

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



## **'Bundy on tap' Banning bottled water in Bundanoon**

Huw Kingston from the successful 'Bundy on Tap' campaign will be the speaker at our monthly meeting at the Conservation Hut on 30 April.

A meeting of about 20 businesses in Bundanoon initially agreed to the initiative. This was followed by a community meeting, in early July 2009, where a packed town hall of 356 residents voted overwhelmingly to support the initiative.

When bottled water alternatives were officially launched, in late September 2009, it is believed Bundanoon became Australia's First Bottled Water Free Town. (And possibly the world's first.)

This small town community initiative has generated unprecedented national and international media coverage and worldwide support.

As part of the initiative, Bundanoon expanded drinking water facilities in the town. Indeed access to drinking water in Bundanoon is now greater than before 'Bundy On Tap' began.

Businesses have available for sale reusable drink bottles and chilled filtered tap water. Free filtered water stations and water fountains or 'bubblers' provide for the general public, and for local primary school children.

**Blue Mountains Conservation Society  
Monthly Meeting  
7,30 pm, Friday, 30 April, 2010  
The Conservation Hut, far western end of  
Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls.  
Visitors are very welcome**

## **Blue Mountains ECO Homes Tour**

The next Blue Mountains ECOHomes Tour will be Saturday 17th April 2010.

These are an all-day bus tour, led by ECODESIGN Architect Nigel Bell, that are fun and informative. They are a 'must see' for those thinking of building or renovating within the Mountains and elsewhere. Participants learn from those that have done it – be it straw, earth, recycled or conventional materials, sustainable renovations, solar-cells, passive solar and/or funky home design! Mostly, these are not 'grand design' but achievable and homely, contextual and sustainable, community-level design.

Nigel seeks out what's interesting and different, explaining the sustainability issues, regulations and performance. When we visit the homes, it's over to those who've done it – be it the owners, builder, architect or designer! Be inspired by the thought, the skill and the lifestyle – those who've made the transition from idea to reality. We usually visit five very different homes (upper Mountains, lower Mountains) with an occasional demonstration of construction techniques. They're always fascinating.

It's a low-cost community event, with all money raised going to Katoomba High School P&C to assist with the school's environmental programmes [info@ecohomestour.com.au](mailto:info@ecohomestour.com.au). The tours have been running for 10 years are very popular, with many people coming back for more. So register your interest and book early to ensure your place on the bus.

**Book:** <http://www.ecohomestour.com.au>  
**Enquiries:** 4782 3384 (evenings)

## **From the President**

I was extremely pleased to be elected President for a third term at the Annual General Meeting held on March 26. Although my full President's report is contained in this edition of Hut News, I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Hall for his work as Publicity Officer. David has stepped down from the Management Committee and we will miss his ideas and work. I would like to welcome Peter Green who has taken on the Publicity Officer role.

A highlight of the evening was an update of the Blue Mountains Youth Environment Summit by Laurie Sharman, a Year 11 student from Katoomba High School. Laurie talked about a solar car made by students from Orange High School and a workshop on the Drink tap Water campaign.

We ended the evening by showing 'Wind Girl', a DVD made by students from Lithgow High School. I was very impressed by this excellent production about a girl living on a wind farm in Hampton. This was a great end to an enjoyable evening.

We are still searching for a Monthly Meetings Convenor who could help to organise these nights. Please contact me if you are interested in finding out what this involves 0419, 824 974 or [domtara@bigpond.com](mailto:domtara@bigpond.com)

Speak to you next month, Tara Cameron.

## **STROBOS**

The Strobos team have started off the year with an excellent Feb-March 2010 issue.

You can find it at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/HutNews/Strobos-Feb-March-2010.pdf>

**"Hut News", the newsletter of  
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#### **HUT NEWS EDITORIALS**

The deadline for the next issue of Hut News  
is **20 April 2010**

#### **MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES**

Lachlan Garland 4757 1929  
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#### **BUSHCARE GROUP**

Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group  
meets second Saturday of each month, 9am  
till noon. Tools and gloves are available.  
Bring a drink, a snack and a hat. New  
members are always welcome. Phone Karen  
on 4757 1929.

## **Nursery News**

**Kevin Bell, Nursery Manager**

### **Sales to cease at Blackheath:**

Ever since the opening of the Blackheath nursery over 20 years ago, we have conducted sales of plants on Tuesday mornings but, regrettably, these will cease at the end of April 2010, primarily because of safety concerns from movement of heavy NPWS vehicles in the nearby compound. This was exacerbated on 23<sup>rd</sup> February when almost 100 people presented Council vouchers for plants and this created a chaotic and dangerous situation. Following discussions amongst the volunteers, we agreed it would be in the best interests of the Society to cease public sales on Tuesday mornings.

However, we are certainly not deserting our Upper Mountains customers and we will be at the Blackheath Neighbourhood Markets, beginning in May, with a good selection of local plants. More on this in the May *Hut News*. Experience at Lawson has shown that we earn more at the monthly Magpie Markets there than at the combined weekly sales at the Lawson nursery and we expect to see the same trend at Blackheath.

### **Saturday Opening at Lawson:**

As a trial, we are opening our Lawson nursery on Saturday mornings in April to cater for those residents who are unable to come during the week. So, whether it is to redeem your Council vouchers or just to browse and select plants of your choice, you will be most welcome.

### **Council Plant Vouchers:**

As alluded to above, response to Council's Plant Vouchers offer (5 for households, 50 for community groups) has been overwhelming and since becoming available on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, almost 2 200 (of the 3 000 issued) have been redeemed up to the 24<sup>th</sup> March. I will be discussing further improvements to this worthwhile scheme with Council officers on the 30<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Plants for the GWH Upgrade at Lawson/Bullaburra:**

We have made deliveries to the ABI Group (the contractors for the highway upgrade) of 3,700 plants for the Golf Course basin and nearly 2 000 plants for the Loftus Street Basin at Lawson. While these may not be obvious to you as you drive down the highway, next time, glance left at the new road section on the northern side and you will see 46 2metre high trees supplied by us. These are also visible from the train. Another 7 000 smaller plants will be added later. More deliveries of plants for other areas are scheduled for May with the last batch due in September. Production of this volume of plants is a tribute to the diligence and skill of our dedicated band of nursery volunteers whose number now totals more than 20. What a team!

**Kevin Bell**

## **Environmental Notes**

**David Hall**

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics latest projection are that energy consumption in Australia will increase by 35% by 2030.

Oil use is expected to remain at 36%.

Coal will decline from 37% to 23%.

Gas will increase from 22% to 33%.

Renewables will increase from 5% to 8%.

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The University of Melbourne has developed software that allows organisations to develop a strategy for reducing and offsetting their carbon liability. The Carbon Liability Optimiser(CarLO) also helps an organisation account for its emissions when making investment decisions across all areas of operation.

Source- The Australian.

## Climate change - the science is clear!

Craig Linn

This year has seen climate change sceptics and the spin doctors of the fossil fuel industry churn out a stream of half-truths and disinformation that is just occasionally peppered with an actual fact so as to lend some credibility to their nonsense.

### Do not be misled.

At times like this it is essential to remember that the overwhelming majority of the best climate scientists in the world are telling us that:

- climate change is real;
- it is proceeding far faster than anyone had previously thought possible; and
- it is, with next to no doubt at all, caused by human activities – primarily the burning of fossil fuels, with coal being the main culprit.

In early March, Dr James Hansen of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies spoke in Sydney. Dr Hansen is acknowledged as one of the world's pre-eminent climate scientists. His message was clear: climate change is real and we must act now!

