolan Karst Conservation Reserve.

Celebrating our heritage and our legacy

Greetings to you as we reach spring, the season of celebration for the Blue Mountains – celebration of the Saving of Blue Gum Forest, and the World Heritage Area we live within.

The Blue Gum 100 group is dedicated to promoting the values of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area to the wider community. The group includes young people and seniors embracing knowledge sharing across generations and cultures.

Every year on 2 September, a few people walk to the Blue Gum Forest to commemorate the saving



In 2025, some bushwalkers and their friends met at Perrys Lookdown to celebrate the 93rd anniversary of the saving of the Blue Gum Forest. Some were descendants of men and women who had been involved in the campaign to save the Blue Gum Forest.
Photo: Richard Delaney

Local native plants for your garden

Blue Mountains Conservation Society nursery volunteers will be at the Blackheath Growers Market on Sunday 13 September and on the second Sunday of following months. Please come along and say hello to our hard-working volunteers and check out what local native plants will grow best in your garden.

New volunteers are welcome. Are you interested in helping out at the nursery one morning a week?

Enquiries nursery@bluemountains.org.au

The Blackheath Growers Market is run on the 2nd Sunday of every month (except January), 8 am to 12 noon, at the Blackheath Community Centre. You will find over 60 growers who can tantalise your tastebuds with a wide array of local and regional foods, fruits and vegetables, meats, breads and cheeses (cow, goat and sheep), olive oils and local wines, nuts and honey, free range eggs, spices and condiments, plants and seedlings, a wide range of baked goods and so much more. Just a short stroll from Blackheath railway station.

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* To contact management committee and subcommittee members by phone, please leave a message with your full contact details and reason for your call on **0490 419 779**.



President's report

As winter begins to loosen its grip on the Mountains, there is plenty happening at Blue Mountains Conservation Society — from advocacy on pressing environmental issues to planning the Society's future direction.

On 30 July, I joined Peter Ardill (Bushcare Officer and 2nd VP), Carolyn Williams and Lyndal Sullivan (Land-Use Sub-Committee) in meeting State MP Trish Doyle to discuss several important issues, including the Housing Delivery Authority and Targeted Assessment Pathway, the Draft Sydney Plan and urban footprint, feral trout stocking in Wentworth Falls Lake, the Companion Animal Review, environmental weeds along the railway corridor, land clearing and future traffic pressures along the Great Western Highway.

We also clarified communication protocols between BMCS and Trish Doyle's office. Members wishing to contact the electoral office on behalf of BMCS are asked to do so through the President. Please contact me if you have any questions about this arrangement.

Our focus on weeds continues! On 12 July, together with Liam Ramage (Threatened Species Officer), Peter Ardill and other BMCS and Bushcare members, I attended the second Blue Mountains Weed Action Workshop (convened by Andrew Cox and Pip Walsh) where the group developed strategies for working with Council to tackle weeds. A public meeting on weeds is planned for November.

July saw a Strategic Planning Workshop, where we explored BMCS's mission and vision, member engagement and participation, and priorities for the next two to five years. The Members Survey 2026 provided valuable insights into both our conservation priorities and the future of the Society. Further workshops will turn these ideas into goals and actions and evaluate our progress. A big thank you to Pip Walsh for volunteering her expertise to this process.

Community engagement remains a focus. On 26 July, Annette Cam (Senior VP) and I spoke at the Action for Community and Environment (ACE) event, *Nature: For Our Children's Future*, in Lawson. On 30 July, Andrew Solomon (Membership Secretary) and I also attended the opening of the new reading room at Varuna.

We are participating in the Day of Peace on 12 September, Springwood Festival on 19 September, and the Mountains Sustainability Festival on 26 September.

Our regular nursery stall continues at the Blackheath markets from Sunday 13 September. We are still looking for a Nursery (Admin) Manager – please contact me!

Spring has arrived!

Annette Sartor president@bluemountains.org.au

Join Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Find out how you can help preserve our beautiful World Heritage Area

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

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

The seriousness of the long-distance campaigner. Blue Mountains State MP, Trish Doyle, and the late Norm Harris, one of our Society's most persistent campaigners, reacted in ways true to themselves when they realised the length of the march that had established the Grand Clifftop Walk from Wentworth Falls to Katoomba.

(Photo supplied by Trish Doyle)



Tribute to Norm Harris

I acknowledge Norm Harris, who left us earthside on 21 July at the tender age of 95. Our Blue Mountains community – along with Norm's family, many friends, Labor Party mates, neighbours, colleagues and collaborators in the environment movement from NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains City Council and Bushcare groups – farewelled him in a moving funeral service at Leura.

I had the great pleasure of knowing, walking with and working with Norm. He was a man of quiet strength and unwavering principle: steadfast, loyal, and committed to his family, friends, fairness, justice and the causes he believed in.

Norm Harris was a gentleman, a gentle, kind and sweet man, an indefatigable conservationist and campaigner, a visionary, and a friend. He is most famous for the many years – over 20 – of campaigning successive governments, Ministers, and local members to see the Grand Cliff Top Walk come to fruition in 2024. Norm's work was instrumental in securing the support and funding that brought that remarkable project to life. It is his lasting legacy, one of absolute dedication.

