



# Lower Blue Mountains Conservation Society

## NEWSLETTER

APRIL

1982

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Next Meeting: Friday, 16th April. Apologies to readers but this date has been changed from April 9th which is Good Friday. This will be a general meeting for the discussion of business.

Future Meeting: Friday 11th June. We look forward to hearing Mr. Koperberg (Executive Officer, Blue Mountains Bushfire Prevention Association) who was unable to attend our March meeting.

### REPORTS.

1. At the February meeting a decision was made not to recommend Harry Butler for the Australian Natural History Medallion Award. We have written to withdraw the nomination and also to Harry Butler advising him of our decision and reason.

2. A works committee was elected to deal with matters requiring more time for consideration than is available at meetings. The committee has five members:- Christine Stickley, Wendy Godfrey, Margaret Esson, Brian Mills, Bob. Chapman (co-opted as Norman Sage who was elected had to resign.)

This committee met on 21st February to consider the following matters:- a) A submission to Council re. the appointment of an ecologist -

b) A submission to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority -

c) A request from the Housing Commission re. the development of land in the Mulgoa region.

### REPLIES.

a) A letter has been sent to Council outlining our reasons for the desirability of appointing a scientist as ecologist.

b) A submission has been sent to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on the zoning plan for the Cairns section.

3. Besse Bramsen has resigned from the post of Publicity Officer due to the pressure of other commitments and her place has been taken by Brian Mills. We thank Besse again for her hard work and enthusiasm.

We would welcome contributions to the Newsletter from members - so if you have anything of interest please don't hesitate to send it in.



The following article and poem have been contributed by Besse Bramsen and relate to her experience of the "Renewing of the Dreaming".

We would like to thank Besse for her very interesting and beautiful account and poem and for sharing with us her observations, responses and resolution for the future.

#### RENEWING OF THE DREAMING

In August 1981 some 100 people were camped in forest by the Clyde River, inland from Ulladulla, preparing for a ceremony of renewing of the dreaming to be held on the first morning of Spring.

So, on the last evening of August fifty of us set out to climb "Pigeon House Mountain" as it is marked on our maps. This name sounds to me now an indignity - the Aboriginal name is Bulgaan. We were given three possible translations:- woman, breast or place of plenty food. The outline of the mountain is breast shaped.

It was a teaching site where the elder women of the tribe took girls to bring them up to initiation, as the men took boys to their sites.

From my visit there came a short poem, for which I have been asked to include in this newsletter, but for the benefit of members who have not attended one of these camps, some explanation is necessary.

On the climb we traversed a broad saddle on the mountain side known as "timeless garden" : quite an expanse of moist sclerophyll ablaze with the richest gold of winter wattles, pink of early boronias and many white and red flowers of heath types. And there was abundance of Persoonia varieties (Geebung); evidence of terrestrial orchids, though too early for flowers. Both of these were valuable foods for the Koories (Aboriginals).

The lower slopes of the mountain showed noticeable devastation of logging operations and had been fiercely razed by "control-burning" in high winds twelve months previously. The bush there was a depressing sight, and I had been told at the time of the fires that at least one colony of koalas was incinerated.

The walk through the timeless garden raised my spirits somewhat and finally to stand on the peak of the mountain in swirling mists, biting wind and driving sleet was an attainment.

The night in a large cave was an experience. Lying back on the dust and gravel floor, watching light and shadow dancing on the walls as our low fire flickered, it was easy to imagine crooning and story telling of Aboriginal times. When the chatter of the company died down and an occasional cry of a night bird came through the silence with fresh and frosty air, Spirits of "the Dreaming" came with them.

We had to be alert and on our feet to greet the first faint ray of dawn. Then as light came up it revealed a very large boulder on a cliff opposite our shelter and in it a cave containing an eagle's nest.

For the ceremony we filed out onto a very large rock-space in which were many depressions filled with clear, icy water. Perish the thought beforehand but afterwards feelings indescribable when we dipped hands into the water and wiped them over eyes to greet the rising sun on this - the first day of Spring.

After the ceremony, the sun then creeping well up in the sky, we went again in small parties onto the topmost pinnacle. While younger folk enthused on the beauty of the scenes below, my mind wandered back to the scene that was there when yet another canopy of tree-crowns sheltered the forest greenery. One young man in



the party roused me by asking which, amongst occasional bird calls was the lyre bird. I immediately sank back into deeper depression thinking of the rhapsody, the vast symphony of bird calls that must have filled those valleys before axes, guns and feral animals got amongst them and their habitat and I queried "the renewing".... then began to think - it is up to us. So, arriving home, I wrote back to this

MOUNTAIN OF DREAMING.

