

# HUT NEWS

*"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"*



Issue No. 418  
October 2023



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

## Intergenerational Transformations

The most important aspect of our planet for future generations is the natural environment which will allow those generations to live and function upon it. Generations currently alive need to slow down the very rapid and unnatural changes that now imperil the natural environment.

Rapid changes are observable in both the local and global spheres. This series is about rapid changes in the Blue Mountains region and what we can do to steer the region towards a brighter future.

Early in this new series, we will publish opinions from some of the longest serving active members of our Society and note changes that have occurred within their experience. We will look at the age structure changes forecast in the Federal Government's Intergenerational Report and what opportunities that offers for the future of volunteering for the environment. We will consider public spaces, large and small, in the region and what will be growing in them in 30, 60 or 90 years time.

➔ The Future of Environmental Volunteering,  
Pages 6-7

## Back to The Hut ...

Members and friends,

Please join us on **Friday 27 October**

**6.30PM to ~8.30PM**

**AT THE CONSERVATION HUT**

(end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls)

Meet and greet old and new friends ... share the sunset (at 7.21PM AEST) ... find out what the Society has been doing.

**Light refreshments will be provided**

Please bring any historical photographs you may have of the Conservation Society and the old Conservation Hut. (We may be able to photocopy them for display.)

**A Guest Speaker:** World Heritage was inscribed on The Greater Blue Mountains in 2000 in recognition of its significant natural values. The Greater Blue Mountains is an enduring cultural landscape with amazing engraved and painted rock art, strong associations and continuing traditions. It is time it is recognised for its cultural heritage values.

**To help with catering, please book with a free ticket from Humanitix - [bit.ly/backtothehut](https://bit.ly/backtothehut)**

## Mick Dark Talk for the Future Sunday 22 October, 4.30pm, Carrington Hotel, Katoomba

The Mick Dark Talk for the Future honours Mick Dark, a former president, vice president and life member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS). It is an annual event, co-presented by BMCS and Varuna the National Writers' House (Varuna).

The talk this year is being given by Nardi Simpson, a Yuwaalaraay author, storyteller and performer dedicated to the making and sharing of culture and it is part of the Blue Mountains Writers' Festival.

<https://www.bluemountainwritersfestival.com.au/events/mick-dark-talk>

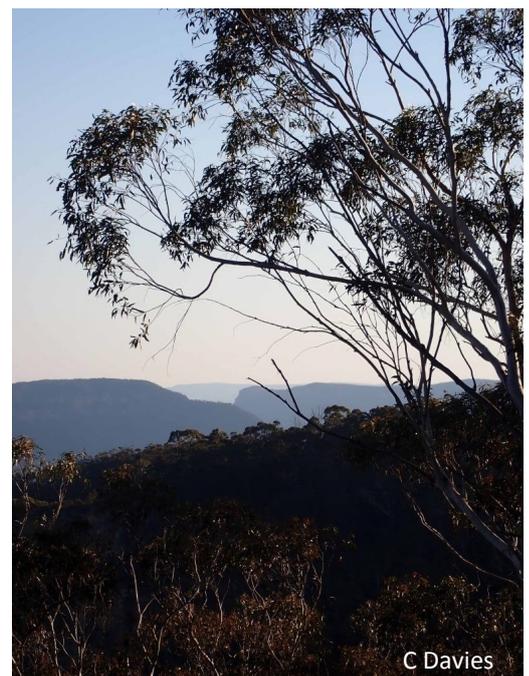
## Blue Mountains Conservation Society NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

We will be at the **Blackheath Growers Market**  
on **SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER** and on the  
**2nd Sunday of every month.**

For enquiries and to place an order, contact

**Nursery Manager, Paul Irwin:**

[plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com](mailto:plantnurserybmcs@outlook.com)



C Davies

View from the Conservation Hut

## Council votes for containment of domestic cats -- Meredith Brownhill

Blue Mountains Councillors voted unanimously at the August Council meeting to seek changes to the NSW *Companion Animals Act 1998* that will enable local councils to implement cat containment regulations.

Cr Brent Hoare accepted a petition signed by 580 local residents at pop-up stalls in Glenbrook, Springwood and Katoomba. It has been forwarded to Trish Doyle, our local Member of Parliament.

Blue Mountains Councillors also supported the motion calling for a grants programme to support councils introducing pet cat containment policies in administration, education and compliance.

NSW and WA are the only two states without cat containment regulations. Other states and territories have made a big effort to improve cat controls e.g. Darwin City Council requires cats to be kept at home. Queensland and Victoria allow local councils to make their own cat containment regulations. The entire ACT now has mandatory cat containment on the owner's property.

634 bird species use urban landscapes say Birdlife Australia, and this includes threatened species. They also say, *Urban spaces are important refuges for birds, particularly those impacted by fire and drought events* (1).

It is time to protect our Blue Mountains wildlife by regulating pet cats and amending NSW legislation.

Can you please write a letter asking the NSW Government to amend the *Companion Animals Act* to enable local councils to introduce cat containment laws, according to the needs of wildlife, environment and human communities?