I pay tribute to Norm's life. He will be remembered and missed. May he now Rest in Peace, reunited with his darling wife Laurel.

Trish Doyle MP

Member for the Blue Mountains
Parliamentary Secretary for Environment, Heritage,
Climate Change & Energy



H5N1 bird flu

Update September 2026

High pathogenicity Avian Influenza H5N1 continues to be infecting birds in Australia. In NSW two cases on migratory Petrel birds were found on the north coast and more recently three cases have been confirmed on Greater Crested Terns which are native birds. One found at Wentworth near the Darling and Murray River junction, one at Narooma on the south coast and one at Snug Cove, Eden on the far south coast. This far south coast detection will result in the establishment of an enhanced surveillance area around Eden by the state government with monitoring for sick and dead birds on the ground, on waterways and from the air using drones.

Following the announcement from the Federal Government that an H5N1 vaccine has been approved for use in native birds, the NSW Government is advancing plans to vaccinate captive native species held in zoos and other captive areas. This is important for endangered species such as Regent Honeyeaters, where breeding programs are in place. Birds must be captive as two vaccination shots are required, although the VIC Government is planning to vaccinate 5,000 Little or Fairy Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) on Phillip Island, as they return to their same nesting areas from the water each evening.

Public reporting is an important part of the response to bird flu, with calls to the Emergency Animal Hotline critical in supporting detection efforts. If you find sick or dead birds or animals, the Australian Centre for Disease Control says:

- Do not handle the birds or animals
- Record your location and what you see (take photos or video, if possible), also GPS reading
- Report this information to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on **1800 675 888**

Late note: As we go to print it has been reported that a long-nosed fur seal found at Beachport south of Adelaide is Australia's first case of H5N1 bird flu infecting a mammal on the mainland. Also a fox found in suburban Adelaide is suspected to have been infected with the H5N1 bird flu.

Chris Whiteman



Nepean River bank (Ron Hyslop)

Exhibition by Leanne Tobin at the Lewers Gallery

On 12 August, the Interpretive Nature Group visited the art exhibition created by First Australian woman Leanne Tobin showing at the Lewers Gallery at Emu Plains. This free exhibition which continues until 1 November 2026, every day, was a very worthwhile insight into the very long indigenous history of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, the dreamtime stories of the Darug people and the relationship of Leanne's people to the natural environment. Our members were delighted by the artist's skill at multiple genres of artwork, ranging from portraiture to animations. We noted the gallery's high quality café serves breakfasts and lunches daily.

The venue also provided an opportunity to walk along the Nepean River bank and observe the effects of this year's flooding. Despite the presence of urban development surrounding this part of the Nepean Valley, it is still possible to see examples of the wildlife and imagine the natural forces that have given this valley its ongoing biodiversity and fertility.

To find out about further TING events, contact Christine Davies hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Blue Mountains International Day of Peace 2026 Saturday 12 September: Katoomba Civic Centre

The **Day of Peace** is about acknowledging and developing a Culture of Peace now and for the future: it will celebrate the diverse Blue Mountain community members and groups who all – directly or indirectly – work toward positive, sustainable peace, bring peace alive for children and young people through their participation in creative projects, youth-led workshops and panels, through activities on the day and ongoing.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society will be there with a stall and all the latest campaign information.

Please come and say hello to our volunteers.

30 SEPTEMBER–4 OCTOBER 2026 NEWKIND, Redbank Victoria

<https://www.newkindconference.com/>

NEWKIND is a festival-style conference that brings people from all walks of life together to celebrate our diversity, build bridges of understanding, and inspire collective action for positive social change.

Enjoy five days of inspiring talks, discussion panels, workshops, music, arts and entertainment in a family-friendly environment, with lovingly prepared meals and camping under the stars in regional Victoria.

Suzanne Rix

Blue Mountains Conservation Society member

Hut News Trivia: Question 26

How many migratory birds visit Australia each year?

The answer can be found on another page of this newsletter.

Minnehaha Falls

It was late afternoon when we came to the pool but the sun was still warm on the rocks.

The cool water embraced our bodies, enveloped us in peace, in solitude.

The quiet couple with the two small children welcomed our nakedness, joined us in the pool, offered us fruit, gave warm companionship. The calm escarpment towered above us all.

Beside the steep track above the waterfall the scribbly gums glowed like candles. Our bodies glowed, cool with the pool's depths. The scent of the water swept over us. You reached for my hand.

Graham Alcorn

Living Near the Bush

HOW TO SUPPORT NATURE IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS



Blue Mountains Conservation Society

To view the online flip book or download a PDF version visit

<https://bluemountains.org.au/LNTB.shtml>

A limited number of print copies are available at Society events.

