



O.F.F. NEWS



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URGENT ACTIONS NEEDED !

A Draft Local Environmental Plan to allow child care centres in the 6(a) Open Space Zone is now on display at Hurstville Council and Library, Penshurst Library, and www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au. As Zone 6(a) includes Oatley Park, Myles Dunphy Reserve and other reserves, OFF Committee regards the Plan as a significant threat to our limited public recreational space and natural areas. It could result in further clearing and alienation of the already depleted bushland so essential to the quality and character of our area. The Committee will submit an objection to the Plan on behalf of the Society but this action will be more effective if supported by other independent objections. Members are therefore asked to consider submitting their own objections, quoting file number 04/00338, to the General Manager, PO Box 205, Hurstville BC1481, or via email hccmail@hurstville.nsw.gov.au. The closing date for submissions is **Wednesday, 19th May**, so the matter requires urgent attention.

VINCENTIA VICTORY

Last August, OFF was notified about a proposal to construct a four storey sailing/yacht club and other developments on beachside bushland near Vincentia on the South Coast. Our Committee subsequently sent a letter of objection to the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, pointing out how the proposal would damage a sensitive and important environment. We are pleased to report that, as a result of this and other objections, consent for the proposal has recently been refused.

IDEAS FOR 50th ANNIVERSARY ?

As OFF was established in 1955 we will celebrate our 50th Anniversary next year. The Committee would like to mark such a special event in an appropriate manner, and would welcome any ideas for this from members.

CONSERVATION IN YOUR BACKYARD

'Horticulturalists and permaculturalists have had a stranglehold on gardens since time immemorial, but their time has come to move over and make room for.....**ecoscaping**', writes Bob Crombie, a TAFE ecology teacher and a former National Parks and Wildlife Service Officer at Royal National Park. His experience and deep understanding of both local and global ecology have produced very effective, practical and personally satisfying techniques for conserving our local natural heritage. Bob will speak on this topic at our next monthly meeting on 24th May. His talk will be particularly informative and stimulating for members and visitors interested in sustainable gardening, enhancing their backyards with native flora and fauna, and the conservation of biodiversity (see our website for Bob's introduction).

PLASTIC BAG WAR

Alan Fairley has commented on his recent visit to Kangaroo Valley where he was pleased to see the shops advertising their town as 'plastic bag free'. This is an excellent example, and some OFF members have suggested we should promote something similar for Oatley. Apparently, a number of other communities and a few large chain stores now have active programs to reduce plastic bag usage (see 'Did you know' overleaf). OFF News will follow this up in the next issue.

BIRCHGROVE HISTORIC WALK

On 13th April, led by Keith Robinson, 14 members walked through the streets of Birchgrove to examine the many historic features of the area. These included heritage buildings, the first harbour tunnel, St John's Church, and the old Caltex Lubricating Oil Depot. Further details of this excellent field trip may be found on our website at off.oatleypark.com

PERHAPS YOU FORGOT ?

Some members are not sure if they've paid their subscriptions for 2004. If you are one of those, please call Carolyn on 9579 6631

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

May 24 (Monday) Regular monthly meeting at 7.45pm. Bob Crombie, formerly of NPWS and TAFE (ecology teacher) will speak on **Ecoscaping Gardens.**

May 29 (Saturday) Field Day. A pleasant 2km walk from Governor Phillip Park, Nth Palm Beach, to Barrenjoey Lighthouse. The first part of the walk is along level ground and beach, while the final 400 metres ascends 105m along a steep, stony, uneven track and rough steps. The reward at the end is one of the most spectacular views on the NSW coast. Catch the 8.05 train from Oatley station (second carriage) and then the Palm Beach bus, Route L90, at 9.04 am from Town Hall (go down Druitt Street to Clarence Street bus stop). Bring lunch, drinks, sun cream and wear sturdy boots. A stick is helpful for the short ascent at the end. Leader: John Blake, tel 9570 4796.

June 28 (Monday) Regular monthly meeting. Dr Penny Berents, Australian Museum, **Deep Sea Fauna of Sea Mounts.**

WOLLI CREEK FIELD DAY

This was led by Heather Mackey on Saturday, 1st May. It was attended by 13 members who walked from Tempe Station through remnant eucalypt forest along Wollie Creek to Bardwell Park. A feature of the trip was a cluster of five heritage-listed stone cottages at Jackson Place in a fine bushland setting (only five kilometres from the Sydney CBD). All participants were very favourably impressed with the Wollie Creek valley which contained surprisingly good samples of the original flora and fauna of this part of suburbia.

STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE ADI SITE

The former Australian Defence Industries (ADI) site is an extraordinary undeveloped area of 15.4 square km within the western suburbs of Sydney. Because access has been prohibited and the entire area surrounded by a high security fence since 1942, it contains many rare and endangered species and unique samples of ecosystems virtually eliminated elsewhere. It is also the only place near Sydney where large (and apparently thriving) populations of kangaroos and emus may be viewed in near-natural conditions. Sadly, the land is being sold to Lend Lease who, with powerful political support, have prepared detailed plans to develop it as a new residential suburb. Nevertheless, the development applications and sale are not yet finalised, and community groups are still hopeful that the entire area will be

protected, as recommended by the National Trust. The Daily Telegraph has recently joined the campaign to save the site with a series of articles revealing its remarkable natural features and beauty (April 17-24). The Daily Telegraph also urges its readers to express their opposition to Lend Lease's plans by writing to the Prime Minister, Premier, local members and local councils.

VERY BRIEFLY

World Environment Day: June 5. For details see website www.unep.org/wed

Kai Mia Way: June 6, Sunday. Guided walk along Woronora section. Bookings at Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, 9545 3077 (ask for Nick or Jo).

Transit of Venus: June 8. The last time this occurred was in 1882. The time before that was 1769. To observe it then at Tahiti was said to be the reason for Captain Cook's epic Botany Bay voyage.

Bushfire Conference: June 24-25. Influences of political and social changes on management. Nature Conservation Council. For details and enrolment form phone 9279 2466, fax 9279 2499, or email abaker@nccnsw.org.au.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Plastic bags are produced from petroleum. Nearly **seven billion** supermarket checkout bags are used in Australia each year. The amount of petroleum used to make these could produce the fuel to drive 20,000 cars far enough for each to encircle the earth. (see Planet Ark's website)