



## ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER'S OFFICE NSW

Uncertainty continues for EDO following a review of legal assistance services announced by the NSW Attorney General. New guidelines indicate that state funding is not to be used for lobbying activities, public campaigning, and legal advice to activists and lobby groups. It is to be for legal advice and representation for socially and economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

*The Australian* reported that these changes follow months of mining industry pressure on government to "de-fang" EDO. Most EDO work is to protect the environment on behalf of rural community groups, farmers, Aboriginal groups, and rural and regional communities. These groups surely come within the definition of disadvantaged and vulnerable. EDO will receive \$110,000 less of Public Purpose Trust funding this financial year, and the future of this funding, (over two-thirds of its annual budget) is uncertain. Despite the cuts, EDO is committed to maintaining its high standard advice on environmental legal questions and developments in environmental and planning law. It appears that 2013 is shaping up as a defining year for EDO and generally for planning and the environment.

## WARRAGAMBA DAM FIELD DAY - 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER

Five people braved the weather forecast of searing 40c heat for the trip to Warragamba dam. On arrival, we were surprised to find that, despite advice to the contrary, access to the dam wall was permitted. We proceeded down onto the dam wall, where we observed swimming wildlife in the dam waters (possibly native water rats). Then we went down onto the "garden terraces". After inspecting the wall from below, we climbed back up to the cool air-conditioning of the visitors centre, and examined its very informative exhibits. Afterwards we found a very comfortable picnic table and shelter for lunch, and later retired to the Wallacia pub for much needed refreshment.

## SMIGGINS TRIP JANUARY 12-19<sup>TH</sup>

A great time was had by the 20 of us. It was wonderfully cool throughout. Sunday 13th had rain and fog, but most were happy just being there, and enjoyed the rest day. Walks included the Lakes Walk circuit taking in Kosciuszko Summit and Seaman's Hut, Mount Stillwell, Bobs Ridge trail to Cascade Hut, Rainbow Lake, Waterfall walk, Watson's Crags, Porcupine Rocks, Palaibo Track, Charlottes Pass Boardwalk and a section of the Summit Walkway from Thredbo top station. Drives and Picnics covered Lake Eucumbene/Buckenderra, the Alpine Way to Tom Groggin, Khancoban, and Cabramurra. We dined at a number of popular spots - Alpine Air, an open-air café between Perisher and Charlotte's Pass, Indian in Jindabyne (before a platypus spotting evening along the Barry Way), Iona Café at Dalgety, Guthega Alpine Inn, Eagles Nest Thredbo, and a farewell lunch on Friday afternoon at Wild Brumby Distillery. [Report by Robin Dickson]

## RAISING WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

The Colong Foundation notes that the recommendation of *Infrastructure NSW* to raise the dam wall by 23m is unnecessary and environmentally damaging. Installing new floodgates and improved flood monitoring would provide substantial flood mitigation and save the \$500 million estimated cost of raising the wall. In addition, there would be no protection against extreme floods (average one in 500 years) even if the dam were enlarged. [www.colongwilderness.org.au/](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/)

## DEATH OF KEITH UNDERWOOD

We were saddened to hear of the death of Keith Underwood. Many of us remember him as an active and involved member of OFF. He was Hon Secretary of our Society from 1988 to 1993.

## OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA LOGO

Tim James' striking design of a magpie's head superimposed on a flannel flower, a common and iconic plant in Oatley Park, has been selected as the logo. We are in the process of incorporating versions of the logo on our website, letterhead and OFF News. The trial above, for the News, is for consideration, and comments welcome.

## SERIOUS DRAINING OF AQUIFERS

However much we waste and abuse water, we assume that the rains will refill the rivers and reservoirs, except during droughts. *The National Geographic* notes that while it may be true for water at the surface, it is not so underground.

Subterranean water is stored by nature in the pores of rocks, often for thousands of years. The world is becoming increasingly dependent on it, and over-use can cause major problems. The most evident is a lowering of the water table beyond the reach of existing wells that must be deepened to reach the groundwater. In some places, the water table has consequently dropped by hundreds of feet.

In parts of India, groundwater levels have dropped 10 meters since 1979, and the depletion is accelerating, emptying the giant natural reservoirs far faster than the rains can refill them. About a quarter of India's food is irrigated with underground water and it is running out.

India is but one example; the crisis is global and growing fast, but remaining largely out of sight and mind.

[news.nationalgeographic.com/news/](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/)

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD FOR ALAN FAIRLEY

OFF nominated Alan for an Environment Award in the 2012 National Volunteer Awards program, recognising his outstanding contribution to protecting the environment and educating the public about its importance.

The nomination was successful and on 5<sup>th</sup> December, Alan was presented with the award by Daryl Melham, Federal Member for Banks, at a ceremony in Revesby.



## OATLEY PARK FLOWERS IN JANUARY

### Black She oak

Erect tree with pine-like leaves and 6-8 leaf-teeth in a whorl around the stem joints. Male and female flowers different. Female inflorescences (pictured here) small, red and scattered along stems. Female flowers form distinctive cylindrical woody cones. Widespread and common.

### *Allocasuarina littoralis*



See Alan Fairley's whole list at <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=1821>

## COMING EVENTS

**Feb 4<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm. The Annual General Meeting** with the election of officers and review of the work of the Society. If you are interested in nominating for the committee, please contact **Liz Cameron**. If you have interesting photos please bring them for a "PowerPoint presentation", [sorry no slides, must be digital photos on CD or memory stick, (up to 18 photos!)]. The meeting will close with a social supper - please bring a plate.