The Gardens of Stone tourism degradation

Despite the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area being “protected”, a wave of short-sighted proposals continues

At State Mine Gully and half in the Conservation Area: kilometres of bike track will scar large areas of sandstone rock-plate, degrading the pagoda views from Dobbs Drift lookout – the gateway to the region from Lithgow. The bike park’s design and the development consent specifies that this gully’s abundant rock will be utilised for jumps, armouring and trail walls.¹

At Lost City: two roads (one for 4WD use) and a carpark spoil iconic views and visitors will look across the valley at glinting car windshields and cars detracting from the scenic splendour of Lithgow’s prime pagoda attraction.

In pristine pagoda landscapes: three private glamping resorts are planned. Approving them signals to future developers that the best locations in NSW parks can be developed.²

Shattering the silence: the Emirates are seeking fly-in, fly-out operations for its Wolgan Valley Resort up to 210 helicopter flights per week over campgrounds, proposed glamping resorts and other attractions in the Gardens of Stone. This noise barrage would obliterate peaceful enjoyment of the park’s tranquillity. The lower Blue Mountains villages also would suffer additional helicopter noise.³

The current tourism focused masterplan approach has been a bridgehead for decisions degrading park heritage and scenery. Compromising unique natural features with poorly located facilities is a risky tourism strategy because tourists might believe the park is degraded and go elsewhere.

In 2014, a Planning Assessment Commission determined after extensive inquiry that pagoda



Dobbs Drift view west spoiled by bike park.

landforms are of “special significance” and deserve the “highest level of protection”. The nature-focussed management of **Destination Pagoda**⁴ would boost tourism and prevent roads, resorts and bike parks built in pagoda landscapes.

Not too late to stop resort development:

Write to **Premier Chris Minns**⁵ Ask Premier Minns if his legacy will be the protection of our national parks and conservation reserves, or the damaging privatisation of them (this link goes to the Premier’s webpage, so draft your letter to Premier Minns off-line first to avoid silly mistakes).

For more information go to the **Gardens of Stone website**.²

Keith Muir

Gardens of Stone Alliance

Links:

¹ <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/planning-panel/state-mine-gully-mountain-bike-track>

² <https://www.gardensofstone.org.au/times-running-out-gardens-stone>

³ <https://www.gardensofstone.org.au/stop-helicopter-apocalypse>

⁴ <https://bit.ly/3TNJUHA>

⁵ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/premier-of-nsw/contact-premier>

Discover Plant Local

Looking for the perfect plants for your garden? Blue Mountains City Council’s interactive **Plant Local** tool helps you discover more than 600 indigenous plant species suited to local conditions, making it easy to create a garden that thrives, supports local wildlife and strengthens the unique ecosystems of the Blue Mountains.

Explore Plant Local today:

Visit: <https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/plant-local>

Help us to grow this community resource! If you have photographs of locally indigenous plants to share, or suggestions for new species that are easily sourced, we would love to hear from you.

Send your contributions to
plantlocal@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Blue Mountains Sustainability Festival

Saturday 26 September

Katoomba Civic Centre and surrounds

Katoomba and Leura will come alive with hands-on workshops, inspiring talks, market stalls, shopping trail and live events that celebrate eco-friendly choices and local creativity.

Explore vintage treasures, support local businesses and organisations, and get inspired.

Visit the Blue Mountains Conservation Society stall at the Katoomba Civic Centre and discover how small actions can make a big difference.

Book launch:

Living Near the Bush: How to Support Nature in the Blue Mountains

packed with practical ways residents can reduce their environmental impact and help build a more resilient Blue Mountains.

The hell child takes flight

Opinion by Don Morison

Squillions more taxpayer dollars soon to be gone with the wind?

Arguably, from October 2026, four urbanised regions in Australia will have a pair of passenger airports offering regular domestic flights. Brisbane and Gold Coast airports are 108 km apart and both have substantial populations within their catchments. Perth and Busselton/Margaret River airports are 224 km apart, the latter with about six interstate flights a week which were among the first to be considered for suspension when avgas shortages were threatened by the 2026 middle eastern war. Tullamarine and Avalon Victoria airports are 65 km apart. Although established in the 1980s, Avalon offers only about 57 scheduled passenger departures per week. Mascot and Badgerys Creek airports are about 57 km apart.

Gambling with other people's money is a well-known Australian pastime. Politicians' expectations that the Mascot/Badgerys Creek pairing will be more like the successful pairing of Brisbane and Gold Coast than the other examples represent a historic gamble of taxpayer's money. The private sector declined an early opportunity to invest in the Badgerys project.

What can go right or wrong about Badgerys? The heat and pollution trap that the relevant part of south western Sydney is becoming due to climate change has to remain bearable for passengers and workers who will be at the location.

A reasonable proportion of air travellers must be willing to fly from Badgerys although disposable incomes are much higher closer to Mascot and transport links from the new airport (including to the Blue Mountains) remain in tatters. The politicians have to hold their nerve against residents who will be extremely annoyed by noise from even a small number of flights. Incidents from noise, fuel spillages or worse incidents over World Heritage listed national parks may or may not jeopardise continued Heritage Listing.