If you seriously want to understand more about climate change and what can be done about it have a look at Dr Hansen's web site at Columbia University:

<http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/>

In mid March the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO came out boldly and presented two clear messages to the nation: "Climate change is real" and "It is very likely that human activities have caused most of the global warming observed since 1950". To read their joint statement see:

<http://www.csiro.au/resources/State-of-the-Climate.html>

## Welcome to new members

Rachel Henry, Surry Hills  
Barry Margetson, Lawson  
John Waterstreet, Blackheath  
Jayne Eldred, Katoomba  
Gary Boyce, Werrington County  
Peter Wilson, Blacktown  
Patricia McCullough, Leura  
Frederick and Helen Johnston, Blackheath  
Sylvia Laurent, Balmain  
Allan Rutherford, Lithgow  
Roslyn Reibelt, Lawson

## Australia's Climate Action Summit

13-15 March 2010 Sue Morrison

I attended the recent 3 day summit in Canberra and returned home exhausted but inspired by the enthusiasm and determination of a diverse range of individuals active on climate change and sustainability issues.

The summit was attended by more than 300 individuals from community-based climate action groups in every State and Territory. These groups make up the newly formed Community Climate Network, which aims to facilitate communication between groups and assist with co-ordination and resourcing of climate action campaigns.

A number of possible campaign streams were discussed, including 'No New Coal', '100% Renewables' (watch out for the campaign launch on 2 May this year), 'Climate Emergency', 'Vote Climate' and 'Trade Unions & Green Jobs'.

Strategies discussed at the summit will form the basis for local actions across Australia throughout the coming year.

The summit also included a number of 'Issues and Politics' workshops covering topics such as emissions trading vs. carbon taxes, nuclear power, recent attacks on the IPCC and climate scientists, understanding international climate negotiations and climate justice issues.

Skills-based workshops were also held, including one I attended on using lobbying, political and investigative tools in climate action campaigns. BMCS is already well-practised in using many of these tools!

One of the most interesting talks was presented by Beyond Zero Emissions which has recently released its Zero Carbon Plan for the stationary energy sector. This is the first of a series of reports which will outline detailed strategies for de-carbonising Australia's economy by 2020. An executive summary of the plan can be downloaded at <http://www.beyondzeroemissions.org/zero-carbon-australia-2020>.

The overwhelming message of the summit was that emergency action is required to ensure a safe climate future. We need to remain focussed and work together to ensure Governments around the globe get serious about taking action on climate change. Every individual has a role to play, whether it's talking to family and friends about why you believe action on climate change is necessary and what they can do, through to visiting your local MPs and getting involved in community actions.

Further reports from the summit will gradually be posted on the website: <http://www.climatesummit.org.au/> which will now become the website of the Community Climate Network. If you would like more information please feel free to contact me.

Sue Morrison [wollemisue@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wollemisue@yahoo.com.au) or phone 4757 3918.

**The next Capertee Valley tree planting weekend** will be held on **15-16 May**. Come along and be part of this fantastic project to replace habitat for the endangered Regent Honeyeater on previously cleared land. Some volunteers are also needed on Friday 14th for laying out the plants.

Since 1994, over 75,000 trees and shrubs have been planted in the valley as part of this project, with volunteers planting two weekends each year. This time we will be planting 3000 trees and shrubs to extend and enrich an area of woodland at the foot of Mt Gundangaroo near Glen Davis. There has been excellent rainfall in the Valley over the summer which has provided a welcome boost for the seedlings planted last August and which should make for ideal conditions for tree-planting in May.

For registration or more information please contact Pixie at Birds Australia on email: [basna@birdsaustralia.com.au](mailto:basna@birdsaustralia.com.au) or phone 02 9647 1033. After you register, you will receive detailed directions to the site and accommodation will be allocated in various cottages throughout the valley or if you prefer, camping is available. The Saturday night dinner at Glen Alice is always a great social event.

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## SAVING THE RIVER RED GUMS

### NSW Government Backs Down on Red Gums

On 2 March 2010, FRANK SARTOR announced NSW Government's River Red Gum decision. This represents a major backdown on its promise of creating a new Millewa National Park. In the announcement Frank Sartor said that:

**“After visiting the Riverina region in January 1 could see why the river red gum forests are of national and international significance”.**

Despite this acknowledgement of their importance, half of the Internationally significant Millewa wetland will be opened up to five years of intensive logging.

This is a bad decision as it destroys the centrepiece of the Red Gum decision - the iconic Millewa forest - recommended by the independent NRC and approved as a national park by former Premier, Nathan Rees, in December 2009.

Environment groups have condemned the decision. Federal Environment Minister, Peter Garrett, must oppose the move and groups will be seeking to overturn the Millewa logging plan when legislation implementing the decision comes into NSW Parliament in April 2010.

#### What you can do

- Write to or make an appointment to see your local ALP member.
- Write to your local and national newspapers.
- Ask Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett to intervene by declaring the River Red Gums ‘a matter of national environmental significance’.

#### What to Say

Let your local MP and the newspapers know:

- You are not happy with Premier Keneally's Red Gum decision and the backflip on Millewa National Park. It is not a balanced outcome.
- The decision should be amended on the way through the Upper House to immediately protect the entire Millewa forest (42,000 ha).
- This would better protect environmental values and meet Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner aspirations.
- Any ‘transition’ process in Millewa that allows logging as part of a so-called phase-out will deliver damaged environmental goods and will not resolve the conflict.
- This is a critical test. Is the NSW Government capable of producing one strong conservation outcome to contrast all the appalling decisions of the last term?

Ask your local member to make urgent representations to the Premier and the NSW Minister for Environment on the issue.

For more information see <http://www.npansw.org.au>

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**FORMER NSW premier Bob Carr has launched a national protest against the NSW Labor government's proposal to allow continued logging of the giant river red gums in southwest NSW. An email was sent to more than 340,000 members of the activist group GetUp (<http://www.getup.org.au/>), urging them to write to NSW Premier Kristina Keneally “to let (her) know you think the future of these might trees is very, very important”.**

**A message sent by email to 340,000 GetUp members from Former NSW Premier Bob Carr.**

“From the air they are bands of green that emerge from the Great Dividing Range and run along the banks of our major rivers as they snake west. On ground they are stately silhouettes, mighty arms akimbo, hefty trunks streaked red on white: statuesque, unmoving, some hundreds of years old but with the look of eternity. **The river red gums are the guardians of inland Australia.**

Enter these forests. Set off a mob of kangaroos. Then hear the silence settle. Look around and be filled with the wonder of being in ancient Australia.

**Log these?** Log them for another 5 years until the old ones are all gone and we are left only with straggly regrowth? Log them when 80 per cent of the landscape along the Murray has already been cleared? When on some stretches 75 per cent of the trees are already dead or dying or stressed because of drought and climate change? Log them for firewood and railway sleepers and fence posts?

**Many parts of our country are in flood, but the Murray-Darling, food bowl of our nation, is still cracked and dry.** The River Red Gums that stand guard on its banks are a gift to future generations. They are of national significance, and it falls to all of us to protect them.

The NSW Government has announced national parks protecting some of the red gums, but reports suggest **over 18,000 hectares of the most important trees will be logged for another 5 years -- other areas indefinitely.** I intend to seek clarification of this, but you may wish to **let Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett know you think the future of these mighty trees is very, very important:**

The most reliable estimate is that **there are only 136 jobs in red gum logging on public lands across NSW. Timber jobs are 0.2 per cent of employment in the region. All can be accommodated in new national parks.**

How can I be so certain? First, because **Victoria has just done it.** As of June 30 last year, logging stopped forever in 91,000 hectares of red gum wetlands. The outcome is jobs positive because there are 30 new park ranger jobs in four new parks, 10 jobs in forest management and 24 jobs in the tourism sector.

Second, because NSW offers loads of experience in world-significant nature conservation made possible through industry restructuring without job losses. **We have had 30 years of these arguments. Each has ended with decisive conservation victories,** and the outcomes have been endorsed at state elections. In my experience - and I was environment minister in the Wran government between 1984 and 1988 - the case made by conservationists starts by looking over-reaching. But it always ends up being vindicated.

My Government led Australia on nature conservation. I am proud of creating some 300 new national parks. We saved the South East forests, the North coast icons and the Pilliga. These were all generous conservation outcomes, and no unemployment resulted. We can do it with the river red gums, but **Government need to be reminded that nature conservation has public support:**

In their bones country and city people alike know that as the continent's population climbs (to more than 40 million by mid-century, according to the latest estimates) we will count precious every hectare of national park this generation has declared.

