



# O.F.F. NEWS



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## THE AGM 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY

Congratulations to Julian Sheen who was re-elected as President and to the elected committee members.

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Julian began with a tentative list of our objectives for the coming year. They included:

- Care of bushland sites where specific issues have been identified, as in the Miles Dunphy Reserve
- Awareness and attention to the health of the Georges River from Dharawal to Botany Bay
- Promoting the use of our website for communication of our ideals and relevance, and inviting feedback.
- Promoting and protecting native trees in our urbanised environment

Julian noted the questions that must be put to Councils regarding the protection of native trees. They are: -

- How many DAs with a request for tree removal are approved?
- Are there more stringent criteria for mature native trees, and for trees within a tree community?
- Why are some trees removed though they do not fit councils' policy of removal?
- Which view will prevail in a difference of opinion between Tree preservation and Development officers?
- Is there a quality check of arborists' qualifications, and is there a recommended list of qualified arborists?

To enhance respect for our key bush area, Oatley Park, Julian raised the possibility, suggested by a member, of O.F.F. recommending its name be changed to *Oatley Bushland Park* to emphasise its essential quality. He called for community response to the idea.

Julian then spoke of the strength of O.F.F. arising from its strength of purpose that is clearly defined and communicated. Unlike organisations whose purpose has become blurred or irrelevant. O.F.F. has a clear mandate to conserve the essentials of our natural environment, and to protect our natural heritage. Membership of O.F.F. is valuable and important. It is not what you get out of the Society – but what you give to it; your contribution to an important and relevant cause. A strong membership ensures the respect of the wider community that will anchor our relevance through 2012 and on toward our 60<sup>th</sup> year.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Membership of O.F.F. remains around 300. Life Member Harry Whaite, who died in February, was honoured by a tribute in O.F.F. News and a donation to Bush Heritage Australia.

The 2011 program included 22 activities. Ten field outings were attended by an average of 18. The most popular were a walk in Dharawal SCA and a week-end at Lithgow, where 34 members visited stunning areas in the Gardens of Stone Stage Two Proposal that are threatened by mining.

Monthly meetings were attended by an average of 47 people. The largest audiences were at talks on Biodiversity in Australia, Sydney's Lizards, and the Great Victoria Desert. A/V equipment has been updated to improve the quality of speakers' presentations.

The Annual Dinner attracted 45 members and friends; Julian Sheen acknowledged those who had joined O.F.F. more than 40 years ago, and Trevor Revis sang for the guests. The Annual Picnic in Oatley Park was relocated to The Castle because of rain and a small group celebrated there.

Eleven information-packed issues of O.F.F. News were printed and published online. John Davoren has scanned issues dating back to 1968 and they will soon be available on line.

The O.F.F. website now includes Alan Fairley's photos of Oatley Park blooms each month, and the history of O.F.F. - *Being Green*. It showcases O.F.F.'s many and varied activities through the year with photos and stories.

In 2011 O.F.F. campaigned for better water quality in the Georges River catchment. It lobbied for Dharawal to be declared a National Park with protection from mining. It participated in River Health and Streamwatch sampling programs, and ran a Clean Up Australia site in Myles Dunphy Reserve.

Our *getting greener* project for Lower Georges River Sustainability Initiative ran Birds in Backyards workshops for 84 participants. We gave away 700 native plants, Jason Cockayne made 18 garden visits, and we led four bird walks in bushland reserves. We hope to increase rain-absorbing, shrubby gardens that attract small birds, and reduce stormwater runoff and use of pesticides.

O.F.F. engaged with the community through stalls at Oatley Lions Festival, Oatley-Mortdale Scouts Market and Australia Day in Carss Park, It supported Oatley and Oatley West Public Schools. Alan Fairley introduced Oatley Park to Resourceful Australian Indian Network, Hurstville Council's Heritage Tours and Loftus Probus Club.

Thank you to all members of Oatley Flora & Fauna - your enthusiasm and friendliness has built a strong and caring Society. Report by the Secretary, Liz Cameron

### SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2012

The sixteen members and friends who gathered together at Smiggins Chalet enjoyed a wonderful week of cool temperatures along with soft mist, rain and sun; however no-one was hampered by the weather. Walks included Rainbow Lake, Mount Stillwell, Kosciuszko Summit via Old Summit Road, Main Range circuit, Kosciuszko Lookout via the Thredbo chairlift, Waterfall Walk, Porcupine Rocks, Merritts Nature trail and Thredbo River track, Charlottes Pass boardwalk. Drives included Dalgety-Nimmitabel-Cooma, Adaminaby - Kiandra (walking the heritage trail in the wet) - Cabramurra, and The Barry Way (following the Snowy River). With great company, jigsaws, DVDs, plenty of reading and many enjoyable "happy hours" it was a great week. Wild Brumby Distillery & Jindabyne provided some very pleasant lunch spots. [Report by Robin Dickson]

Since O.F.F.'s program for 2012 is in the post to members, this edition is also being posted. You can receive the newsletter from the website every month, and save the cost of postage. You can then print out the coloured version.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Uniting Church Hall Fredrick St [cnr Letitia St] Oatley starting at 7.45pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month.  
Visitors and accompanied children are welcome to all meetings and excursions.