It's not too late to slow down the growth of passenger flights at Badgerys Creek and the further haemorrhaging of taxpayers' money. It may not be too late to rescue some of the native vegetation that will be sacrificed to prevent bird strike, thus strengthening the biodiversity of the new national park close to the airport that the state government has blithely announced. Even some of Australia's best farmland that is being swept away to make this a mega airport might be rescued if it remains largely a freight and general aviation airport. Mascot airport has recently had a major expansion approved. An environmentally and socially sensible level of passenger flights from Greater Sydney could be achieved into the future from Mascot alone.

A normally sensible newspaper in Sydney has acted as a starry-eyed cheerleader for Badgerys airport, even recently editorialising that the millions of taxpayer dollars lost through unwise decisions and bungling before the airport opened will now cease. Perhaps boars and sows will hold tickets on early flights from Badgerys?

Environmentally friendly gardening

Spring has arrived, and it's time to get super busy in your garden! Here are some ideas and suggestions; the list is certainly not intended to be exhaustive.

- View the Society's popular *Environmentally friendly gardening* webpage at <https://bluemountains.org.au/environmentally-friendly-garden.shtml>
- Preference local native plants. If considering exotics (plants of overseas origin), check the Society's environmental weeds webpage: <https://bluemountains.org.au/environmental-weeds.shtml>
- Plant the native plants that occur naturally in your local area (aka locally indigenous plants). Many introduced natives can turn feral e.g. kangaroo paw.
- For small properties, local tea-trees, hakeas, banksias, *Acacia longifolia* and *Acacia obtusifolia* are good tree substitutes. Birds love them!
- Small birds enjoy fossicking for insects in *Olearia elliptica* and clumps of ferns. Plant densely.
- Thick plantings of shrubs and local *Lomandra* and *Dianella* species offer protective shelter for bandicoots, antechinus, lizards and other small native animals.
- Need privacy? Local mint bushes (*Prostanthera* sp.), *Philotheca myoporoides*, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Banksia ericifolia* and *Hakea salicifolia* are great

screeners, support insects and birds and are regularly available in our local native nurseries.

- Plant a bright winter garden! *Acacia terminalis* (shrub) and *Acacia longifolia* (small tree) are spectacular in the colder months. No fertilisers required!
- For contrasting texture and form, try some sedges in damp spots, or even a *Gahnia* or two if there is sufficient space.

More next month!

BMCS Bushcare Officer

bushcare@bluemountains.org.au



Acacia terminalis is a hardy, winter flowering shrub (Peter Ardill 2026)

AI may help the environment

The Society's "Clean the Blue Mountains Rivers" Campaign is following Amazon's Cocks River Catchment Restoration Project.

Amazon is proposing funding a 10 year project to be delivered by the Australian River Restoration Centre (ARRC) to restore part of the Cocks River catchment. ARRC say they will work with local landholders to deliver restoration works and catchment protection along 14.8 km of waterways. The aim is to reduce polluted loads, improve water quality, and restore habitat for native plants, fish and wildlife. Once completed, the project is expected to increase water availability by nearly 400 million litres per year for Sydney Water customers.

The project is to focus on invasive willows, erosion control and livestock pollution. Examples of works include livestock exclusion fencing, bank stabilisation, off stream watering systems, stock crossing improvements, establishing and maintaining fish passage, and 14 hectares of removal of willows in swamps and riparian zones.

Most of the works will be implemented over two years followed by ongoing monitoring and maintenance through to 2036.

The project is Amazon's second water replenishment project in Australia. The first is also located in part of the Greater Sydney Water Catchment at Picton, Buxton and Thirlmere. That project is restoring 54 hectares of land impacted by the 2019/2020 bushfires.

Amazon has a global goal to be water positive by 2030 and aims to return more water to communities and the environment than it uses directly.

In the Greater Sydney context Amazon has existing and planned data centres located in western Sydney. It is understood there are no planned in the Society's area of interest with MAK Urban Group officially withdrawing a Katoomba data centre development application in June due to community concerns.

While the Cocks River Catchment Restoration Project reads as beneficial to the catchment there are broader environmental issues for the community to consider, and significantly is the appropriateness of offsets, whether voluntary or otherwise.

The Society's National Park and World Heritage subcommittee will monitor the ARRC project progress and keep members updated.

Malcolm Read NatPks@BlueMountains.org.au
National Parks and World Heritage Officer

Volunteering for the Society

The management committee positions are listed on page 2. You will notice that there are some vacancies.

Please contact the president, Annette Sartor, by email at president@bluemountains.org.au or by phone (leave a message) 0490 419 779.

There are many other ways you can volunteer – join a subcommittee, help at one of our stalls, offer occasional clerical help – there is a long list of tasks and some we haven't thought of yet. Please contact the president and discuss what you might be able to do to help protect the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Will the new Nature Laws work?

When the Australian Government passed its new Nature Laws on 28 November 2025, I searched for media coverage of what should have been a major national environmental story. There was surprisingly little. One comment particularly caught my attention. During an ABC 7.30 interview, Environment Minister Murray Watt said the new laws "will not affect native forest logging". Others in Resilient Blue Mountains shared my concern. As David Christie put it, "We need the detail".

