http://off.oatleypark.com

Issue 11/14

Nov/Dec 2014

MINES KNOCKED BACK

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] has rejected the application to extend the Coalpac mines near Lithgow, in the environmentally sensitive area adjacent to the Blue Mountains World Heritage area. Advocates for the mines, Energy Australia, told NSW Planning that the mines would help them expand electricity supply and reduce prices, and told the federal government that they wanted to reduce supply and increase prices because of the Renewable Energy Target.

PAC was not convinced that this small coal resource was particularly significant for the electricity market, and considered the economic benefits claimed were outweighed by environmental costs and impacts. The

300 hectares of ancient stone pagodas and forest, part of the Gardens of Stone in the Ben Bullen State Forest, have also been spared. Anglo American's Drayton South coalmine has been knocked back by PAC because it is 'not in the public interest'. If approved the open-cut coalmine would have changed the face of local communities in the Hunter. http://www.hcec.org.au/aggregator/sources/1?page=1

AUSTRALIAN BIODIVERSITY

Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) notes that ours is one of the most important nations on Earth for biodiversity. It is one of only 17 "mega diverse" nations and home to more species than any other developed country. 87% of our mammal species, 93% of reptiles, 94% of frogs and 45% of our bird species are found only in Australia.

Sadly, however, Australia is facing a crisis, with the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. 29 native mammals have become extinct since European settlement, and $\frac{1}{3}$ of all mammal extinctions in the last 400 years have occurred in Australia. More than 1,700 species of animals and plants are listed by the Australian Government as being at risk of extinction. Nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of our mammal species and $\frac{1}{7}$ of our bird species are listed as threatened. http://www.australianwildlife.org/

ENVIRONMENT versus ECONOMY

The Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, noting that the community is taking more from the environment than natural systems can replenish, recently issued a report entitled Blueprint for a Healthy Environment and a Productive Economy. This considers the magnitude of the environmental challenges we face. Ross Gittins, commenting on the report, noted that the heated climate-change debate is distracting us from addressing many significant environmental problems. Air pollution and water pollution controls have helped restore the health of the environment. However, the destruction of native vegetation, over extraction of water from rivers and aquifers, introduction of weeds and pests, stripping soils of carbon and nutrients, and poorly planned urban development, are some of the factors driving the continuing decline in the condition of Australia's natural assets. Related item re danger of feral cats/

STATE OF THE CLIMATE - 2014

An interesting item for the climate debate is <u>State of the Climate-2014</u> - the third in a series of reports from the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO showing further warming of the atmosphere and oceans.

SoC-2014 reports that the change is occurring against the background of high climate variability, but that the signal is clear. Air and ocean temperatures across Australia are now, on average, almost a degree Celsius warmer than they were in 1910, with most of

the warming occurring since

1950.

This warming has seen Australia experiencing more warm weather and extreme heat, and fewer cool extremes. There has been an increase in extreme fire weather, and a longer fire season, across large parts of Australia.

Rainfall averaged across all of Australia has slightly

increased since 1900. Since 1970, there have been large increases in annual rainfall in the northwest and decreases in the southwest. Autumn and early winter rainfall has mostly been below average in the southeast since 1990.

Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations continue to rise and continued emissions will cause further warming over this century. Limiting the magnitude of future climate change requires large and sustained net global reductions in greenhouse gases. More at http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Climate/ http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/<a href="http://www.csiro.au/Ou

POWERFUL OWLS WORKSHOP

Chris Lloyd has organised a small workshop for Sunday March 1st on the POWLs on the Georges River, and would like to hear from anyone interested in participating. It will involve an outline of what has emerged so far from the project, working through pellet material collected to find the most common prey, going through the observation data for trees used for breeding, roosting, and the associated vegetation and landscape and planning for the next breeding season [If you are interested contact Chris Lloyd mailto:pezoporus@bigpond.com]

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2015

Our annual trip to Smiggin Holes Chalet will be from Sat 7th to 14th Feb. Costs per night are \$119 double or twin room; \$98 single room, \$48 per child 6-18. We need to book a minimum of 10 rooms but we do not have to finalise until 31st Jan and you do not have to stay for all 7 days. For information and bookings, Liz Cameron \$\mathbb{g}\$ 9580 6621 or lizc@pacific.net.au

2015 OFF MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Members will shortly receive a personal letter from Robin Dickson, our Membership Officer, reminding us that the annual \$25 membership subscription is due by 1st January. It is also an appeal for us to update our contact details if they have changed recently.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 24th (Mon) 7.45pm monthly meeting and social supper. Please bring a plate. Shauna Chadlowe sends her apologies, and will be replaced by Leah Royle, speaking on Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) protecting endangered wildlife, mammals, animals, ecosystems, and biodiversity.