Sincerely, Bob Carr.”

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## SAVING THE RIVER RED GUMS

### MURRUNDI RUWE PANGARI RINGBALIN (RIVER COUNTRY SPIRIT CEREMONY)

**Saturday 3rd April - Saturday 10th April** along the Murray/Darling system, see below. Dancing the spirit into river and country: the Aboriginal peoples of the Darling and Murray Rivers are gathering for Murrundi Ruwe Pangari Ringbalin.

These ceremonies will dance back the spirit of the river and country and aim to help restore environmental and cultural flows, reconnect people along the river, and contribute towards reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. All non-indigenous people are welcome to come along and show their support.

Murrundi is the Ngarrindjeri name for the entire Murray-Darling Basin and all of its waterways and wetlands. Many of the Aboriginal nations along the Darling and Murray will be participating in the Ringbalin. Each night there will be ceremonies of dance for the spirit of river and country.

### Australia's River Red Gums

The river red gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* is the most widely distributed eucalyptus species in Australia, growing along watercourses throughout the country. It lines the Murray River for most of its length.

The trees are usually 20–35 m high with some over 45 m, with a diameter of 1–3 m. Canopy is dark green and the forest floor is usually devoid of undergrowth. The trunk is vari-coloured, which includes patches of leaden grey bark above an area of brown-black. The branches are often twisted and the root system is often partly exposed.

River Red Gums can reach over 700 years old. Hollows start to form at around 120 – 180 years of age, creating habitat for many wildlife species, including a range of breeding and roosting animals such as bats, carpet pythons, and numerous bird species. The Superb Parrot, a threatened species is among the birds which nest in the River Red Gum. The dense foliage of the tree also provides shade and shelter from the sun in drier areas.

It is the association with the water that makes the tree interesting. It needs periods of partial flooding where its trunk may be inundated for months. Seeds are washed to high ground during

a flood and germinate to take root and grow before the next flood submerges the new tree.

The association of the River Red Gum with water makes the tree a natural habitat choice, indeed sometimes the only choice in drier areas, for other species. The trees provide a breeding habitat for fish during the flooding season, which also benefits aquatic bird life that depend on fish as a food source during their own breeding season. The snags formed when River Red Gums fall into rivers are an important part of river ecosystems, and vital habitat and breeding sites for native fish like River Blackfish.

Aboriginal people used the tree for its medicinal properties. A handful of young leaves, crushed and then boiled in water, was used as a liniment that was rubbed in for chest or joint pain, particularly for general aches and flu symptoms. Young leaves were also heated in a pit over hot coals, and the vapours were inhaled, which helped with the treatment of general sickness.

Sources: <http://www.murrayriver.com.au>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus\\_camaldulensis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus_camaldulensis)

Further reading: <http://www.reec.nsw.edu.au/geo/scirrg/scrrg0.htm>

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## SYDNEY ROCK PROPOSAL Chris Whiteman

The article in March Hut News regarding a proposed "Blue Mountain Reserve at Sydney Rock" has brought support from many people including our local state member, Mr Phil Koperberg.

It has also brought back memories.

In the early 1900's Sydney Rock was regularly listed as a tourist feature which commanded a fine view of Sydney and of the intervening bushland. Older members can remember Sydney Rock from the 1930's and 40's when it was a popular picnic spot. When the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened, Sydney Rock was covered with people hoping to see the fireworks. During the War, Lawson residents watched searchlights waving across the Sydney horizon and the fireworks at War's end.

Archeologist Dr Eugene Stockton has noted that three Aboriginal sites have been recorded in the neighbourhood, including rock shelters, axe grinding grooves and rock engravings. Sydney Rock could well have been a place with a story in Aboriginal culture. The North Lawson Ridge, now traversed by Queens Road, shows signs of cultural significance for Aboriginal people. For Gundungurra people travelling there, along the the main ridge, "Sydney Rock" could well



have served as a marker for turning north along the ridge. Also, the large kangaroo engraving on the North Lawson Ridge in Kangaroo St, points to the Sydney Rock area.

The proposal arose from Dr Stockton's concerns about the widening of the Great Western Highway, which will involve rerouting the railway from south to north of Sydney Rock.

Dr Stockton is urging that the old railway cutting, at least the part immediately south of the Rock (part of the original engineering completed in 1866), be left open and that Sydney Rock and the adjacent railway property be reserved as a heritage item on account of its considerable historical, geological and botanical interest.

With continued BMCS and community support for an educational reserve in this area it is to be hoped that appropriate government assistance will be forthcoming.

You can add your support by contacting Phil Koperberg, MP, Member for the Blue Mountains.

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Email [bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

## New power stations not needed - university report

Craig Linn

A new university report has concluded that we can address NSW's electricity needs without building new large scale power stations, and in the process lower both costs and emissions.

Back in 2007, the NSW Government commissioned the Owen Inquiry which concluded that there could be a potential shortfall of baseload power in NSW from 2013/14 onwards. On this basis the NSW Government has pursued its plans for new power stations. However, more recent data and analysis by the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) demonstrate that reconsideration is warranted.

The UTS researchers, Jay Rutovitz and Chris Dunstan, presented their report "*Meeting NSW Electricity Needs in a Carbon Constrained World*" at a Parliamentary Seminar on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010. This seminar was sponsored by John Kaye of the Greens, Mike Baird of the Liberal Party, and our own local member Phil Koperberg from the Labor Party. Our thanks to all three for being prepared to promote sensible ideas.

In summary, the UTS analysis uses new power usage data and projections combined with the new national Renewable Energy Target to show that there will be no power shortfall until 2017 and that it will only be a modest shortfall (3,800 GWh) by 2020. However, very significantly, the report then goes on to say that "*even the revised energy shortfall disappears if moderate energy efficiency measures are put in place. Rather than an energy shortfall, there is the possibility of a surplus of electricity generation potential of more than 12,000 GWh by 2019/20*".

The report argues for greater use of a "distributed energy" approach, with small scale but highly efficient cogeneration plants located near where energy is used, improvements to end use energy efficiency in all sectors, and improved peak load management (also known as demand side response). The bottom line of the report is that NSW can more than meet its power needs by simply taking a number of sensible steps that cost less than building massive new power stations, and also result in lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The above is a highly condensed summary, anyone concerned about the NSW Government's current plans for the power industry should definitely read the report which is available at: <http://igrid.net.au/node/190> (Look in publications section near top of page on right)

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## MOUNTAIN MEMORIES by Wilson Alcorn

I adopted Minihaha Falls Track as it was not in any ranger's area. A place of great beauty, water flowing over black rock, the slopes covered with scribbly gums like ballet dancers against a blue sky, classic hanging swamp with no soil and water supplying nutrients to the plants.

We once found a nest of the tiny Emu Wren and three or four *Boronia* species in season.

Above the entry park, the creek was silted up and completely choked with Broom, some with stems as thick as a man's arm. It was beyond our resources but every year, we kept the walk clear by pulling every plant betrayed by the deeper green colour. We couldn't wait for yellow flowers and seed setting. We bought in a truck with pressure hoses, initially for big patches using 245 which was very effective and selective.

We swallowed a lot of it with no protective clothing. We also put backpacks on and climbed down into gorges.

We had to close areas as 245 is very dangerous to a pregnant woman. From here on we just pulled up any new growth each year.

A group of computer literate Leura women put in a submission and got a \$30,000 grant to clear the creek. A team of two, one working to cut the stem and other painting poison on cut (you have 40 seconds before the plant's defences act). Council supplied saws etc. It worked and volunteers like my 18 year old "Greenie" girl enjoyed it. Shows what can be done.

The stone steps down to the pool at the falls was a family adventure but one day a bit of cliff, steps and all, fell down. The District Engineer West (D.E.W.) was working on a light weight steel step system and under his direction we built a stair with a landing in the middle.

I hope access to the falls is still there, although sadly the once deep pool is now silted up.

Below the Falls, there is no track and

## Observing Nature

Christine Davies

This "leaf moth" spent a day on my screen door. So like a dry gum leaf in shape, markings and colour, it has the perfect camouflage.