That concern led Resilient Blue Mountains to organise the *Will the New Nature Laws Work?* forum in Katoomba on 3 May. The well-attended forum generated many questions about whether the reforms will actually deliver better outcomes for nature.

The conversation continued at a forum follow-up in Lawson on 26 July. Participants watched five short films prepared by Dr Roy Tasker from the original forum, covering nature-friendly farming, what environmental destruction would become illegal, whether the laws can actually stop destruction, Listening to Country and cultural burning, and the absence of a climate trigger.

Importantly, between the two events, Federal Member for Macquarie Susan Templeman arranged a meeting between Environment Minister Murray Watt and BMCS President Annette Sartor and former President Annette Cam.

At the July follow-up, the two Annettes reported on three important questions they had put to the Minister.

First: will those administering the new laws have sufficient environmental expertise? Minister Watt expressed confidence in the skills and professionalism of departmental advisers.

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Celebrating our heritage and our legacy: from page 1

of the forest by bushwalkers in 1932 – only eight years to go until the 100th anniversary. This year, invitees can join Blue Gum 100 in the Grand Cooee Chorus on 10 October, 11.30 am to 12.30 pm. This date is almost midway between Celebrating Blue Gum and the anniversary of World Heritage on 29 November.

The Grand Cooee Chorus will be a great opportunity for our community of citizens, bushwalkers, conservationists to interact publicly with visitors demonstrating our connection to place, culture and nature. You can help relay the message down the Grose Valley and finally to Govetts Leap and Evans Lookout. *We hope this will become a yearly event.*

Wyn Jones, Blue Gum 100

Announcing the Society's 2026 Spring-Summer Environmental Weeds Campaign!



The United Nations has identified "invasion by pest species including weeds" as a "major management challenge" confronting the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Let's support our hard-working bushcare volunteers, professional bush regenerators and environmental managers.

- Our campaign will feature newspaper, broadcast and social media outreach to the whole Blue Mountains Community.
- There will be information packed websites.
- There will be weed identification and management advice for your home garden.

Links and references:

<https://bushcarebluemountains.org.au/about>

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/environmental-weeds.shtml>

Blue Mountains City Council Priority Weeds Handbook

Protesters charges dropped

Arrested for demanding government adhere to its Net Zero targets

Opinion by Anne Ammann

On 7 August, 2026, NSW Police withdrew all criminal charges against 125 people arrested during Rising Tide's 2024 People's Blockade of Newcastle Harbour, home to the world's largest coal port. This was seen as a victory for the climate action group.

Australia has arrested more climate protesters than any other country. It is the second-largest coal exporter globally, with around 90 per cent of mined coal exported. 153 adults and 14 children were arrested in 2024. Most faced two charges: one under NSW anti-protest provisions for obstruction or disruption of a major facility (maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment and/or a \$22,000 fine); another under the Marine Safety Act for interfering with others' use of the water (maximum fine \$5,500).

In October 2025, the first test cases were dismissed and police ordered to pay \$73,000 in legal costs. In June 2026, defendants were offered a choice: the more serious anti-protest charges would be withdrawn if they pleaded guilty to Marine Safety Act offences. Most agreed. Charges were dropped after police were unable to provide adequate information.

Rising Tide spokesperson Naomi Hodgson told Madelaine Link of the *Newcastle Herald* on 7 August that people would continue to protest amid worsening climate impacts. She added, "No one wants people facing criminal charges for trying to protect their future. This was never fundamentally a law-and-order issue. It is the consequence of governments failing to respond to the climate crisis with the urgency it demands. This movement will continue to grow."

The NSW government accepts the reality of climate change, yet enforces severe anti-protest laws against climate protesters. Greens MLA Sue Higginson noted that dropping charges against 2024 blockade activists

followed the release of a critical report by the Net Zero Commission which concludes that NSW is unlikely to meet its legislated 2030 (50 per cent) and 2035 (75 per cent) emissions-reduction targets. Coal mining accounts for 94 per cent of emissions from the state's resources sector and there are already-approved and proposed mine extensions. The largest, Hunter Valley Operations (HVO), proposes to emit more than 800 million tonnes of CO₂. Centennial Coal is also pursuing expansion at its Springvale and Clarence mines.

Coal mining expansion undermines confidence in government climate policy, delays investment in regional renewable projects and leaves coal-dependent communities without clear transition planning.

129 protesters arrested in 2025 still face charges under the Marine Safety Act. This case demonstrates the courts' role in demanding that police provide accurate, comprehensive and specific evidence to establish their case. At the same time, anti-protest laws with their severe penalties remain unchanged.

Climate heating will continue. Things will worsen unless governments compel the fossil fuel industry to reduce emissions. Carbon credits and carbon capture and storage cannot solve this. 80 per cent of climate change is caused by burning fossil fuels.

Australian politicians argue that at 1 per cent, Australia's domestic contribution is small. But when export emissions are included, we are the highest per capita contributors to global pollution among OECD countries.

In many areas Australia shows leadership, yet it remains a long-term laggard on climate change. Protesters keep asking Labor governments to stop pretending they are good global citizens and start acting consistently and ethically to play our part in reducing emissions.