Please address your letter to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Ron Hoenig at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/ministers/minister-for-local-government> OR G.P.O. Box 5341, Sydney 2001.

(1) Birdlife Australia. *Inquiry into the problem of feral and domestic cats in Australia*. Submission 94, p5.

## We all like a story with a happy ending ...



A Bullaburra resident found her cat with this Feathertail Glider in its mouth and gently rescued the glider and rushed in to a neighbour who was a wildlife carer.

Fortunately the glider was not injured and after a couple of days observation was released back with its glider community.

The second image shows the glider after it had recovered from its fright.

Let's help make more happy stories and support Council's initiative. Please read the above article and write to the Minister.

-- Editor.



The feathertail glider is the smallest gliding marsupial in the world. It is the size of a small mouse growing to a maximum of 80mm and a weight of only 15g. A gliding membrane extends from the elbow to the knee. The distinctive feather-like tail, with long stiff hairs protruding to either side, functions as a rudder and allows it to manoeuvre in flight.

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**THE DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER HUT NEWS IS 12 OCTOBER**

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**Enquiries: Christine 4787 7246**



## Join our school campaign: Katoomba Street Sends Plastic Packing!

Have you ever thought about how many plastic milk bottles get discarded in the Blue Mountains, annually? Well, a group of Year 10 students from Kindlehill School in Wentworth Falls were shocked to find that in the Blue Mountains alone, a staggering 3.84 million plastic milk cartons are discarded in just one year. That's equivalent to an 8-story building the size of their school's ball court. They wanted to create change in their local community, so they decided to focus on plastic milk bottle consumption by cafés in Katoomba.

The project is in its third school term; students have surveyed local cafés about how much plastic bottle waste they produce and researched solutions. They discovered a system, designed and manufactured in Australia by Six Simple Machines. The "Juggler" system uses milk in 10-litre bags. Each 10L bag uses the same amount of plastic as one 2-litre plastic milk carton. That is an 80% reduction in plastic bottle waste. It has a fridge system that holds the 10-litre bags of milk and dispenses milk from taps in precise amounts which means less milk wastage. The students approached the company and they are on board to provide the system to interested Katoomba cafés at a discounted rate.

The students wanted to make the machines free to cafés so there were no obstacles to converting to this plastic-saving system. This meant that subsidies were needed and they had to get some funding. So, they launched a campaign, Katoomba Street Sends Plastic Packing, to subsidise the price of the system for the cafés.

After meeting with cafés in the Katoomba Street precinct, nine came on board and another two possible businesses may join the program.

On 23/8/23, four members of the Year 10 class travelled to Macquarie Street to pitch their campaign for funding to the Minister for Environment, Penny Sharpe and MP for the Blue Mountains, Trish Doyle. The reception being warmly positive, the Kindlehill students left even more determined to find subsidies for these cafés so that plastic bottle consumption will change for the better for the main street of Katoomba.

Come on board the campaign, tell everyone you know. Help us to get the funds so cafés in Katoomba Street Send Plastic Packing! -- **Kindle School Year 10 Students**

Kindlehill Year 10 students with their teacher Georgia Adamson, Minister for Environment Penny Sharpe and Member for Blue Mountains Trish Doyle.

(Image provided by Trish Doyle)

## Measure your Energy and Water Usage

My Energy and Water Saver Kit for Blue Mountains residents is now available.

Blue Mountains City Council has made kits available for residents to use free of charge to measure the energy and water usage of homes or businesses. Available from the BMCC library.

For more information:

<https://yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/my-energy-and-water-saver-kit>

## New Volunteers Welcome

The Society's Management Committee is made up of volunteers. We would welcome members to fill the positions of Environment Education Officer and Threatened Species Officer. Do you want to make a difference? Can you spare a little time to volunteer? Do you have some expertise or are willing to learn? To find out more, please contact [alanpage7@bigpond.com](mailto:alanpage7@bigpond.com)

## Blue Mountains Conservation Society Planning & Development Resource Kit

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

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit:

[www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml)

# Activism Works: Part 2 Adani's Coal Mine

-- Susanne Rix (2017)

I'm locked below the engine of a vast bulldozer. The dark fuel line snakes over my head and winds into the belly of the beast. I'm hot, dehydrated, frightened. I've been here for over eight hours and now afraid of passing out - losing total control of this dangerous situation. How did this happen?

One week before ... An unknown number lights up on my phone. I answer. "Hi Susanne, Bernard here from the Narrabri protest. Will you come to Queensland next week?" ("Why?" I said.) "Adani is about to start mining and we want you to join us in protest. We need someone like you". (Like me, hmm, I wonder.) Later I learn what someone like me really means.

The Adani mine will be the largest coal mine in the Southern Hemisphere at a time when coal should be history. How can I face my grandchild in the future if I just stand back and watch that happen.

Secrecy surrounds coal mine protests, because the Narrabri camp (and others) had been infiltrated by coal employees in fake dreadlocks. Actions were constantly thwarted when the authorities were alerted to our plans. "Someone will meet you at Proserpine airport. We'll text you when you arrive." I draw down on my Credit Card and fly to Proserpine. Another unknown number appears on my phone. "We'll meet you outside in 20 minutes driving a white Datsun."

