



O.F.F. NEWS



Published by
**OATLEY FLORA & FAUNA
CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.**

Print Post App. No. PP 255003/03239

Price: 10 cents

Issue: 2004/3

March/April 2004

BOB WALSH: OUR NEXT SPEAKER

Bob Walshe is an unassuming, mild-mannered man of quite extraordinary achievements. After three years of army service in World War II he completed an honours Arts degree and Diploma of Education as a reconstruction trainee. Then followed outstanding careers as teacher, writer, publisher and community activist. He has been the founder or co-founder, and president/chairman of many effective community and work-based groups, including the NSW Council of Reconstruction Trainees, Sydney Teachers' Writing Group, Primary English Teachers' Association, Total Environment Centre (with Milo Dunphy as first director), Sutherland Shire Environment Centre and, more recently, the Kurnell Regional Environment Planning Council.

His voluntary community work has been recognised with awards such as Sutherland Shire Citizen of the Year (1995), Order of Australia Medal (1998) and Centenary Medal (2001). He has been at the forefront of many conservation campaigns, including the present campaigns to protect Botany Bay and Georges River. Bob is a stimulating and innovative speaker, and we look forward to hearing his views on Botany Bay at our meeting on March 22.

MORE ON PORT BOTANY EIS

As reported in the previous OFF News, the Port Botany Extension Impact Statement (EIS) is on display for public comment until March 29. The intimidating 5000 + pages of this document are superficially impressive but close examination reveals much repetition, verbosity and largely irrelevant technical detail. Members of OFF Committee consider the proposal is likely to be very detrimental, and a submission to this effect is being prepared on behalf of the Society. Members are also urged to examine the EIS (see last OFF News) and submit their own comments.

The proposal would double the number of large ships entering the Bay, greatly increase road traffic congestion and enclose the endangered waterbird habitat of Penrhyn Estuary. It is obvious that the resulting impacts would be significant but cannot be reliably predicted in quantitative terms, no matter how sophisticated and detailed the predictive techniques may appear to be. Yet the EIS says that all impacts will be "within manageable limits". **This is just not credible** and must be strongly challenged.

WEST HEAD FIELD DAY

A very successful field trip to Aboriginal sites near West Head, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park was held on February 28. A report with photographs may be seen on OFF's website, off.oatleypark.com.

ANOTHER OATLEY TREE THREATENED

This time it is a large mature eucalypt outside 76 Waratah Street. The irony is that the local residents want to keep it but the Council 'Tree Preservation Officer' has recommended its removal because of a fungal growth in the trunk. There does not appear to be any danger to the house, driveway or passers-by. We believe this is another case of an arborist seeing Australian trees through European eyes. Fungal activity is part of the natural growth process of large eucalypts, helping to form hollows with great habitat value for birds and other fauna. The Society has petitioned the Council for retention of the tree.

HELP AVAILABLE

Our Welfare Officer, Faye Coughlan, attends to special social functions of the Society such as arranging support and assistance for members, if needed, in times of illness etc. She may be contacted on 9570 6338 and would appreciate members informing her when needs of this type occur.

FINAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

A few subscriptions are apparently still overdue. The Constitution states that membership ceases if payment is not made by March 31.

Meetings are held at the **Uniting Church Hall, Frederick Street, Oatley.**
(near the corner of Letitia Street)

It is intended that meetings commence promptly at 7.45 pm.

Visitors and children are welcome to attend all meetings and field days.

Coming Events

March 22 (Monday). Regular monthly meeting at 7.45pm. **Bob Walshe OAM**, well-known conservationist (see page 1) will give a talk entitled '**Botany Bay in Peril**'. Please note that Bob Crombie, listed as the speaker in the last OFF News, will now address us on May 24.

March 27 (Saturday) FIELD DAY, Wombarra to Austinmer coastal walk. About 7km. Leader: Cliff Crane who may be contacted, for that day only, on mobile phone 0403 851 237. A leisurely stroll along the coastal rocks and beaches with perhaps a splash in the surf or rock swimming pools. No climbing or jumping, just a couple of spots that need a little care. Lunch on grassed headland near the Headlands Hotel where there's a bistro/snack bar if you don't want to carry food. The walk is exposed so bring hat, block-out and fluids. **Meet in second last carriage of train leaving Hurstville at 9.02 am arriving Wombarra 9.45am.** Return train is either 3.05pm from Thirroul (1.5 km further on) arriving Hurstville 3.58pm, or 3.59pm from Austinmer arriving Hurstville 4.58pm. As there is no absentee voting in the council elections that day, you may need to make a pre-poll or postal vote (details from electoral offices on 9585 9485 or 9330 9507).

April 13 (Tuesday) EXTRA FIELD DAY, Birchgrove historic walk. Leader: Keith Robinson, 9869 8743. Ferry from Wharf 5 Circular quay 9.30am. Morning tea near Birchgrove ferry terminal. Lunch at Snails Bay Park. Finish about 2.30pm and then a bus back to the CBD. Bring water, morning tea and lunch.

THE KAI MIA WAY

OFF Committee member, Sharyn Cullis, writes: "Imagine a 250 kilometre system of walking tracks and bike trails that link the very beginnings of our river system to the sea. This is the vision shared by the Georges River Environmental Alliance and Sutherland Shire Environment Centre that has become the plan for the Kai Mia Way. It will enable people to walk through areas of great contrast; through pristine bushland and swamp, and then on to spoilt wastelands, and both through some of the wealthiest and poorest urban areas of Sydney. But mostly the way hugs the foreshores or seeks out viewing points of the Georges River and its tributaries, particularly the Woronora."

A number of completed and on-going foreshore projects funded by local councils and the NSW government may be regarded as the initial stage of the project. The next stage will be furthered by a grant of \$45,000 recently announced by Minister

Craig Knowles. **At the next OFF meeting, Sharyn will display a Feasibility Study Report of the project** with a comprehensive set of maps and proposed track networks. As one of the people closely associated with the proposal she will welcome feedback and suggestions. Further information may be viewed on www.ssec.org.au.

HELP WANTED

A volunteer is urgently needed to attend to the regular mail-out of OFF News. This usually takes little more than two hours per month. It involves the fixing of addressed labels on envelopes, insertion of folded News, and posting. Please contact Cliff on 9580 3269 or Fred on 9525 0552.

OUR WEBSITE: WHAT'S NEW ? (off.oatleypark.com)

- Details of David Waterhouse's bird survey of Moore Reserve wetlands, with photographs.
- West Head Field Day: report and photographs.
- The new 2004 Programme of OFF Activities.