I have always had a fascination for insects, spiders and other creatures, and a native garden is where you can see a great diversity of them.

Some people have a fear of spiders. Spiders are part of the wonder of the Natural World. They are diverse and interesting. Instead of learning to fear spiders, children can be encouraged to look, learn and enjoy - but not touch!

The Australian Museum in Sydney has an exhibition which might encourage this.

### "The World of Spiders"

Is on daily during the April school holidays. "Explore the fascinating world of Australia's spiders. Collect the spider show bag full of fun activities and fascinating spider facts. See live spiders, learn to identify friend from foe and how to treat a spider bite!". Entry is \$10 after museum entry.



ground cover may be thick enough to defeat the broom.

Some readers may be familiar with brother Graham's poem about "Ogmo" the scribbly gum moth and their delicate calligraphy is very visible here.

Minihaha is a magic place - but then I am known as a man who talks to trees and hugs them!

PS We had a report of water nymphs in the pool but it was probably nurses from the hospital!

**Wilson Alcorn, former Head Ranger for Blue Mountains City Council, looking after Blue Mountains walking tracks.**

## Sublime Point, dawn

by Brendan Doyle

A rock pool's still surface  
now riffled by a breeze,  
now tickled by rain drops

Majestic dawn opens her veil,  
trailing long tresses of cloud  
over the face of Mount Solitary

Katoomba disappears

There's a plane somewhere above  
but nothing matters  
save being here on this timeless rock

breathing bellbird song and tumbling water  
as rays caress clouds  
that slumber in the valley

To be alive this sacred dawn  
standing between moon and sun  
as the world is born anew

## JOYCE BRISTER

2/5/1916-24/2/2010

The Blue Mountains lost one of its most talented and personable women with the tragic death of Joyce Brister in a car accident at Hazelbrook in February.

Joyce was a founding volunteer at the Blackheath nursery and continued her lifelong interest in the nursery through regular visits there and by encouraging her son, Keith, to also become a nursery volunteer. She was a member of the Centenary Reserve Bushcare Group and the Baccante Gardens at Blackheath, and maintained her own predominately native garden.

As a young woman, Joyce undertook studies in geology at Sydney University at a time when there would have been few women in that field and distinguished herself by graduating with 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours and the University Medal in Geology. She extended her studies at the same institution with a Masters degree and taught geology both in England and Australia, concluding with a course for the University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age here which I was privileged to undertake.

Joyce was an avid lover of nature and travel and whenever I met her in Blackheath village I would always ask her where she was off to next and, invariably, she had some immediate national or international travel plans.

She was a wonderful, inspirational example of somebody who maintained an active physical and mental life right into her nineties. Let's all do the same!

**Kevin Bell**

## Down the Wallaby Track — a backward glance, with John Low

### FROM VIENNA TO SUBLIME POINT

On Sublime Point Road, bounded by West and Willoughby Streets, there is a six hectare parcel of native bush that was gazetted as public land in 1917 and has gloried ever since in the name of Crown Reserve No. 52069. Earlier this year I walked across from my home in North Leura to check it out and while the sky opened and I got a soaking, I found a very peaceful place with plenty to delight the amateur naturalist.



My interest in this reserve was sparked by finding a copy of a proposal made in 1999 by the Sublime Point Bushcare Group to have the area given a more meaningful name. They suggested the 'Grete Vanry Reserve' and wrote to Council requesting support for an application to the Geographical Names Board. There was, however, no mention as to the success or otherwise of this proposal and it left me wondering. It seemed a good idea and I wanted to know what happened.

Margarete (Grete) Vanry was a Life Member of the Conservation Society. She was born in Vienna in 1908 and after leaving school became a highly skilled milliner. While her social conscience found an outlet in trade union activity it put her in danger and after Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938 she fled with few possessions via Switzerland to France. With the help of a friend and former employer who had also fled Austria and migrated to Australia, Grete arrived in Sydney in December 1938. She resumed her career as a milliner and also her trade union activity. She became involved in the peace movement, indulged her love of music, literature and film and when she had a house built at Narrabeen she established an Australian native garden, beginning a deep and passionate interest that lasted the rest of her life.

In the 1970s Grete and her husband Frank retired to Leura, to a house they had earlier built on land near the reserve in Sublime Point Road. Her garden, blending with the surrounding bush, attracted a variety of native birds and animals. She joined the Conservation Society, became a regular attendant at the Hut, taught members the Bradley method of weeding and propagated and raised native plants. Her custom of always picking up rubbish and pulling out weeds in the bush became legendary. At the time of her death in 1997 a friend recalled: "While others rested for lunch, Grete weeded!" If her millinery career lacked a deeper satisfaction, she found it in native plants and her passion for the environment.

On my rainy visit to the reserve I found no sign that the bushcare group's proposal had been successful. The reserve remains nameless and subsequent inquiries have failed to elicit any explanation. It seems a shame that the memory of someone who cared greatly about the Blue Mountains has not, for whatever reason, been allowed to provide a more meaningful naming for a place she loved.

**John Low** [johnlow@iprimus.com.au](mailto:johnlow@iprimus.com.au)

*(Photo of Grete Vandry provided courtesy of Shirley Brown.)*

## Mount Piper – 209 billion black balloons every year !

By Craig Linn

In June 2009 Delta Electricity (fully owned by the NSW State Government) lodged a concept plan to build a massive new 2000 MW fossil fuel power station immediately next to its existing Mount Piper coal-fired power station near Lithgow. If built, this so called “*Extension*” would be almost one and a half times the size of its older existing neighbour.

In early March 2010 no one was surprised when the NSW Planning Minister Tony Kelly announced that the government was giving approval to Delta Electricity's concept plan. And, no one was surprised that the NSW Government chose to make the announcement on a day when the media was totally preoccupied with the Rudd Government's new health care plan. And, no one is surprised that many politicians, the Premier included, continue to use weasel words such as a “fuel neutral” for the new power station, when they really mean coal or gas.

Some might say that a government that wants to sell the state's power stations might just think that a pre-approved expansion plan could perhaps boost the sale price. But let's not enter that debate, let's just look at a few facts.

### Fact 1: We don't need massive new power stations

Plans for new power stations in NSW (Mt Piper, Bayswater in the upper Hunter, and the Munmorah redevelopment) have been justified by the NSW Government on the basis of the 2007 commissioned Owen report. The Government has kept saying that without new baseload power the lights will start going out from 2013. However, new data and analysis demonstrate that this is nonsense and that we do not need large new power stations (see separate detailed article). None the less, many in the Government who are aware of this new data keep pushing the misleading line that we need more new baseload power – this is unconscionable behavior.

**Fact 2: If built now, Mt Piper would almost certainly be coal fired.** Despite Government spin about “fuel neutral” plans for Mt Piper, the facts argue otherwise. The coal infrastructure in the Mt Piper area is already very well developed, while the gas option would require the building of a costly new pipeline from Young to Mt Piper. The informed consensus is that the gas option is unlikely at Mt Piper if a power station gets the go ahead now.

### Fact 3: A 2000 MW fossil fuel power station produces vast quantities of pollutants.

Delta Electricity's environmental assessment documents propose the use of either CCGT technology for gas, or USC technology for coal. Even with these improved technologies, if the development was to proceed and we assume only 80% of full capacity operation on average then direct greenhouse gas emissions would range from approximately 4.91 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e per year for a gas fired station, to 10.47 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e per year for a coal fired station (these are Delta Electricity's own figures). To put this in perspective, it is worth taking note of the NSW Government's own frequently trumpeted “black balloon” carbon pollution reduction campaign. On the basis of one black balloon containing 50g of CO<sub>2</sub>, the NSW government's concept plan approval of the Mt

Piper project amounts to an approval for potentially more than 209,000,000,000 (209 billion!) black balloons every year.

**Fact 4: New fossil fuel power stations seriously undermine emission reductions.** The building of new fossil fuel powered generating capacity at Mt Piper, Bayswater, and Munmorah could increase NSW emissions by more than 24 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e annually which would result in an emissions increase of more than 15% for NSW. This is at a time when the crystal clear scientific message is that we must be reducing emissions.