My fellow protesters are warm, friendly, lovable. I'm drawn to them. They have taken time off work to support the protest by using their social media expertise to publicise the Adani activities. This is a vital part of any planned action and I am awed by their skills and commitment. We drive 30 minutes before we receive the next instruction. I guess we are all in the dark.

Our instructions are to follow the rusty blue Toyota ute presently parked 100 metres before the turnoff to Clermont. We follow and drive on trustingly. Strawberry farms give way to dry grazing paddocks stretching toward distant blue forested hills. We leave the bitumen at an unmarked dirt road and enter the wild eucalypt forest. Weaving through the grey and green chaos of the Australian bush, my heart leaps with love of this country.

We bounce along teeth-rattling corrugations taking multiple turns until I wonder if we have been possibly going in circles? Would I ever find my way back if I had to?

The ute slows at a rusty milk churn. No other marker is evident to me - but the ute turns confidently and we follow along a narrow track opening to a dusty paddock dotted with tents and dodgy tin sheds. "Here we are. Settle in and join us for dinner at 7 then a meeting at 9."



Where will I set up camp? Somewhat disoriented, I stupidly plonk my tent in the middle of the path to the bush loo. Oh well. It's my birthday tomorrow, so I crawl inside and unwrap the gift my daughter Serena has given me before I left. A tiny, dainty and very elegant French silk dressing gown. Perfect.

I meet some of the other activists. Dale from Melbourne is in charge of the media. He has taken a year out of his career as a journalist to support the work of FLAc - Front Line action against Coal. Andrea is the camp kitchen supervisor for October. She normally works in a Bank in Brisbane but is using her annual holidays to support the camp and the activists. Mavis is a retired vet and has been here in her camper van for six months supporting the group in a variety of ways but particularly caring for the chooks. Andrew is the social media king. As an IT specialist, he keeps the computers running and keeps in touch with what is happening beyond the camp and supporting those doing other outreach programs. To support himself, he works remotely building websites for small companies. Maria, an artist, creates beautiful banners and signs for us to display at various actions. She has just completed a three-metre wide red and black banner for the next action, which I discover, will be used tomorrow.

The 9PM meeting is cloaked in more secrets. "All mobile phones in the basket!" We glance at one another and then obediently part with our connection to the world.

"Adani has commenced work and the site is four hours drive away. We have to get there before the Adani crew, so have to leave at 1AM. Is anyone willing to be arrested?" Not me I think, remembering the brutal treatment I had received at Narrabri.

I look around the circle of 30 young activists. Passionate, youthful, strong. Their careers stretch into a future potentially tarnished by a criminal record. No-one raises a hand. There is a pause. He asks again. My working life is behind me, so I have no fear of a criminal record. My little finger reluctantly lifts - followed by my hand. It is the only one. Another endless pause ... another hand goes up ... John, similarly over 70, not young or strong, but yes, passionate!

We are to be the Bilbies - the sacrificial lambs. We are fitted for our lock on devices. A metal bracelet for my birthday. I prefer my silk gown.

Continued in November Hut News ...

## A new UN Report declares Australia a Hotspot for Invasive Species

- Chris Whiteman

Australia has been identified as a hotspot for invasive species by a United Nations biodiversity report completed by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. There are more than 200 invasive species that threaten Australia's biodiversity. Coordinating lead author of the report Dr Andy Sheppard, Research Director CSIRO Health and Biosecurity, said the best approach to managing invasive species was prevention.

Australia has one of the highest modern global native species extinction rates and is the worst in the world for mammals.

An increase in international trade, travel, climate change, and habitat clearing are among the key drivers for the spread of invasive species, the report notes. Areas situated near International airports and sea ports are particularly at risk of invasive species outbreaks. This does not augur well for the Blue Mountains World Heritage area once the Western Sydney airport is completed.

Australia is among nations suffering the biggest loss of biodiversity from invasive species as the global cost of managing pests nears an estimate of more than \$600 billion. Australia already has close to 3,000 introduced alien species.

Fire ants, Yellow crazy ants, Myrtle rust, Gamba grass, foxes and cats are just some of the many invasive species causing havoc to Australia's native habitat. At the same time, already established invasive alien species can supercharge environmental disasters. For example, the wildfire-promoting properties of introduced African pasture grasses exacerbated bushfires in Hawaii this year.

Globally, we observe around 200 new alien species every year, and many of these species have negative impacts, including threats to native species, the health of natural vegetation, or the way ecosystems work.