### COMING EVENTS

**Feb 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Kirstin Proft speaking on The Importance of Wildlife Corridors**, a way of maintaining connectivity between bushland, helping ensure species diversity. Kirsten is Biodiversity Conservation Officer from National Parks Association of NSW

**Mar 4<sup>th</sup> (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day 2012. [Details below of OFF's participation at Lower Gannons Park\*]**

**Mar 10<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field Day to Taronga Zoo**, Enjoy a day at the Zoo. We will have a specialist talk by Terry Boylan at 11.00am at the Snake House. Assemble near the Komodo Dragon enclosure by 10.50am. Apart from the Snake House event, participants will be free to "do their own thing". Everyone's interests will be different and people need to use the day to their best advantage. People can, of course, join up together if they wish. Have a great day! **Leaders: Robin and Rob Dickson** ph. 95805663, 0459 340 133. [More details below\*\*]

**Mar 26<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Graham Fry speaking on Madagascar**

**Mar 31<sup>st</sup> (Sat) Earth Hour 8:30 to 9:30 pm [see notes below\*\*\*]**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> (Sun) Field Day to Cumberland State Forest amble. Leaders: G Lalchere & V Bolling [details later]**

**April 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting with Chris Rehberg speaking on Camera Traps to Monitor Fauna.**

**April 27<sup>th</sup> (Fri) Field Event: Lizard spotlighting at Lime Kiln Bay Leader: Matthew Mo**

**May 6<sup>th</sup> (Sun) Field day: Loves Bay Kiama - Gerringong. Leaders: Lesley and Peter Cox.**

### MORE ABOUT COMING EVENTS

#### \*CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY - MARCH 4<sup>th</sup>

Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society (O.F.F.) is helping to clean up and conserve our local environment by participating in the 2012 Clean Up Australia Day at **Lower Gannons Park, 8.30 am to mid-day** Register at Vale Lane, off Robyn St, off Vista Ave. Parking at Gannons Park, off Boatwright Ave, near the intersection of Forest Rd and Belmore Rd. We are playing our part in protecting our environment for now and future generations. Register for this event in support of a great cause or just turn up on the day. More at [www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/Lower+Gannons+Park](http://www.cleanupaustaliaday.org.au/Lower+Gannons+Park).

This area is one of the larger recreation areas in Hurstville LGA including open areas and bushland. Council has developed a draft landscape master plan which provides a long term vision for the Park. [www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/).

Bring: gloves, hat, sun-screen, sturdy shoes, boots or gumboots, water and a rubbish bag if available. We may also be disinfecting boots/shoes to prevent the spread of Phytophthora Dieback, a disease that kills plants and is spread by humans moving contaminated soil or plant material. We spray the underside of footwear with a mix of 70% methylated spirits and 30% water that is quite harmless to humans. [Leader Graham Lalchere email: [glalch@gmail.com](mailto:glalch@gmail.com)]

#### \*\*TARONGA ZOO TRIP ON MARCH 10<sup>th</sup>

**Costs: Zoo entry Group Booking** (per person): Adult \$35.20, Child (4-15yrs) \$17.20 (under 4yrs free), Senior/Concession \$31.50 (if we have 12 seniors entry is reduced to \$25.20). **Ferry:** Seniors' \$2.50 covered, Adult \$5.60, Child \$2.80 each way. Bus (to top entry gate) Adult \$2.10, Child \$1.00, **Suggested Travel Arrangements:** Train (second last carriage) from Sutherland 8.05am, Oatley 8.13am, and Mortdale 8.15 am. Ferry: from Circular Quay Wharf No.2. 9.15am. Arrive at the Zoo Wharf approx. 9.30am. Travel by bus to the top entrance where we will gather to arrange payment for the Group entry. Please bring the exact money as we have to pay cash for the whole group in one lump sum and change will not be available. (Seniors, as costs depend on numbers, please organise to have both \$31.50 and \$25.20 at hand.) Bring sunscreen, rain gear, hat, water and food, or purchase it at kiosks. Wear comfortable walking shoes. [The Dicksons].

#### \*\*\*EARTH HOUR ON MARCH 31<sup>st</sup>

The interesting publication *Doryanthes* [www.doryanthes.info/](http://www.doryanthes.info/) notes that last year a record of 5,251 cities in 135 countries officially took part, and that there is a lot going on this year. The Hour has grown far beyond the one symbolic time of darkness to a mass sustainability movement. Earth Hour is not about saving an hour's electricity, but about uniting people to protect the planet, and each one of us can be a part of it. <http://www.wwf.org.au/earthhour/>

### GRAZING IN NATIONAL PARKS

Keith Muir, Director of The Colong Foundation for Wilderness has called on the Premier, Barry O'Farrell and Environment Minister, Robyn Parker to rule out any introduction of grazing in our national parks, apparently being proposed by a ginger group of local councillors in Western NSW. Keith argued that putting stock into our national parks would cause a pest management problem, would destroy native plants, prevent regeneration, churn up the ground, pollute waterways and displace native fauna. [www.colongwilderness.org.au/](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/)

### PROTECTION OF NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA

The Environmental Defenders Office [EDO] notes that all native animals (fauna: mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) and many species of native plants (flora) are protected in NSW under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1979* and the *National Parks and Wildlife Regulation 2009*. Once a particular plant or animal is listed as a threatened species (as even the Koala may now be in some places!) then their protection is covered under the provisions of the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. To see how you can protect native animals and plants on your own land go to [www.edo.org.au/edonsw](http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw)

### Briefly

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Experience DVD, with 40 panoramas of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, is available from their website for \$12. Place your order at [www.bluemountains.org.au/](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/)

The annual Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority [SMCMA] Community Forum will be held on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> of March at Sydney Olympic Park, cost: free. All environmental volunteers working in the Sydney region welcome. Register at [nicoladixon.wufoo.eu/forms/](http://nicoladixon.wufoo.eu/forms/)

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2012

Have you paid your membership fee yet? The fee is \$25 per family. You can pay by direct bank transfer to 062 206 901997 Oatley Flora and Fauna Con Soc, but if you do so, you must put your name on the transfer form.

Biodiversity?