### Fact 5: Delta's claim of being CCS ready is of little value

Delta Electricity claims in its preliminary environmental assessment that the Mt Piper power station will be designed to be “capture ready” for future carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology. Even if CCS ever does become a commercial reality (perhaps in 10-20 years), the greenhouse gases will pour out till then. And further, current analysis shows that the cost impost of CCS is such that both wind and solar-thermal technologies are more than cost competitive against CCS fitted plants, as well as being far cleaner and simpler.

**Fact 6: Clean renewable technologies will soon be cost competitive.** Even in financial terms, if a need for new generating capacity could be demonstrated it should be built using clean renewable technology. The costs for renewable technologies such as wind and solar-thermal are falling steadily, while the costs of fossil fuel based technologies are rising relentlessly. If we add to this the fact that eventually there will be a price put on carbon emissions then the stupidity of fossil fuel for power generation becomes apparent. Even key NSW government representatives acknowledge that a carbon price of \$20-\$25 per tonne will make clean renewable energy sources such as wind and solar-thermal cost competitive with dirty coal fired power stations.

### Fact 7: The long term economic benefits for the Lithgow area are small.

Delta's own documents state that after the construction phase, there will be at best only 50 new long term jobs associated with the new Mt Piper power station. This very small increase in long term jobs is insignificant against the enormous ongoing environmental costs associated with a fossil fuel power station and its associated mining activities. In contrast a 2008 report from the University of Newcastle notes that there could be more than 70,000 new jobs generated in NSW by 2020 if the government was to commit to a clean future based on energy efficiency programs and renewable energy.

### Fact 8: All that has been approved is a concept.

Finally, it is vitally important to remember that so far the government has only approved what is called a “concept plan”. With strong community opposition it will stay that way, just a concept, that will eventually become no more than a memory of a particularly stupid idea.

Image Source: Zack Goehner's webcomic [www.treatloaf.com](http://www.treatloaf.com)

As part of the Society's participation in the state wide "No New Coal" campaign, we seize the opportunity for political engagement whenever and where ever possible. On the 24<sup>th</sup> February representatives of the Conservation Society met with the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Frank Sartor, at Parliament House; and on 4<sup>th</sup> March we met with our local member Mr Phil Koperberg in his Springwood office.

Our message to both politicians was fairly simple: there is no immediate need for new baseload power; improved energy efficiency and increasingly cost effective renewable energy sources are a better way to go; and new large scale fossil fuel power stations are a retrograde step in both financial terms, due to coming carbon taxes, and environmentally as they undermine any hope of reducing emissions.

Both Minister Sartor and Mr Koperberg were generous with their time, and both were prepared to listen, which is a good thing in itself. There were, however, clear differences in their responses; and it's worth letting the society at large know their positions on Mt Piper. Please note though that this is a summary of our understanding of what they had to say. As th Blue Mountains local member, we offered Mr Koperberg the opportunity to provide a few paragraphs for Hut News to state, without third party interpretation, his position on Mt Piper. Should he accept this will appear separately.



NSW Environment and Climate Change Minister Frank Sartor

Though Minister Sartor spoke at length we believe it is fair to summarise his position briefly as follows. He was not prepared to make any solid commitment to renewables as a genuine alternative for Mt Piper. In fact he argued that despite the large scale use of renewables in Europe, Australia was different and that renewables were simply not price competitive here. In this context it was interesting to note that one of his senior staff present at the

meeting stated that with a \$20- \$25 carbon tax wind energy was indeed competitive. The bottom line: he was at best prepared to advocate gas as being better than coal, and acknowledged that the NSW electricity grid needed a lot of work to make it useful for wide scale distributed energy sources. As a Minister in the current Labor government his position was predictable, however as the state's Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, in particular, it was disappointing.

Phil Koperberg's opinions on the matter were a good deal more refreshing and indeed hopeful. The meeting with him covered a lot of ground, but during the course of the meeting he made a number of significant observations, which in many respects effectively sum up his position at the time.

- He stated that in this day and age, building a coal fired power station (although the cheapest option) is not a particularly bright idea. Even putting aside CO2/Climate Change issues he stressed that one must always remember that they are big

polluters in many other ways. He went on to note that considering the issue in financial terms (and noting that we currently lack any effective form of carbon tax to make renewables financially competitive) he favoured the flexibility offered by smaller "boutique" gas fired power stations and cited the Tallawarra (400 MW) CCGT station as an example.



Member for Blue Mountains Phil Koperberg

- But then, significantly, he went on to say that when one considers the reality of climate change, and the reduction targets we must reach by 2020 and 2050, then we really must start right now on long term investment in clean renewable technologies.
- He then went on to critique Cap and Trade schemes, such as the Rudd/Wong CPRS, stating that they are essentially flawed in that by compensating the polluters they fail to put in place the genuine disincentives necessary to wean society off fossil fuels. In his own words they simply "allow business as usual to continue", and as an aside he noted that even Ross Garnault had slammed the Rudd/Wong CPRS.
- A discussion on carbon taxes followed; he agreed that there is real merit in much simpler carbon taxes as they are transparent and not open to rorting. He noted that without an effective "real" price on carbon, something not achieved by the CPRS, we will get nowhere.
- He stressed several times during the discussion that the urgency of the climate change debate needs to be fired up again, having of late been hijacked by climate change sceptics. Towards this end, when approached by Greenpeace, he had agreed to sponsor a Parliament House seminar titled "Meeting NSW Electricity Needs in a Carbon Constrained World" . (This seminar was in fact held on March 9th, and was presented by the Institute for Sustainable Futures from UTS. See separate article).

Given the above, one could easily believe that Mr Koperberg hasn't entirely given up his old portfolio of Environment and Climate Change!

## **New power stations not needed - university report**

We can address NSW's electricity needs without building new large scale power stations, and in the process lower both costs and emissions.

Report by Craig Linn on page 6.

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## From 'Here to Eternity' The Mt Vic saga: What is happening?

Brian Marshall

Most members will know that the RTA selected the 'orange corridor' as the preferred route, but saw a need for further refinement in four critical areas (Mt Victoria – 3 options; Little Hartley – 2 options; River Lett – 2 options; Forty Bends – 2 options). A 2-day 'value management' (VM) workshop (25-26 November) was held to refine these contentious aspects of the Mt Vic-Lithgow route. The VM workshop **excluded** the widely-held preferences of the community (including this Society) for limiting work to basic safety issues and re-allocating funds to freight and passenger rail improvements. It also excluded re-visiting previously-discarded corridors.

**Excluding costs**, the VM workshop decided in favour of the 'long tunnel' option for Mt Vic, the 'bypass' for Little Hartley, the 'northern alignment' for River Lett, and the 'current alignment' for Forty Bends. Other than 'bypassing' Little Hartley, this accorded with the Society's environmentally-focused submission. Unfortunately, with **costs included** (for all options except Mt Vic), the preferred River Lett route became the 'southern alignment'. The effect of costs on the preferred Mt Vic option will be enlightening.

For those aware of the Society's opposition to any Darling Causeway-Newnes Plateau route, the outcome of the RTA's consultation processes can be construed as a success. Yet political fortunes continue to churn, such that the only certainty is ongoing uncertainty. The Mt Vic-Lithgow upgrade, Newnes Plateau, Bells Line of Road, and freight and passenger rail improvements become political pawns at the mercy of 'indecisive' government and non-binding 'solutions' trumpeted in opposition!

**So what is now being provided for our ongoing amusement and what does the future hold?**

Following Ron Christie's Herald-sponsored report, which included a provision for bi-partisan commitment such that an incoming government does not overturn the previous government's decisions, Premier Keneally released her much-awaited plan. This committed substantial sums to rail improvements, including 'express' trains which would reduce the Central-Katoomba journey by about 17 minutes. A funding mechanism is offered, and there is somewhat

reluctant support from the Opposition, in fact some would say she is wearing the Opposition's clothes. Yet the \$21 billion in unspecified road funding dwarfed the amount for rail, and none of it solved the somewhat parochial 'Mt Vic' battle over the hearts and minds of voters from Blackheath to the Central West.