## Grandma's Knitting

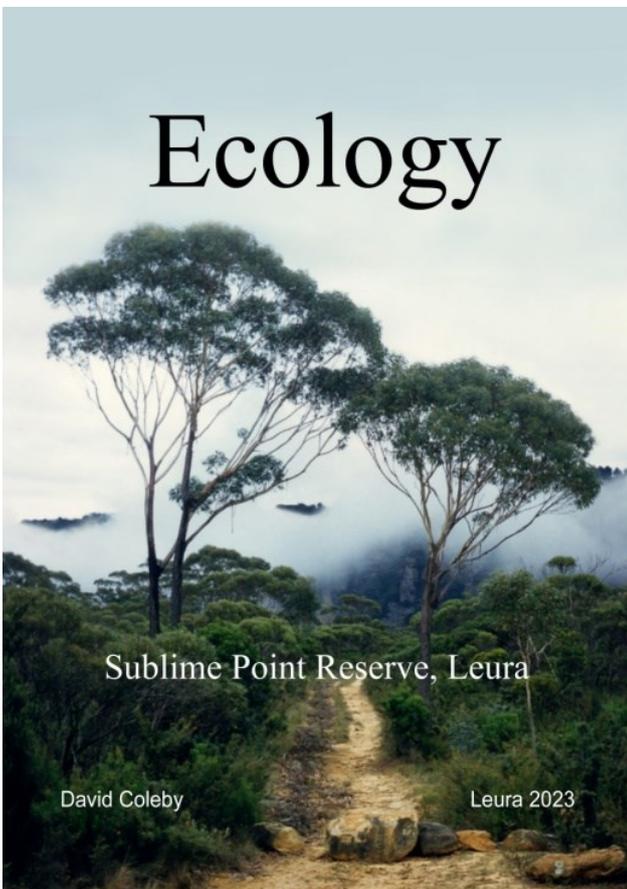
Three new babies by Christmas—  
I busy myself  
tiny garments plain knitting  
but threaded  
with the ribbon  
of my love

I would weave into the fabric  
the colour of dreams  
pink and gold for  
the brilliance of parrots  
black red and yellow  
of Koori struggle  
grey of mountain mist  
and green always the green  
of trees and nature's bounty

I would colour your lives  
with the plain and purl of humour  
with passion for wilderness  
and noble causes  
for the smallest creatures  
and with friendship  
which is love

Rosemary Lewis, 5.2.89

Published in Hut News, February 2014



## Ecology: Sublime Point Reserve, Leura: An Environmental Snapshot in 2023

David Coleby, [davidcoleby@bigpond.com](mailto:davidcoleby@bigpond.com)

ISBN 978-0-646-88001-3

This interesting and thoughtful book, though small in size (58 pages), is a masterful distillation of the ecological knowledge garnered by the author and his Volunteer Bushcare Group during nearly thirty years as custodians and caretakers of the Sublime Point Bushland Reserve, Leura. It is a companion to the previous, more history-oriented account, *Twenty-five years of Bushcare at Sublime Point (2021)*. Together, they are a lesson in the dramatic bushland transformation that can result from focused input over a sufficiently long time span.

The book traces the many aspects of the evolving ecology and ecological communities of this area of bushland since 1996, during which time community volunteers supported by Blue Mountains City Council have transformed it from "an environmental eyesore" into "a public asset."

It is illustrated with large numbers of informative photographs and is divided into easily-accessible sections, including vegetation, birds, frogs, reptiles, fungi, invertebrates and ecological communities. The roles of soil type and chemistry, topography, historical use, fire, rainfall and global heating are woven into the story, creating the comprehensive "environmental snapshot" of the title.

Highly recommended.

-- Reviewed by Alan Lane

# The Future of Environmental Volunteering (Intergenerational Transformations Series)

The Intergenerational Report released by the Federal Government in August 2023 identified Australia's population trending towards having 19% of women and 17% of men over the age of 55. It also predicted the "participation rate" (which is the percentage of the working age population in paid work or actively seeking paid work) trending downwards as far as 62% from the current 67%.

What are all we people who are healthy enough to do some volunteering each week going to do with our time? Statistics so far disclosed don't tell us everything about the people who might be available for volunteer work but they do point to decades of opportunities for any organisation that can make a case for the volunteer work they offer being important to the future of our planet and fulfilling for those who undertake it.

-- Series coordinated by Don Morison.

## What Doctor Alan Lane says



Alan Lane coordinated a bushcare group at Popes Glen, Blackheath, for 29 years. It was one of the early voluntary bushcare groups recognised by BMCC – a total that has now reached 65. He believes the latest voluntary bushcare group to be accredited by BMCC is the Govetts Leap group, coordinated by Keith Brister.

Alan said: *"Volunteers are the mainstay of many facets of*

*society, including fundraising shops and school extra curricula activities."*

*"A good professional bushcare coordinator can suggest new ways of thinking and acting about bushcare as well as challenging volunteers."*

Alan agrees that experience, freshness and innovation are all needed for a good volunteer group. He used the phrase, 'corporate memory' to describe an aspect of effective continuity.

### MAKING VOLUNTEERS FEEL COMFORTABLE

Alan recommends making volunteers feel needed and avoiding repetitive or boring tasks being frequently done by the same volunteers without variation. He thinks group coordinators need to regularly praise volunteers and explain the difference that is being made through the work that volunteers are doing.