Find out more about climate activist groups:

Rising Tide <https://www.risingtide.org.au/>

Lock the Gate <https://www.lockthegate.org.au/>

Knitting Nannas <https://knittingnannas.org/>

Is uranium mining coming to your community?

Uranium mining has been prohibited in NSW since 1986. However, the state's Upper House passed the Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities Prohibition **Repeal** Bill on 6th of May 2026 to lift the 40-year ban. This bill now awaits debate in the lower house. The bill was tabled by John Ruddick of the Libertarian Party and passed in the Upper House with a majority of 2 votes. The Repeal Bill is now under consideration by the Legislative Assembly (Lower House).

This Repeal Bill has gained hardly any publicity in the environment movement and with a Labor and Greens majority it is unlikely to get approved in the Lower House. But Nuclear for Australia and The Mining Council backed up by the Murdoch press celebrated this Repeal Bill as 'proof' that "Australians are now in favor of uranium mining". We see this as another step of an agenda to lock Australia into the radioactive world of the nuclear industry. Check out:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/zMx2yhNum4k>

In 2012 the NSW government repealed the ban on exploration for uranium in the state. Although it is

reported that no government licenses for exploration were applied for or granted to companies, it is clear that they have undertaken aerial exploration without needing regulation or permission. The NSW Government has also undertaken aerial surveys and published a statewide uranium concentration map. Although this information is in the public sphere, it is not readily available or accessible to communities and councils across the State who need to know whether they would be impacted if uranium mining were ever approved.

The long-term damaging outcomes of uranium mining are widely known and have been extensively documented. Potentially exposing NSW communities and their environments to these hazards is totally unacceptable. We iterate our position on uranium mining and call on all members of the NSW Legislative Assembly to reject the Repeal bill and uphold the prohibition on uranium mining in NSW.

Thomas Ebersoll

Lithgow Environment Group



Over 40 years of community effort: Part 2

(Continued from August 2026 *Hut News*)

In 1994 the review of the remainder of the Local Government Area (not covered by LEP 91) commenced as the Blue Mountains Environmental Management Plan – Stage 2 (EMP 2) with significant community input.



Rally on 18 July 2015 (Rob Linigen)

Draft LEP 97 was exhibited in late 1997, attracting over 1000 submissions from the community. The main Blue Mountains Conservation Society concerns were its failure to protect creek lines, steep slopes and significant vegetation. It was not a prescriptive plan with clear rules, leaving much open to matters of opinion, for example 'merit' assessments. A commission of inquiry was called for by the community. The 1999 Commissioner's recommendations supported most proposals from local environment groups.

In March 1999, Council commenced a major review of the LEP with mapping, data collection and analysis to implement the Inquiry findings. This emerged as Draft LEP 2002, sparking intense community debates and 1404 submissions. The Bushland Protection Order was one controversial component of the LEP which generated intense debate in the media and public meetings. After further amendments, Draft LEP 2002 was submitted to the state government for approval.

After two years of delay it was gazetted as LEP 2005, again after lobbying NSW government by council and the community.

Even before the ink dried, the NSW government was demanding that this LEP be forced into a set 'template'. This presented huge challenges for council planners to retain the protections which were largely defined by mapping and local provisions, neither of which "fitted", but resulted in draft LEP 2013. Years of negotiation between the NSW Department of Planning and Blue Mountains City Council ensued.

The NSW government was threatening to remove many of the local environmental protections. The Society invested heavily in a campaign aimed at ensuring that the new draft LEP 2013 would be at least as good, if not better, than previous LEPs.

- A protest rally in the snow also drew attention to the community's opposition to any watering down of the LEP (July 2015).
- A coalition of 39 community, environmental, heritage and business groups across the Blue Mountains signed an Open Letter to the Minister for Planning, urging him to support a LEP which was environmentally sound and protected the unique heritage of the Blue Mountains (September 2015).

In LEP 2015, the Blue Mountains has achieved the most environmentally tailored LEP in New South Wales, with many specific provisions aimed at protecting the World Heritage Area and our unique heritage. However, there were some losses.

Since 2015, the LEP continues to be under threat from successive state governments, which seem committed to a "one size fits all" approach to planning.

The Society and our allies continue to be vigilante to

retain the good aspects of the LEP.

A *History of the development of Blue Mountains Local Environment Plans – 1958-2015* can be found on the Society's website¹ it gives more information about the detailed work of council planners and how Blue Mountains Conservation Society and other community groups went about achieving protections for the environment.

Lyndal Sullivan

¹ <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/pastcampaigns/LEP-History.shtml>

Image Maker

Don't argue with a hairdresser!
She's at the cutting edge of your looks.
All doubts must be cast aside
Just as your hair itself –
Cut, floored and garbaged.

No social mirror here:
Just glass, to frame your common view
Of her latest crowning work of art
That she adds to by taking away.

You look younger now, she says.
Your old self, such good company
These past months, now forever gone:
To undo time yet again
And help you pretend,
However fleetingly,
That youth is still on your side.