Andrew Stoner (National Party Leader for NSW) announced his, and presumably the Opposition's, intention "*to stop the proposed highway upgrade to Lithgow*", following previous commitments to re-examine the Newnes Plateau option and 'upgrade' the Bells Line of Road through the World Heritage Area. The Government truly has a credibility gap, but political reality dictates that the 'easy' policies of opposition recede into 'eternity' when confronted with the fiscal realities of government. It is frightening that current frustrations may make clutching at straws a viable alternative.

Despite the many reports which have canned a substantially upgraded Bells Line of Road as a major freight haulage route, Anthony Albanese and David Campbell have committed the Federal and State Governments to developing a '*Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan*' (LTSCP) for upgrading the Bells line of Road. The LTSCP will have three sections: the Sydney Motorway Network to Kurrajong Heights; Kurrajong Heights to Bell; and Bell to the Great Western Highway. The latter section will once again threaten Newnes Plateau. The study would seem to be window dressing for the upcoming Federal and State elections. It comprises a political solution to Central West calls for a new road over the mountains. Unfortunately, such commitments are 'honoured' at considerable cost to the taxpayer, despite every sane person recognising that a Bells Line of Road freight option is not (and will never be!) economically viable, or environmentally and socially acceptable. It is outrageous that this nonsense will go ahead, despite an overwhelming community preference for upgraded rail infrastructure.

As fuel prices progressively reflect 'peak oil' and climate change bites, coal-fired power stations will choke Lithgow and compromise any rational approach to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and governments of the day will inevitably blame their predecessors for

failing to promote rail in the face of political expediency and regrettable incompetence. In the 'eternity' of indecision that passes for Australian political wisdom, the way forward is a morass.

*Que sera, sera!*

**But** if you believe the Bells Line of Road should be for cars and light vehicles and remain a tourist asset, if you truly believe in the magnificent World Heritage Area, and if you are firmly committed to rail-based freight and passenger transport, you can be heard. The RTA and its consultants will engage the community in planning the corridor. So when the time arises, don't be fobbed off with management jargon and the RTA saying it is limited by the terms of reference, present the case for funding rail to the RTA and the politicians *ad nauseam*, until even their thick skins are breached. The Society will engage with the process and will always advocate rail, but it needs your help. The Society has no vote. You are the voters and you have the power.

*Be prepared to use it!*

Brian Marshall

### "WIND GIRL"

Lithgow High School was awarded the National and NSW Secondary School Winner Wind Girl, which stars a local wind farmer and his daughter Alex.

Alex and her father highlight the importance of wind energy and how it ensures we have a sustainable world for the future.

The students at Lithgow High School were also recognised for their technical excellence, taking home two National Spotlight Awards in the Videography and Sound categories.

The film can be found and downloaded at:

[http://www.panasonic.com.au/kwn/winners\\_2009.cfm](http://www.panasonic.com.au/kwn/winners_2009.cfm)

## Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

Autumn is a time of great restlessness and change in the bird world. The shorter days and colder nights prompt many species into their incredible annual northward journeys. And with the demands of breeding and feeding hungry young mouths over (at least for most species), even the sedentary birds are free to pursue a more carefree lifestyle for a while as they wander a bit further from their breeding territory in the company of mixed species flocks.

The most easily observable migratory behaviour is that of the Yellow-faced Honeyeaters which stream through our area in many thousands - a truly amazing event to watch and one which continues on most fine-weather mornings from late March to mid-May. As the season progresses they are joined by an increasing proportion of White-naped Honeyeaters. Both these species are making their way up the south-east Australian coast and tablelands - possibly many have come from Victoria and the high country of the Great Divide and are heading towards areas rich in winter flowering shrubs, perhaps the northern NSW coast and into Queensland.

As they fly through the Blue Mountains they funnel up the gullies and follow the escarpments and corridors northwards, stopping regularly in treetops to rest and regroup. Their flight calls - a brisk "chip chip..." from the Yellow-faced and more liquid "mew mew mew..." from the White-naped - are a characteristic sound of autumn in many parts of the mountains. Good places to see them include Kings Tableland and Darwin's Walk at Wentworth Falls, along Narrow Neck, west of Katoomba near the Explorers Tree, and Shipley Road before the turnoff to Megalong Road at Blackheath. Flying along with them you can often see, or hear, flocks of Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Silvereyes, Red Wattlebirds, Noisy Friarbirds and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes. If you find a good vantage point and watch closely for a while, you might see something rarer come along!

This autumn, bird observers in the Blue Mountains will start regular counts of migrating honeyeaters as part of the Important Bird Area (IBA) project. Please contact me if you're interested in getting involved or learning more. (In a future issue I'll talk about what the IBA project is and why the Greater Blue Mountains has been declared an IBA.)

Recently I've been noticing plenty of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos around, sailing along in that distinctively fluid, graceful way of flying that they have. As we move into winter, they will congregate into larger flocks in areas with good sources of food such as banksias and hakeas in seed.

For anyone wanting to read more about the autumn honeyeater migration in the Blue Mountains, my website has further information at: [www.bmbirding.com.au/hemig.html](http://www.bmbirding.com.au/hemig.html)

**Carol Proberts** ([origma@westnet.com.au](mailto:origma@westnet.com.au))

## A PINK SKINK

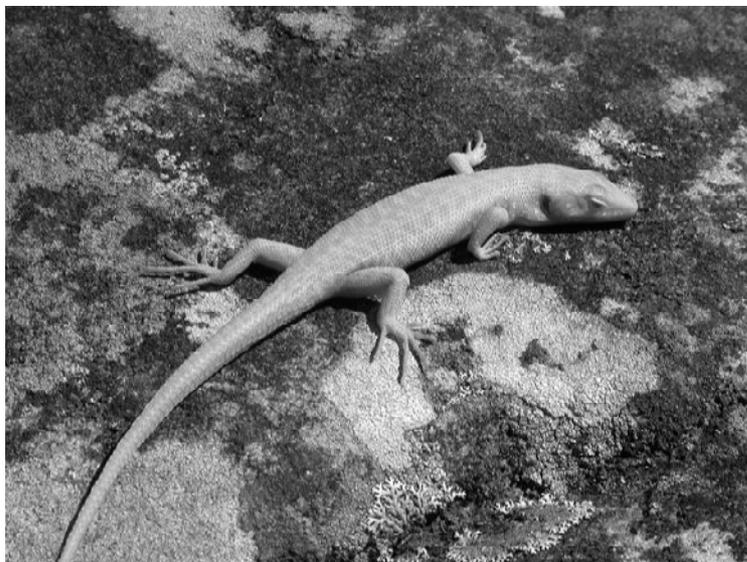
It was a "Lizardy" morning on a recent Springwood walk. Along the track we stopped for a Bearded Dragon, a couple of Eastern Water Skinks, a Jacky Lizard and a Copper-tailed Skink.

However, lizard of the day was seen while we were sitting on a rock shelf having morning tea.

We suddenly saw a pink lizard sunning itself and after numerous photos and much discussion we thought it might be an albino Cunningham's Skink. The Australian Museum later confirmed this.

It's long term chances of survival are not high but it has managed to survive so far and we all wished it well as it crawled under a rock ledge.

**Jill Dark.**



## Membership Application Form

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

Address: .....  
.....PC .....

Phone(s) .....

Email .....

**MEMBERSHIP FEES** (please circle one item)

Single \$25 Concession (Senior/Student)\$15  
Household \$30 Concession (Senior/Student)\$20  
Corporate (open to negotiation) \$100

Bushwalkers only.:  
(\$20 per walker per annum) \$.....

Donation (tax-deductible) \$.....

**TOTAL AMOUNT INCLUDED** \$.....

Note: All fees include GST at the relevant rate.

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline): Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Web or database management; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Society administration.

**I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:**

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1. ....  
2. ....  
3. ....