*"Volunteers should not feel overwhelmed by the tasks they are part of. There is a need to reach a 'critical mass' of the numbers of people working on a task."*

*"Volunteering is a social activity and I have enjoyed listening to the conversations that have gone on in a bushcare group. Many of the people there might not have met, were it not for bushcare."*

### RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

*"Maintenance of numbers is a most important challenge for a volunteer group. There is not any single effective strategy towards this goal. The Popes Glen Bushcare Group has tried letterboxing the local area, sending press releases to the local paper with photos, distributing a regular online newsletter to 40*

*addressees around the district and conducting events such as local planting days, sometimes involving local schools. The group's 11 times a year newsletter has now run to 309 editions."*

Alan was prepared to discuss a "life coaching" approach which would involve explaining to people how they could reorganise their lives to allow a few hours a month for volunteering versus a "hands off" approach which emphasised the individual's freedom to decide exactly how much time they allocated to volunteering and when they would need extended breaks.

He opposed a 'heavy' approach to communicating to volunteers or potential volunteers what could be expected of them as part of the group. He stressed that joining a volunteer group is not a life sentence for the volunteer.

### PASSING ON RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN A VOLUNTEER GROUP

Alan treats very seriously the need for coordinators and others performing special roles such as newsletter production to be able to hand over their responsibilities to new generations.

*"You must develop a sense of trust with people you pass responsibility onto. You must make volunteers accepting increased responsibilities aware that they will be able to apply their individual styles and discretion to the roles they are accepting. They are not just copying people who have held responsibility in previous times."*

Images: portrait provided by Alan Lane. Recent Popes Glen Bushcare Group workday, Paul Vale.



(Continued on page 7)

## What does former President of our Society, Robin Mosman, say?

People can come to volunteering for more than one reason. Being aware about local amenity can make you concerned for the environment. A particular development or issue can make people think about their long term philosophy about what's important to them and the broader human species and to later generations, in other words what the world will be like for our grandchildren.

Events like the bushfires make you realise everything that goes to make up your local community because you all have to cooperate to preserve it. The environment is an important feature of the community economically, aesthetically and in many other ways.

At a first meeting with a potential volunteer, I tell them volunteering has enriched my life and given me personal empowerment. It means I don't have to just wring my hands. Even small contributions add up. You can learn a lot about yourself, your community and the environment. It's a great way to meet very good people and share really worthwhile common interests with them. Environmental volunteers are vital for the future.

Our region is important because people from more densely populated areas can come here and learn about something different. That enhances our responsibility to take care of our own area.

Many different types of people can get on well together in an environmental organisation. It doesn't matter if they can commit different total quantities of time over very different schedules.

The ability to keep people working together is vital to environmental leadership. You can't afford to lose volunteers. They are a very important resource. Keeping some long-term people in a group adds a helpful knowledge of history.

You've got to have a fire in your belly about the importance about what you are doing. That sustains you through whatever is thrown against you. There are many skills from previous experiences that I find I can call upon when I'm drawn into an environmental conflict. Adversity binds groups of activists together and makes us more determined.

I kept on doing what I could do. Sometimes people sympathising with us can write letters to politicians even if they can't do anything else. It's better to do something rather than nothing, even at times when not many others can.

Value your volunteers! Respect them. You can try being a bit different from your predecessors in your coordinating role if you want. Be sensitive to the reactions from your volunteers and reevaluate your effectiveness.

By belonging to a volunteer group, you are going through part of a lifetime of learning. In the current era, volunteering is more important than it's ever been. Everything we have in life depends on the health of the environment. Put your finger on the pulse of environmental campaigning. Take time to communicate with volunteers and express the significant ideas in what you are all doing. Words and ideas are important. "Without a vision, the people perish" (biblical quote).

## What other Society members are telling Hut News

Voluntary environmental organisations need to connect with the membership better. Organisations need to welcome volunteers to become activists.

Social acceptance of environmental ideas has to develop slowly.

Those recruiting volunteers need to learn the value of patience. They need to network.

Stalls are a good place to introduce people to volunteering.

Whether or not a volunteer coordinator for the society is paid, the society needs somebody in that position. There needs to be a specific role of keeping a roster of volunteers and a volunteers section or page of the society website.



Former society president Robin Mosman (with her gloved fingers on the corner of a Society banner) and other distinguished figures in our Society's history, at an anti-coal protest near Narrabri NSW.

# Birds of the Paroo Darling (Peery) National Park NSW

## Part 5 - Babblers

-- Annette Cam

Babblers are in the family *Pomatostomidae* and are endemic to Australia. Babblers are such fun; they are very active birds, found in noisy groups. They dart between dense shrubs and always seem to end up on the other side of the vegetation, hiding where you can hear them but can't see them. Mind you, you cannot really sneak up on a group of babblers.

Babblers build communal roosting nests in trees which are often close together. They don't stay in the same nest but move between nests in their territory

### **Chestnut-crowned Babbler** (*Pomatostomus ruficeps*)

The Chestnut-crowned Babbler has a distinctive chestnut colouring on its head and two white stripes on its wing coverts. It is endemic to inland south-eastern Australia, being found in western NSW, south-western Queensland, eastern South Australia and north-western Victoria in arid and semi-arid woodlands. It feeds on insects, spiders, crustaceans, small reptiles and small amphibians and fruits and seeds.