Nov 29th (Sat) Field day on Five Ferries. Catch the 9:07AM Rivercat, Circular Quay, wharf five, to Rydalmere; I will meet people on the wharf. We return to the city, walking between ferry stops and catching ferries, about 13 kms of mainly flat walking on paths. I suggest the train leaving Oatley at 8.13am and Mortdale at 8.15; change at Town Hall. If not on Seniors' Card, suggest a Day Pass. Leader Jennifer Whaite 10403921685

Dec 1st (Mon) OFF Picnic in the Park, our annual Christmas get-together, in Oatley Park at the Steamroller from 5.30pm. BYO food, drinks, picnic chairs, table etc. Barbecues if no fire alert. Info Liz Cameron \$\alpha\$9580 6621.

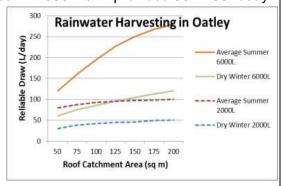
Feb 2nd (Mon) 7.45pm Annual General Meetina with the election of officers, followed by members' photo slides and a social supper. Members are encouraged to bring a plate, and to display interesting photos. Twenty is the recommended photo limit! Feb 23rd (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting.

RAINWATER HARVESTING IN OATLEY

Jim Vickery, OFF member and retired Environmental Engineer, spoke on this topic at the 27th Oct meeting. Jim is determined to capture as much life-giving rain falling on his roof as possible by storing it in water tanks around his home. This reduces his reliance on town water supply and the erosive impact of excess storm water on our local streams.

He provided guidelines and graphs showing the relationship between tank size and roof area based on rainfall records. In drier times, the *Reliable Draw* [water drawn every day without emptying tank] is between Average Summer and Dry Winter levels shown in this chart. It is a useful guide relating storage volume and roof catchment area. A 2000L tank provides 50 - 100 L/day

[if catchment is 100 sq m or more], sufficient to supply а toilet in small household and some water for the garden. 6000L tank needs least 200 sq



m of catchment to supply water to a washing machine, toilet, and garden. Techniques for the collection, storage and delivery of rainwater were reviewed along with uses for the water that overflows the tank. Jim runs his excess water into a swale in his backyard providing a bog that can recharge the water table. Running excess into a pond is another excellent method of harvesting rain water.

ILAWARRA ESCARPMENT FIELD DAY 2ND NOV In the best OFF tradition, our day started with morning tea at the Robertson Pie Shop. Twenty enthusiastic participants gathered for the Illawarra escarpment experience

Our first stop was Buddaroo National Park, 15-minute drive from Robertson, where we walked the 500m Carrington Falls loop. It was wonderful to see many flowers in bloom, Isopogon, Oleria, Lambertia, Epacris, Callistemon, and Iris to name a few. The Telopea (Waratahs) were outstanding. The approach to the falls along the ridge allowed us many different views of the spectacular twin falls as the Kangaroo River plunges over 50m to the valley below.

over 50m to the valley below.
Our lunch stop was Nellies Glen, near a large rock pool and waterfall. Some of the energetic members sacrificed their lunch break to walk the 4km round trip to Missingham lookout. The walking track leads along the western edge of the escarpment and shows off Kangaroo Valley in all its glory.

After lunch, we made our way to Illawarra Fly, a 10-minute drive from Carrington Falls. The award-winning walk is one of Australia's leading treetop walk experiences. The 1.5km return walk takes in native rainforest and Illawarra escarpment. The steel walkway features two gently swaying cantilevered arms, and a central tower raised nearly 50m from the forest floor. Positioned 710m above sea level, the stunning views take in everything from the rainforest floor into the canopy, and out to Lake Illawarra and Port Kembla beach. The tree top walk truly gave us a bird's eye view enabling us to have a close encounter with a pair of Tawny frogmouths snoozing close to the walkway. [See website for photo gallery].

THE OATLEY CALENDAR

Oatley Flora and Fauna, the Oatley Heritage and Historical Society and Oatley Lions have launched this



calendar tor 2015. Its theme nature and IS history in the Each suburbs. has page description of photo the and information

relating to the scene featured in it. There are dates for important events, school holidays, public holidays, and dates for various groups in the area such as OFF and OHHS. [Available at meetings for \$10 http://off.oatleypark.com/]

FOR NOTING

Buy Nothing Day on Sat 29th Nov: Spend a day without spending! http://www.buynothingday.co.uk/

Community CSG forum on Sun Nov 23rd, 11am in Mortdale RSL organised by Stop CSG Network.

Mules Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues 25th Nov. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (€ 0425 291 879).

<u>atley Heritage & Historical Soc</u> 28 Nov: Presentation at the RSL by Julian Sheen speaking on Oatley in 1938. www.oatleyhistory.org.au

<u>atley Park November Blooms</u> are listed on our website at http://off.oatleypark.com/

World Park Congress 12-19th Nov at Sydney Olympic Park, - the theme "Parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions", with original approaches for conservation and sustainable development.



OFF Secretary: Liz Cameron, P.O. Box 52 Mortdale 2223, \$\gamma 9580 6621 \frac{mailto:off@oatleypark.com}{2014.} Editor: John Davoren. O.F.F News is on our website prior to our monthly meetings. This is the last edition of our newsletter for 2014. A very Happy Christmas and New Year to you all.