**ENQUIRIES:** Phone (02 4757 1872  
Email: [membership@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:membership@bluemountains.org.au)

Please cut out and forward this form with your cheque or money order to:  
**Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.**  
**PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782**

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.



Tara and Elata Cameron at the Consoc Picnic.  
(The president is the one with the hat.)

## THE AGM, A NEW YEAR AND A NEW COMMITTEE

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 26 March 2010.

Tara Cameron presented the President's Report; a copy can be found on pages 13-15 of this newsletter. Bart Beech presented the Treasurer's Report. The Society is in a good financial position, its finances ably managed by our treasurer Bart. Kevin Bell presented the Nursery Report and thanked the nursery volunteers for a very successful year. Warwick Mosman as returning officer took over for the nomination and re-election of Tara Cameron as President. Other members of the new management committee were elected.

Welcome to the new Management Committee. Names and contact details can be found in the box on page 2. With help from members and the various sub-committees, the Society can look forward to another successful year.

If you are interested in the vacant position of Monthly Meetings Convenor or can help out in a subcommittee, occasionally on Society's stalls, or a half day a week with administration, please don't be shy. Contact Tara or another member of the management committee.

## Meet some of the Society's management committee ....

**TARA CAMERON:** "I love being in the bush with my husband Don and daughter Elata. I got into conservation through bushwalking which I really enjoy. I joined Sydney University Bushwalker many years ago and particularly love long trips in wilderness (which happen less frequently these days). I am a teacher at Cranebrook High and live in Faulconbridge. I grew up in Springwood, moved away for many years but was thrilled to return about 7 years ago."

**LIZ REYSWOUD:** "My favourite time is being in the bush, in the peace broken only by the sound of birdsong and the scuffle of insects in the leaves on the ground. I love nature in the wild, huge cliff faces, huge seas, and also tiny plants struggling to survive against insurmountable odds.

Hence my favourite place outside Australia is the Galapagos islands, and secondly Antarctica.

I also love a challenge, hence my recent 'Antartic Plunge'... It was minus10 outside temperature, but the water was slightly warmer owing to the volcanic eruption at Deception Island in 1978. My love for challenges has led me to join the Woodford Academy Management committee, struggling against difficulties to try and keep it alive and functioning. To try and assist Everglades House and Gardens remain available for all to enjoy and to support the Manager of Blue Mountains Food Services which not only provides Meals on Wheels for frail aged living at home, but also provides great services to those recovering from and living with Mental Illness.

My little business which I started in 1988 to hopes of existing for 6 months, is still functioning 22 years later, only very small now, but could easily be built up again if I wanted to. I enjoy Bushcare and gardening and dare I confess, playing computer games. I have two sons, and four grandchildren still currently at school."

Liz, in  
Antarctica





## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc Annual General Meeting 26 March 2010

### President's Annual Report

I am pleased to present my second report as President of the Society. It has been a busy year for us, with members engaged in a multitude of activities to help protect the environment of the Blue Mountains.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

I would like to begin by acknowledging the efforts and support the Society's members. We should be proud of our work as one of the largest environmental groups in NSW, and one totally run by volunteers. It is heartening that so many people have joined together to both enjoy and help conserve, the beautiful environment around us.

More specifically, I would like to thank the members of the Management Committee for their hard work and support. The quality of our newsletter, publicity, website, administration, financial management, nursery and environmental work is the result of dedicated efforts. I particularly acknowledge the members leaving the committee for their significant contribution: David Hall for his tireless work as Publicity Officer, and David Brazil for his role as Meetings Convenor. I am pleased to say that David Brazil has not left us entirely, as he is working on a project to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Much of the work of the Society is undertaken by our Western Escarpment, Landuse, Groundwater and Education sub-committees. I will detail their work later in this report, but would like to acknowledge here the skills and efforts of the people who attend meetings throughout the Mountains.

Of course, our Society would be much the poorer if not for the massive efforts of Kevin Bell and our nursery volunteers.. Our nursery helps to fund our conservation efforts, while also assisting the biodiversity of the Blue Mountains by getting local natives into gardens. We are well served by many long standing and committed workers.

Our bushwalking leaders, through the co-ordination of convenor Liz van Reyswoud, have helped get people in the bush to enjoy nature. Similarly, the plant group through the guidance of Meredith Brownhill, and the bushcare group coordinated by Karen Hising, have enabled members to appreciate and repair the bush. A great time for participants involves work behind the scenes; for which I thank you.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the other 'miscellaneous' members who keep the Society running smoothly. The more informal 'advisors' and people who help put out chairs and make the tea. I would particularly like to thank the families of the Management Committee members for their patience and support.

#### **Membership & Finances**

The Society's membership has remained fairly steady at 921 equivalent members. This is a small decrease from the number at last year's AGM.

There is a separate Treasurer's Report and Accounts, but it is pleasing to note that the Society's funds have somewhat recovered from last year's losses which were caused by the global financial crisis.

Our day to day activities are covered through investments, membership fees, government grants, donations, and funds generated by the Nursery.

## **Campaigns and other activities**

The Society's work is largely undertaken through sub-committees comprising at least one member of Management Committee and several members. Additionally, we have representatives and Project Officers working on specific issues. The progress of our main campaigns is outlined below.

### ■ ***Alleged Pollution of the Cox's River***

As reported in last year's President's report, members of the Society have monitored water quality at some thirty sites in the upper Coxs River catchment since September 2006. They have identified alarming water quality issues in various waterways including: salinity, phosphate, pH and turbidity levels, at significantly higher than natural background levels. An independent consultant was engaged to undertake water testing and his results supported those of the volunteers. Additionally, the consultant found high levels of metals such as arsenic, copper and boron in the upper Coxs River.

These concerns were reported to, and verified by, the relevant government agency. Unfortunately, the lack of action to fix the problems prompted the Society to begin legal proceedings with the assistance of the Environmental Defender's Office. We were not successful in gaining legal aid to fund this action, but were successful in gaining a protective costs order to limit costs to \$20 000. This decision is currently being examined by the Court of Appeal.

### ■ ***Development and Hunting in National Parks***

The State government has outlined plans to allow more commercial development in national parks for tourism purposes. While the Society supports infrastructure such as walking tracks and lookouts, we have worked hard against plans to change the legislation and allow accommodation such as eco-resorts in the parks. Our work has included three public meetings, and liaison with the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce, Blue Mountains City Council, Government and Opposition politicians.

Despite some delays, plans to amend the National Parks and Wildlife Act are still current. A draft Parks Service plan actually contains a proposal to build a restaurant at Govett's Leap (presumably in the park near the carpark). In response, the Society has recently engaged Andrew Cox (ex Executive Officer of the National Parks Association) on a limited consultancy to assist in this campaign.

The Shooter's Party Bill to allow hunting in National Parks has not passed yet but we remain concerned that this may proceed.

### ■ ***Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal***

Efforts to gain protection of the Newnes Plateau and surrounding lands have continued this year. One positive development was the release of a report examining the opportunities for 'Nature based Tourism and Recreation in the Gardens of Stone Stage Two Park Proposal' by Ian Brown. Commissioned by BMCS and the Colong Foundation, this report added to the growing weight of evidence to justify converting these lands to State Conservation Areas. Another positive development was the visit to the area by Catherine Cusack, the Shadow Minister for the Environment.

More good news included progress on the management of Newnes Plateau. The Society instigated a roundtable process of various stakeholders in order to address the damage being done by activities such as illegal trail biking. We hope that there will be some improvements soon.

Less positive, is the lack of progress on the proposal to make Mt Airly and Mt Genowlan and a State Conservation Area. Despite a plan of management being developed, reservation has not occurred. We will be working hard on this issue in 2010.

### ■ ***Groundwater, Drink Tap Water, Sewerage***

The Groundwater sub-committee has successfully argued for the retention of the moratorium against water bores in the Blue Mountains and is now promoting its extension to the land north of the Grose - i.e. the Mounts Wilson - Tootie region. The Society was also involved in a court case that stopped water bottling at Mt Tootie.