We found it across the park in areas of dense shrubs layer with or without tree cover. They are typically found in saltbush, bluebush or low shrublands and woodlands in stands of mulga (*Acacia aneura*) and *Eremophila* sp.

### **Hall's Babbler** (*Pomatostomus halli*)

This species is similar to the White-browed Babbler and was recognized as a separate species in the 1960s. It occurs in central-eastern Australia from Cobar north into south-western Queensland, around White Cliffs, Sturt NP and Mutawintji NP.

Hall's Babblers are found in drier, rocky hillsides with stands of mulga and herbs, and sometimes in Bimblebox (*Eucalyptus populnea*) woodland or eucalyptus-lined water courses. They feed mostly on the ground or glean and probe for insects, spiders on trunks and branches; they also eat seeds.

The Hall's Babbler is listed at Vulnerable in NSW with the main threats being from habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation due to overgrazing, predation by feral cats and foxes, and prolonged drought. NSW Save our Species recovery activities include reducing stocking rates or excluding stock to allow regeneration of habitat, retention of grasslands and mulga including preventing clearing and control of feral goats, rabbits, foxes and cats.



White-browed Babbler © Colin Wright 2021 birdlifephotography.org.au

We saw them on the hillside near Peery Quarters, near the top of the hill which is 149m above sea level. The babblers had built numerous roost nests in separate mulga trees quite close to each other. Of all the babbler species we saw, the Hall's Babbler were the most difficult to find and track.

### **White-browed Babbler** (*Pomatostomus superciliosus*)

We found these along the wooded creek lines where Red-river Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) occur and in some of the more heavily vegetated areas with *Eremophila* species, *Acacia* shrubs and other taller shrubs. They feed on insects, spiders and other invertebrates but will also eat small reptiles, amphibians and fruits and seeds. In general they feed on the ground among leaf litter and under logs and branches.

The White-browed Babbler is the smallest of the babbler species. They are similar in appearance to the Hall's Babbler, however in the White-browed Babbler, the white "bib" extends right down the front of the bird, whereas in the Hall's Babbler the "bib" is short. The eyebrow in the White-browed Babbler is also longer and a little thinner than in the Hall's Babbler.

White-browed Babblers are common across southern Australia in woodlands, mulga, mallee, cypress pine scrubs, saltbush and timber creek-lines.



Hall's Babbler (C)Mark Lethlean 2021 birdlifephotography.org.au



Chestnut-crowned Babbler © Peter Jacobs 2011 birdlifephotography.org.au



## Death of 1,000 Crayfish in tributary of Hazelbrook Creek under investigation by EPA

Blue Mountains City Council is warning residents and visitors to avoid contact with the water in a tributary of Hazelbrook Creek, near Horseshoe Falls, after up to a 1,000 dead or dying Giant Spiny Crayfish were discovered across an area of at least 600 metres downstream from the Oaklands Road and Hall Parade intersection on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

Signs warning visitors to the area that the water is contaminated have been erected and the Environment Protection Authority is leading the investigation to identify the pollutant along with officers from Blue Mountains City Council. Crayfish carcasses have been taken to an EPA laboratory in Lidcombe where they are being tested with a view to identifying the toxicant and isolating the source.

Giant Spiny Crayfish are native to the Blue Mountains and are long lived. They can be seen in the warmer months glowing bright orange or bluish-green in creek beds. Crayfish are a vital food source for many other creatures like turtles, platypus, native water rats and water birds. Crayfish also play a vital role as scavengers helping keep our creeks healthy and clean.

In 2012, Bifenthrin – a toxicant used for termite control – contaminated Jamison Creek in the Wentworth Falls area, resulting in a similarly sized mass crayfish kill, the largest ever at the time. The toxicant, which entered the creek via stormwater drains, also caused the death of other macroinvertebrates in the waterway, and resulted in a massive reduction of aquatic biodiversity.

-- Chris Whiteman

Image: Warning signs of contaminated water at Hazelbrook.  
Photo by Chris Whiteman, September 2023

### How to Join the Society

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is an incorporated voluntary organisation of more than 900 members. Our goal is to protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

You can become a member. Join online: [www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml) or phone 0418 462 576.

Membership includes our monthly newsletter, Hut News, by post and online.

## Sprinter and Sprummer

In his 2014 book (*Sprinter and Sprummer: Australia's Changing Seasons*) Tim Entwisle replaces the European notion of spring with sprinter and sprummer.

He describes sprinter as "the early spring: August and September" and sprummer as "the cranky one: October and November".

Sprinter can be calmer and warmer than Sprummer - which lets you believe that Spring is here. Our record daily temperature for August of 31.8°, recorded in 1991, is several degrees higher than the record daily temperature of both September and October.

I've taken more notice of my mainly European backyard this year as we are selling our Leura home, and want potential buyers to see the daffodils, tulips and irises in flower; the deciduous trees sprouting their leaves in preparation for summer; and fruit trees showing off their blossoms.

And sprummer? On 9 November 2012 we had a heavy snowfall in Leura. The photo of the Waratah was taken on that day in my backyard. The snow had mostly disappeared by nightfall.