Jim Wallace, 1996

Jim Wallace, who served as 2nd vice president, bushwalking coordinator and meetings convenor of Blue Mountains Conservation Society, passed away in August 2026. Jim was one of the most enthusiastic and intense interpreters and raconteurs regarding the natural areas of the Blue Mountains. He once took seven hours to guide a group along the Florabella pass from Warrimoo to Blaxland. He was warmly remembered by family and friends who gathered at his service at Leura.

Don Morison

Hut News Trivia: Answer to Question 26

Answer: Each year, approximately **two million migratory waterbirds and shorebirds** visit Australia from the Northern Hemisphere. Travelling from breeding grounds in places like Siberia and Alaska (12,000 or more kilometres away) these birds arrive around September to feed and rest in Australian wetlands over the warmer months. 37 international species of migratory shorebirds regularly visit. There is a chance this year that numbers will be down due to H5N1 bird flu killing thousands of birds in the northern hemisphere. Migrating birds with the disease may be unable to survive the massive flight to Australia which even in the best of times is a huge strain on the birds.

A history of the Blue Mountains heritage walking tracks¹

Private track construction on freehold land became a fashion among wealthy residents of the Blue Mountains from the 1870s. Some of the early private track makers became trustees of public reserves who, over 50 years, extended tracks to “new sights”.

Part 6.

The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Connection

A curious by-way of walking track history can be found by examining the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital connection to some Jamison Valley tracks.

A month after Prince Alfred had gone down Prince Alfred's track to view the Jamison Valley, there was an attempt on his life. Henry Parkes' personal physician, Sir Alfred Roberts, removed the bullet. “When he recovered it was decided as an indication of gratitude for such recovery to build a hospital as a memorial”.

Sir Henry Parkes wrote to Florence Nightingale asking her to recommend a woman to be the matron. Elizabeth Lilla Murray was recommended. During her voyage to Australia she met the Captain, James Somerville Murray, whom she later married.

When Prince Alfred Hospital opened in 1882, Elizabeth Murray was the matron and Roberts the Honorary Secretary. When Captain and Mrs Murray were married, they honeymooned at Wentworth Falls where Roberts and Captain Murray had holiday homes. Their daughter Margaret Caroline Britannia Murray was born in 1893.

So, in the Valley of the Waters, we have Lillian's Glen, Lillian's Bridge, Mrs Murray's staircase, Britannia Falls and the Caroline Pool. None of these features would have had these names unless Henry James O'Farrell had taken a potshot at Prince Alfred.

Roberts' Pass, completed about 1898, is the final name with a Royal Prince Alfred Hospital connection.

Next Month:

Walking tracks constructed for environmental education.

¹ Excerpts from Jim Smith's *Blue Mountains Heritage Track Study, Historical Report*, 1998, a monthly series continued from the August *Hut News*.²

² Past editions of *Hut News* can be found at <https://www.bluemountains.org.au> – publications – *Hut News* archives.

Sub-catchments of the Coxs Valley



The Coxs River rises near the Great Dividing Range where the range meets the catchment of the Wolgan River, a tributary of the Colo. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has had to work hard to keep the native monocotyledons and shrubs of Long Swamp to their current condition, but challenges further downstream are more severe.



Part 1. Top of the Coxs River



Weeds ... cattle warnings ... old coal sidings ... The human impacts come to a head only a few metres from where the Coxs River approaches the town of Wallerawang.

Images by Christine Davies

The Angus Place region is characterised by further pressure from underground coal mining and historic grazing. Even here, one can see that the Coxs drains a large area of the pagoda country which bestows the name Gardens of Stone.



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

All walks are Grade 3 unless indicated otherwise.

- 7 Sept **Wilkinson Hill and Jinki Ridge**, 6 km approx with some easy off track. Wayne and Mary **0407 643 512**
- 14 Sept **Neates Glen Loop via Braeside Fire Trail and Evans Lookout**, 7.5 km approx., car pool to Neates Glen. Lois **0427 184 165**
- 21 Sept **Cox's Road and Lockyer's Road circuit**, 10 km, 280m descent approx., car pool to Mount York. Melanie **0431 214 687**
- 28 Sept **Red Hands Cave Track via National Park entrance and Euroka Clearing**, 10 km approx., 300m ascent. Wayne and Mary **0407 643 512**

TUESDAY

- 8 Sept **Drummoyne, Hunters Hill, Gladesville**, Grade 1, 5–6 km, Imma **0422 313 828**, Anna **0403 711 457**
- 15 Sept **North Lawson Waterfall Circuit, Dantès Glen Falls, St Michaels Falls, Echo Point, Fairy Falls**, Grade 3, 5 km, Pam **0409 442 502**, Doug **0455 850 753**
- 22 Sept **Parramatta Park area**, Grade 1, 6 km, Judith **0419 780 640**
- 29 Sept **Balmain Peninsula/Tom Uren Trail**, Grade 2, 5 km, Roger **0449 902 774**, Lynne **0407 498 397**

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS are 2–3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace.