Bulgaan! Woman, source of good food  
Where roots and berries live and grow,  
Where eagles nest and raise their brood  
And trees are hairs of your brow,  
Will the dreaming live again?

Bulgaan! Breast of succour given  
With shelter, food and rest for all.  
With your nipple turned to heaven!  
Hear, oh hear our frantic call -  
Can the dreaming live again?

You have felt destruction wrought  
On your torso lying here;  
And in the valleys round about  
Seen felling, dragging, by mere  
Man, of your treasure for his gain.

For thousands of years you were giving  
To Koories all that they needed.  
They, taking only the needs for living.  
Your beauty and sanctity heeded.  
Why should you now suffer the pain

Of seeing the horrible wreckage strewn  
In forest, on ridge and in vale,  
Of logs lying prone with branches hewn,  
Stripped of bark and surface pale,  
And you only the stumps retain?

In lighting of fire see the dun  
Scorched forest beneath your form?  
You are still kissed by sun,  
Clothed in cloud and washed by storm:  
And you help to bring the rain.

Bulgaan! Mountain of love, who feeds  
Flowers in timeless garden,  
Gives to the wild things all their needs  
And of the rocks are warden,  
You, solid as rock, remain!

We, standing on your nipple here,  
Grateful for such heritage  
Raise hands in love to Durramar  
Thankful for this privilege -  
To make the dreaming live again!

Besse Bransen.

Report from Bob Debus.

We were very pleased to welcome Bob Debus to our February meeting when he outlined his philosophy and plans for the environmental development of the Blue Mountains - and made the following points :-

1. He was interested ultimately in a regional plan for the whole Mountains and in the short term was making submissions to the Department of Planning and Environment for much better coordination between DEP, the Department of Lands and BMCC in planning for the Mountains.
2. He would remain sensitive to the suggestions of the Conservation Societies on planning for the environment especially because the town plan was less than adequate in this respect.
3. He is concerned with the colliery issue and pollution in the Upper Grose. He believes that improvements can be made without any threat to miners' jobs, (about which he is also concerned).
4. The escarpment issue is another concern and he has supported the proposals of the Society to the Minister.
5. He regards the appointment by the Council of an ecologist/ environmental officer as essential. Although Council can call on the expertise of NPWS from time to time, it needs much more systematic advice. Under the new planning legislation, Council has strong powers of protection and it needs an ecologist to help Council use them.
6. The Heritage Commission will be more active in the Mountains e.g. the temporary conservation order on Mt. Wilson.
7. In conclusion Bob Debus considers that a number of aldermen are very well disposed on the environmental issue and that they could develop a very useful relationship with an ecologist/environmental officer and the Conservation Societies. This is important again, because Council has such considerable powers now, under the EPA Act.



## CITIZEN'S RIGHTS.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act provides the legal basis of the N.S.W. Planning System. Citizens have been given rights to be informed, consulted, make submissions, attend public hearings, to make appeals to the Land and Environment Court on certain development applications and to seek orders of the Court to remedy breaches of the Act.

Under these new laws you have much wider rights, and the responsibility is yours to know and exercise them. Councils, developers and public authorities have other rights and responsibilities. The system will be successful if each group is aware of its own and each other's rights and responsibilities under the Act.

For example, the Council must ensure that there is every opportunity for people to contribute to the preparing and approval of plans but by the same token, once a plan has been prepared, exhibited, submissions have been considered and the plan finalised in conformity with the Act, applications for permissible uses can be expected to be approved.

A major advance in citizen's rights in planning is the provision for third party appeals by objectors on certain categories of development that have been designated because of the scale of their likely environmental impact and the requirement that there be a public exhibition of an environmental impact statement for this type of development.

From; A publication by the Dept. of Environment and Planning.

The Department has more information, and it is there for us to use.

## Parramatta Park.

Justice McClelland in the Land and Environment Court ruled that the development application to build a stadium on Cumberland Oval in Parramatta Park was null and void and has issued constraining orders preventing the commencement of any work.

Hurrah for the National Trust and Friends of Parramatta Park who took the initiative and did not accept defeat no matter what the odds.