One can't help but watch in awe these seasons. Mother Nature strutting her stuff. Seeing a leaf or blossom or bulb unfurl and all in my own backyard. Who needs to watch a David Attenborough documentary.

*Look, listen, enjoy!*

-- Alan Page.



Snow on the Waratah (Dianne Page)

## Virtual Bushwalk is Online

The TING Virtual Bushwalk has been added to the Society's website. The virtual walk sustained us and many others during the long months of Covid lockdown in 2021. You are invited to click on and enjoy:

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/wild-ting.shtml>

The TING (Thursday Interpretive Bushwalking Group) walks for Term 4 will commence on Thursday 19th October, after our trip to Urunga and Dorrigo Plateau. We have a slow walk (sometimes with a choice of grade 2 or grade 1), a leisurely lunch and the occasional trip away. Contact me on 4787 7246 or [hutnews@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:hutnews@bluemountains.org.au)

- Christine Davies.



Some readers may recognise Society members Heather Hull, Don Morison and Jenny Miller

STOP Coal Seam Gas Rally to save the Pilliga Forest and Liverpool Plains

## Protest for all ages

Members of Blue Mountains Conservation Society took part in a 2000-strong protest rally against large-scale coal seam gas extraction in North-Western NSW including the proposed Narrabri Gas Project.

We were most impressed by the range of ages of protesters who united to publicise this cause on September 14.

-- TING. Photo by Katriona Herborn.

## Some less common wattles

We have all admired the magnificent flowering of Wattles this season, particularly the *Acacia terminalis*, *A. longifolia* and *A. elongata* in the Upper Mountains. Here are a couple of lesser known or seldom seen species which can be found putting on a show.

--Sue Nicol

***Acacia dorothea*** can be found in scattered areas of NSW - near Robertson in the southern highlands of NSW, the Newnes District north of Lithgow and around Lithgow, Lake Burragorang (south of Katoomba), with a few records elsewhere. It was named by an early Australian botanist, Joseph Henry Maiden (1859-1925), after his daughter Dorothy.

***Acacia meiantha***. There are three distinct populations of *Acacia meiantha*, all within the NSW Central Tablelands within 100 km of each other. Two of these are at Mullions Range (north of Orange) and the other at Clarence (east of Lithgow), where this plant was photographed.

This plant is listed as threatened with the category of endangered at both the State and Commonwealth level.

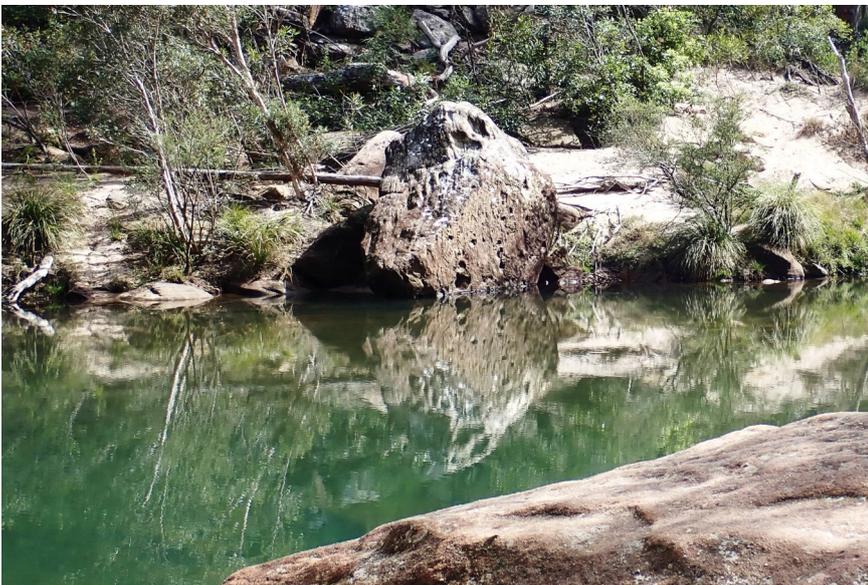
(Source: Australian Plant Society - NSW)



*Acacia dorothea*

## Reminder of the rains

Many ecosystems have dried out since our rainy autumn and winter. However, the slow release of runoff from swamps and cavities in the Blue Labyrinth's Narrabeen sandstone layers meant beautiful reflections were still visible in Glenbrook Creek's famous Blue Pool in late August. Photo Don Morison.



*Acacia meiantha*



**BUSHWALKING:** Enjoy the bush, learn about the Blue Mountains natural environment and find out why bushwalking has been a popular pastime in the Blue Mountains for more than 100 years. Our bushwalking convenor is Doug Nicholls [dougnicholls@bigpond.com](mailto:dougnicholls@bigpond.com), phone 0455 850 735.