**Feb 25<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting** with **Dr Dieter Hochuli**, Associate Professor at Sydney University School of Biological Sciences, talking on *Urban Ecology in a Changing World*.

**Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field Day to Michael Mobb's Sustainable House** - leader **Graham Lalchere**. [Details later]

**Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day** - [Details later]

**Mar 25<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm Regular monthly meeting** with **Dr Peter Mitchell**, one of Australia's leading environmental scientists, talking on *Traces of the Ice Age in Sydney*.

**April 6<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Field Day** to the upper Georges River bushland corridor - Platypus and Koala Country. Destinations are an old convict road (called the Old Ford Rd) that traversed from Campbelltown to the Coast, and the Basin, a river and creek junction on the upper Georges River. **Leader Sharyn Cullis**.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OATLEY FLORA AND FAUNA CONSERVATION SOC INC. FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31/12/2012. Leslie Wylie Hon Treasurer

Credit Balance at 31/12/2011	\$6,932.72		
From 1/1/2012		Receipts	Payments
Subscriptions		\$3,550.00	
Donations		\$1,299.00	
Sale - Plants		\$87.00	
Annual Dinner		\$1,520.00	
Annual Dinner Raffle		\$200.00	
Sale - OFF Caps		\$10.00	
Rockdale Council- Birds in Backyards		\$678.00	
Meeting Stall Sales		\$56.00	
Interest		\$1.37	
Annual Dinner deposit refund		\$199.00	
<b>Total Receipts 31/12/12</b>		<b>\$7,600.37</b>	
Department of Fair Trading			\$49.00
Birds in Backyards costs			\$600.00
Printing/Postage			\$765.61
Australia Post Box Rental			\$93.00
Printing Programs			\$266.20
Annual Dinner			\$1,724.00
Insurance			\$749.52
NCC Membership			\$200.00
Donations (see Note)			\$1,900.00
Lions Oatley Festival Stall			\$120.00
O.F.F Gazebo Awning			\$49.00
Oatley Logo Design			\$500.00
Oatley Uniting Church Hall Hire			\$399.60
Sundries			\$146.70
<b>Total payments 31/12/12</b>			<b>\$7,562.63</b>
Credit balance 31/12/2012		\$6,970.46	
Add Term Deposit A/c		\$9,907.56	
<b>Total Society Funds</b>		<b>\$16,878.02</b>	

**Note: Donations.** (\$500) Environment Defenders Office, (\$300) Colong Foundation, (\$200) WIRES, Kuringai Bats, Wilderness Society, Total Environment Centre, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, (\$100) Sydney Wildlife.

The Society's funds at 31/12/12 were \$16,878.02 including \$543 in the President's Fund for donations to other environmental bodies. Included in the Society's funds are 2013 Subscriptions in advance of \$1500. Generous donations of \$834 were received in Nov/Dec with 2013 subscriptions to go into the President's Fund. Thank you.

## OUR TREASURER STEPPING DOWN

Leslie Wylie is stepping down as Hon Treasurer. Many thanks for your seven years of splendid work Leslie.

## BIRD BROCHURE APPEAL

OFF Committee has approved the printing of a coloured bird brochure to depict the birds of Oatley Park and Lime Kiln Bay. The first step is to raise funds for set up and printing costs. An appeal is being made for donations. If you would like to help this worthy cause, please indicate that your donation is for the bird brochure. Our target is \$2500.

## MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH

This is a regular testing program by volunteers of the creek lines flowing through to the Georges River. The Group next gathers at 9am on Tuesday 26th Feb. For more detail ring Sharyn (9579 1262) or Heather (0425 291 879).

## MANAGEMENT OF MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE

A draft plan will be on exhibition until Monday 18th Feb at Hurstville Civic Centre, and Hurstville City Library during normal opening hours. A public meeting where residents and other stakeholders can discuss the draft plan will be held on 11th Feb at 7pm. There is much more detail to be found at [www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/).

## NO HUNTING IN NATIONAL PARKS!

If you agree that hunting in national parks creates dangers and will hardly help remove animal predators, there are some suggestions about how to make your views known to our parliamentarians.

<http://nohunting.wildwalks.com/>



## FOR NOTING

**Australian Plant Society** NSW Regional Meeting 16<sup>TH</sup> Feb 1pm with Maria Hitchcock sharing tips on growing Waratahs and Flannels Flowers. [menaiwildflower.austplants.com.au](http://menaiwildflower.austplants.com.au)

**Clean Up Australia Day** is on Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Its website is at [www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/](http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/). O.F.F will be organising an event at a site to be announced.

**Mulga Road Books** 89 Mulga Rd Oatley W is operated by Rotary Hurstville and has a wide range of quality second hand books. <http://rotaricap.com/mrb/>.

**Oatley Heritage & Historical Society** has quarterly meetings to report on current research. These are held on the last Friday of Feb, May, Aug, and Nov at 10.30 am at the Oatley RSL. [www.oatleyheritagegroup.com](http://www.oatleyheritagegroup.com)

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2013

Have you paid your membership fee yet? The fee is \$25 per family. One way to pay is by direct bank transfer to BSB 062 206 Act no 901997 Oatley Flora and Fauna Con Soc, AND **put your name on the transfer form.**