Other activities related to groundwater include work with Leura Public school to monitor the quality of a local swamp. The Drink Tap Water campaign, jointly run by our Groundwater and Education sub-committees, has continued with Drank Tap Water stickers being widely distributed. We are currently assessing the future of this campaign as we have not gained funding for more labels.

■ **Education**

A great team of young writers and editors have continued to produce Strobos, the environmental newsletter for young people. This has included a variety of interesting stories such as the "Coald War", Climate Changes actions and descriptions of Waste into Art events.

The students at Katoomba High School put in an amazing effort for the Walk against Warming – really getting into the spirit. They were organised by Chris Yates who is the Society's Education Officer. Chris is an enthusiastic member of the BMCC Schools Environment Network and participant of associated conferences. A highlight for the year was the event held at Katoomba High School to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Blue Mountains national park. This saw the arrival of Wyn Jones, the bush postie who got kids throughout the mountains sending postcards to each other. The Society was pleased to support Wyn's great work.

■ **Climate Change and Sustainability**

Our work on Climate Change and Sustainability has taken a variety of forms this year. We held a successful 'Home Based Sustainability Forum' in which Lis Bastian, David Bowskill and Peter Green presented ideas about how we can live more sustainably.

In keeping with this work, the Society ran a Sustainable Living Competition to encourage residents of the Blue Mountains to reduce their water and energy use. The Prize of \$6000 (approx.) includes money to be spent on energy- or water-saving devices. The winner will be announced in August.

Looking at the larger picture, we have has joined with other environmental groups in a 'No New Coal' campaign to oppose the massive expansion of Mt Piper power station at Lithgow.

■ **LEP 1991 Review and Standard LEP template**

The Landuse sub-committee has continued to work on specific developments and planning policies at both a Council and State Government level. A particularly focus has been the Local Environment Plan (LEP) 1991 review. The Society engaged Lachlan Garland on a brief consultancy to identify areas that may not be mapped correctly. Correct mapping of scheduled vegetation communities makes the way for appropriate zoning. The LEP 1991 will continue throughout 2010. Lachlan has completed work at this stage.

The Landuse Sub-Committee has also lead the charge against plans by Sydney Water to discharge raw sewage mixed with stormwater down Fitzgeralds Creek in the lower mountains. Sydney Water is currently reviewing their decision after we approached Mr Koperberg and local media.

■ **Coal mines**

The Society has continued to attempt to protect the Newness Plateau swamps by engaging with the various companies that undermine the area. This work will be ongoing in 2010.

■ **Mount Victoria Bypass, Bells Line of Road upgrade**

The Society has continued to be involved in the RTA process regarding route options for the Great Western highway upgrade. Brian Marshall has examined the Orange option to identify environmental impacts. The option across Newnes Plateau has been ruled out by the RTA.

Simultaneously, the Society has engaged with other local groups to oppose the route construction and call for the money to be spent on upgrades and rail funding.

**In conclusion**

Writing this report makes me realise how much we have achieved, as well as the obstacles we continue to face. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year, as we continue our efforts to protect the natural wonders that surround us.

**Tara Cameron, President.**

## BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au) or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942 email [mauricekerkham@hotmail.com](mailto:mauricekerkham@hotmail.com) or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Before attending ring the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy 4758 6009 or email [jp34@tpg.com.au](mailto:jp34@tpg.com.au)

Date	Details	Contact	Meet at	(km)	Grade	Map
Apr 17	<b>Transit of Venus Track to Mabel, Edith and Hazel Falls, return loop via Jons Seat</b>	Jo 4758 6009	Park gate on Woodford Ave, Woodford, 8.30 am	9	2/3	Katoomba
Apr 24	<b>Mt York Historic walking tracks. Lockyer's Pass/Lawsons Long Alley</b>	Ros 4733 3880	Mt Vic Station carpark, 8.30 am	12	2/3	Hartley
May 1	<b>Mt Piddington adventure. Horne Point, Ferris and Coxs Caves and other delights</b>	Liz 4754 4966	Mt Vic Station carpark 8.30 am	6	2/3	Mt Wilson/ Hartley
May 10-14	<b>Mid week camping at Dunns Swamp.</b> Ideal walking and kayaking/canoeing venue. Come for 1, 2, 3 or 4 nights - \$5 pp per night	Jim 4758 6009	Contact leader for directions and possibilities	Variable		NPWS Brochure Dunns Swamp <i>Ganguddy</i>
May 15	<b>Glenbrook to Lapstone via Glenbrook Creek.</b> Many creek crossings with some rockhopping. <b>Spectacular gorge section.</b>	Peter 4751 9637	Glenbrook Station (finish at Lapstone Station) 8.30 am	8	3	Penrith
July 19-23	<b>Forward Notice</b> Midweek Monday to Friday at Wolgan Valley - Newnes Hotel Cabins. Cost approx \$25 per person per night. Confirmed booking and \$25 deposit required by June 1.	Jim 4758 6009	Contact leader for proposed program. Let me know if you are interested as soon as possible as there is a party limit of 12 Distances and grades variable			Ben Bullen/ Mt Morgan

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Judith Dyer, 4758 6310, [judithbushwalker@hotmail.com](mailto:judithbushwalker@hotmail.com)

Date	Details	Grade	Contact	Meet
Apr 12	<b>Aeroplane Hills, Wentworth Falls.</b> Visit 1940's plane crash site.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	Wentworth Falls carpark 9.30 am (car pool)
Apr 19	<b>Terrace Falls, Hazelbrook.</b> Waterfalls, large pools.	2	Ros 4733 3880	Hazelbrook Railway carpark 9am
Apr 26	<b>Victory Track, Faulconbridge.</b> Forests and mountain streams.	3	Mary 4757 4569	Faulconbridge Railway Station 9.15 am
May 3	<b>Prince Henry Clifftop Walk - Leura to Katoomba.</b> Wonderful views.	1	Judith 4758 6310	Leura Station, 8.30 am
May 10	<b>Porter's Pass, Blackheath.</b> Superb forests, soaring cliffs.	3	Phil 4787 5560	Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre, 9.45am

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS:** Walks of 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Gail Schwedler 4782 1215 [platypusprotected@yahoo.com.au](mailto:platypusprotected@yahoo.com.au)

Apr 15	<b>Witches' Leap, Furber Steps, Boardwalk,</b> Katoomba. Descent into rainforest. Return via Scenic Rail. Lunch optional.	2	Joan c/o 4782 5966	Opposite BM Council Chambers, Katoomba, 9.30 am.
Apr 22	<b>Walls Canyon and Cave, Blackheath.</b> Exquisite canyon views. Some scrambling.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45 am. Car pool.
Apr 29	<b>Jack Evans Track, Glenbrook.</b> Walk to Erskine Creek. Entrance fee to National Park.	2	Maurice 4739 4942	Glenbrook Rail car park 9.30 am. Car pool.
May 6	<b>Wall's Lookout.</b> Views of the Grose Valley towards Hanging Rock, few steps.	2	Marie 4787 1257	Mount Victoria Station 9.45am. Car pool.
May 13	<b>Lyrebird Dell, Leura.</b> Some steep descents and ascents on good track.	2	Joan c/o 4782 5966	Cnr. Megalong Street and Leura Mall, 9.30am

### WildEndurance: Take the 100 km team challenge

WildEndurance raises funds for the Wilderness Society. This year's event, to be held over the weekend of 1-2 May, is in the Blue Mountains, starting in the Megalong Valley and finishing in Katoomba, with regular checkpoints along the way where teams can meet up with their personal support teams.

While the course is tough, the views are stunning, and with training, any

reasonably fit and healthy person can complete the event. You don't need to be an athlete, you just need a sense of fun and adventure. Participants range from 18 to 80 years.

You have two options on how to tackle the course, either stay together for 100km or choose the 50km relay. Working in teams of 4 to 6 people, your team will take on the twin challenges of

pushing your own personal limits, while each raising a minimum of \$400 in sponsorship to support The Wilderness Society's conservation campaigns for a brighter, more secure Australia. Teams will also be competing for prizes from sponsors.

Registration is \$120 per person. Registration and more information:

[wildendurance.org.au](http://wildendurance.org.au) or 9282 9553