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

**MONDAY LEISURE WALKS:** Short day walks 3-5 hours. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Melanie Lawson 0431 214 687. [melanielawson@outlook.com.au](mailto:melanielawson@outlook.com.au).  
 Oct 9 **Moya Point & Lillians Bridge, Wentworth Falls.** Conservation Hut CP 9:30am Kathy 0422 209 812  
 Oct 16 **Mt Piddington/Reinets Pass Track/Bushrangers Cave.** Mt Vic Stn CP 9.40am. Melanie 0431 214 687  
 Oct 23 **Dalpura Head.** Mt Vic Stn CP 8:40am. Wayne 0429 021 296  
 Oct 30 **Porters Pass/Colliers Causeway.** Blackheath N/hood Center 8:45am. Melanie 0431 214 687  
 Nov 6 **Blue Gum Swamp and Grose Head Lookout.** Springwood Stn CP (north) 8:30am Angela 0427 133 327  
 Nov 13 **Popes Glen/Govetts Leap circuit.** Blackheath N/hood Centre 8:45. Barbara 0428 962 460

**TUESDAY FITNESS WALKS:** Cordinator: Susan Nicholls (4754 1516 [suerosn@bigpond.net.au](mailto:suerosn@bigpond.net.au)).  
 Oct 10 **Meadowbank to Concord West.** Meet Strathfield Stn. G1/6 km. Judith 0419 780 640  
 Oct 17 **The Spit to Manly.** Meet Central Stn. G2/10 km. Marilyn 0409 924 663  
 Oct 24 **Winmalee Ridge Trail & LO.** Meet Westpac CP Swood. G2/ 8 km. Doug 0455 850 753  
 Oct 31 **Trumper Park & Goethe Institute.** Meet Central Stn. G1/4 km. Maurice 0402 402 783  
 Nov 7 **Baltzer LO.** Meet Blackheath Stn. G2/8 km. Roger 0449 902 774

**THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS** are 2-3 hours and are conducted at a leisurely pace. Coordinator: Beverley Thompson (4757 2076 [denfenella12@bigpond.com](mailto:denfenella12@bigpond.com))  
 Oct 19 **Linden Fire Trail. Walk to King's Regiment Carving.** Linden Stn CP 9am. Carpool. Take lunch. Libby 4759 2969. Gr2  
 Oct 26 **Birrabang Ridge, Bells Line of Road.** Mt Vic Stn 9.50am. Carpool \$5. Take lunch. Beverley 4757 2076. Gr2  
 Nov 2 **Pool of Siloam and Lyrebird Dell, possible detour to Golf Links Lookout with many steps.** Meet cnr The Mall and Megalong St, Leura 9.30am. Carpool. Take lunch. Ros 0417 261 465. Gr2  
 Nov 9 **Echo Bluff to Frederica Falls, Lawson.** Lawson Bowling Club CP 8.45am. Carpool. Take lunch. Beverley 4757 2076. Gr2  
 Nov 16 **Willoughby Road to Sublime Point, Leura.** Meet cnr The Mall and Megalong St, Leura 9.30am. Carpool. Beverley 4757 2076. Gr1

**SATURDAY WALKS:** Usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Coordinator Harold Thompson 04090 10736, [Harold.thompson@bigpond.com](mailto:Harold.thompson@bigpond.com)).  
 Oct 7 **Martins L.O., Lost World , Sharks Head to Batman Track.** Karin 0413532953. Springwood Stn. CP. 8.30am. Gr3/7km. Map Springwood  
 Oct 14 **Fortress Ridge to Lockley Track.** Harold 0409010737, Meet Leura P.S. 8.30am. Gr3/9km. Map Katoomba.  
 Oct 21 **Dufours Ck Ridge to Bogey Holes Track.** Harold 04090-10737, Mt. Vic. Stn. CP. 8.45am. Gr3/8km. Map Mt Wilson  
 Oct 28 **Glenbrook St to Duck Hole via Redhands Cave.** Harold 0409010737, Glenbrook Stn. CP. 8.30 am. Gr3/9km. Map Springwood.  
 Nov 4 No walk programmed.

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

## 2023 NSW State Budget will launch new infrastructure debates

Hut News understands the 19th September State Budget allocated no funds for the proposed road tunnel between Evans Lookout Road, Blackheath, and Hartley.

Our Society had expressed deep concerns about multiple environmental impacts of that tunnel as the previous State Government had conceived it. Hut News also understands that environmentally questionable dam projects, including Warragamba dam wall raising and Wyangala dam wall raising (on the Lachlan River) were given no comfort in the 2023 budget.

The impacts of such decisions on future debate about environmentally responsible infrastructure will be further discussed in November Hut News.

-- The Hut News Team.



The environmentally destructive upgrading which continues at Great Western Highway, Medlow Bath, was justified by the previous State Government to complement its proposed Blackheath to Hartley road tunnel.

# M

## MARSUPIAL

**KOALAS** only live in Australia. Sadly, due to the destruction of their habitat, the population of koalas has dropped by 90% in less than a decade.



**PYGMY POSSUMS** are tiny creatures with long prehensile tails. These tails help pygmy possums with climbing.

**WOMBATS** are the only animal in the world whose poop is shaped in a cube.



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Collect the pages as they appear in Hut News.

<https://bluemountains.org.au/documents/hutnews/archive/wild-image-LETTER-M.pdf>