Coordinator: **Beverley Thompson 4757 2076** denfenella12@gmail.com

- 17 Sept **Centennial Glen and Walls Ledge**, Grade 2, Ros **0417 261 465**
- 24 Sept **Den Fenella, Wentworth Falls**, Grade 2, Beverley **4757 2076**
- 1 Oct **Walls Lookout, Bells Line of Road**, Grade 2, Beverley **4757 2076**
- 8 Oct **Braeside Walk to Barrow Lookout, Blackheath**, Grade 2, Tracy **0434 262 611**

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

Will the new Nature Laws work: from page 7

Second: how will the Commonwealth ensure that states deliver appropriate environmental outcomes under Federal-State arrangements? The Minister indicated that some states were better positioned than others to meet the required standards and emphasised that the Commonwealth would focus on Matters of National Environmental Significance, including World Heritage areas.

Third: and particularly important for BMC — will community engagement be meaningful or tokenistic? Will governments genuinely listen to people with detailed knowledge of their local ecology, and will that knowledge influence environmental decisions?

The Minister pointed to forthcoming environmental standards, suggesting these would provide greater clarity. However, important questions about how community knowledge will influence implementation remain unanswered.

Annette Cam emphasised that protecting biodiversity requires more than considering individual threatened species in isolated locations. We need to understand the ecological framework and connectivity upon which species depend — large areas of habitat connected across landscapes rather than nature surviving in increasingly isolated pockets.

Later, Annette Sartor reflected on the importance of the forum and follow-up gathering, telling me that these kinds of events need to happen more often. They provide opportunities for conservation organisations, community members, experts

and decision-makers to come together, exchange knowledge, ask difficult questions and build a stronger community voice for environmental protection. This is particularly important in the Blue Mountains—a World Heritage Area supported by a community with decades of accumulated ecological knowledge, conservation experience and commitment.

The legislation has been passed, but the real test comes now: Will the standards be strong enough? Will they be enforced? Will ecological expertise and community knowledge genuinely influence decisions?

Resilient Blue Mountains and ACE [Action Community Environment Blue Mountains] urge people to watch the Nature Laws forum videos. Continue the discussion and make your views known. The conversation must continue—and our community needs to be part of it.

Please contact me with ANY relevant comment or feedback

shirley@futureasap.com or acebluemountains@gmail.com

Shirley Lewis

Resilient Blue Mountains, ACE and BMCS member

Blue Mountains Conservation Society – Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains 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

What to look for in the Blue Mountains

Spring brings the frog

This little frog in my garden lived in a bromeliad plant. I believe that she may have laid her eggs in the pool in the base of the leaf? Where did she go when winter arrived? With spring on the way (late August 2026) I was thrilled to again find a frog in the bromeliad. Is it the same frog?

I don't know the story. Do we have a herpetologist or a batrachologist in the society who can enlighten Adelina and our members on the secret life of frogs?

Adelina



GREVILLEA

Outside my lounge room window, near the birdbath, this little Grevillia would normally not attract anybody's attention. It is a straggly, low growing little shrub. I think it may have come from the Conservation Society nursery a season or two ago. But it has become the centre of attention for a variety of birds. Look closely at the photograph – such a perfect little flower!

The tiny eastern spinebills are there most of the day, often turning upside down to get at the nectar in the flowers. There are also New Holland honeyeaters, red wattlebirds and little wattlebirds.

While I was watching the birds, my daughter Sophia phoned. What was that noise? She said she was sitting on her deck and being attacked by noisy miners. These aggressive birds are attracted by the larger hybrid grevilleas which her neighbours are so fond of growing. They would drive away all the other little birds.

Adelina

The deadline for October *Hut News* is
12 September

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Railway to the Sky

Engineer John Whitton planned a railway to the sky
No money for a tunnel, so a zig zag line he'd try.
To bring a train up Lapstone Hill to cross the mountains blue
He started with an idea and worked to make it true.

Chorus: For he's going to build a railway, he's going to build it high,
He's going to build a railway to the sky.

To cross the Knapsack Gully, a viaduct the way
A mighty sandstone structure which still stands proud today
And on towards the first points, reverse the middle road
Then upwards past the second points the trains would haul their load.
Chorus.

The zig-zag line he worked on, cut in this hill of stone.
And when it was completed it soon became well-known
Excited sounds from travellers, as they began the rise
Below the sweeping easterly view so far as Sydney lies.
Chorus.

The iron horse could now ascend, where once the bullock dray
Began the steep and tiring climb along the Coxs way
To cross these rugged mountains and head for places new
Remember those like Whitton, they helped to make it true.
Chorus.

Jim Low, 1991

Correction to August 2026 *HUT NEWS* (page 12)

The temperature at Blackheath WAS NOT 4 degrees Fahrenheit. For those of you who are young enough not to know or old enough to have forgotten. Australia measured temperature on the Fahrenheit scale until 1 September 1972, then switched to Celcius. 4 degrees Fahrenheit = minus 15.5556 degrees Celcius! Brrrr!

What did you see in the Blue Mountains – in your garden or during your favourite bushwalk? Was it something that is not there in other parts of the year?

Please tell *Hut News*, send your stories, photos and drawings to Adelina:

hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
or post to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782