



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.
Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 2/2014

Feb/March

OUR 58th AGM HELD ON 3rd FEBRUARY

Congratulations to Graham Lalchere re-elected President, and to our elected committee members. The Presidential address and the Secretary's Report can be found on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

The quotes below seek only to summarise the highlights of the two addresses.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Graham Lalchere's theme was our need to think globally, and act locally. He listed the following as local priorities for Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc. for the coming year.

- 1. Underground Coal Mining South of Sydney** He spoke of the effect of the mining on the Special Areas of the Sydney Catchment Authority, the impact on our water supply and on our local Georges River. We saw the possible extent of this problem last year in the very informative talk by Dr Anne Young. The effect of these mines seems to be quite devastating and we should endeavour to bring this to the attention of people in our area and our politicians.
- 2. Sewer Overflows in our Local Area** There have been a significant number of overflows from the designed relief structures over the past couple of years. Sydney Water has made some changes to the system, in particular reducing the risk of syphons forming at these points, not only in Lime Kiln Bay, but also at other locations, as there was a design fault common to them all. It appears that the Sydney Water options are limited and more needs to be done. This sewer main was constructed in the 50s or 60s; there has been much development since, and the mains may now be overloaded.
- 3. The Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands** They are suffering from increasingly significant environmental impacts from urban development (gross pollutants, sediment, weeds, etc.) that are causing deterioration in the natural qualities of the area. OFF has applied for a Community Awareness Grant from SITA, [the Waste resources company] and this will be used to produce a brochure with map/tracks, flora, and fauna, listing significant sites and showing how wetlands work. The aim of the project will be to raise awareness in the local community on impacts on the wetlands, to promote increased engagement and behaviour change, and to reduce environmental impacts.
- 4. Membership** OFF needs more, and younger members to remain a relevant and vibrant organisation. One of the important changes in our area is the recent arrivals from other countries (and cultures). We want to reach out to these people, and make them aware of what we do, and more importantly, what we stand for. We want to make them locals and engage them in acting locally while thinking globally.

Graham indicated that these are not the only issues we will be pursuing this year, but that we need to focus on them in particular.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2014

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 Account number 901997, AND put your name on the transfer form.

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2013

Liz Cameron outlined the activities of OFF in 2013, as it continued to realise its objectives through actions to improve the local area and to inform the community of the values of the natural environment.

Oatley Park remains a focus. A major achievement was the publication of three colour brochures on the Park - the Birds, Native Plants, and Walking Tracks in which Alan Fairley played a principal part. Thanks to OFF members for their donations to supplement the publication grants from Hurstville City Council, Oatley RSL and Community Club, and the Office of Environment and Heritage (the last facilitated by Mark Coure, MP for Oatley).

The Oatley Park Plan of Management (2004) has been reviewed by a sub-committee, and a report is being prepared on the steps needed to achieve effective long-term management of bushland and reduce bushfire risks in the Park,

Hurstville Council included Oatley Park and Baths as heritage items in its Review and Update of the 1988 Heritage Study. Water quality in the Georges River catchment is of great concern. Dedicated OFF members continue to undertake Streamwatch surveys in Myles Dunphy Reserve, and to monitor and publicise sewer overflows into Dairy Creek and Lime Kiln Bay wetlands, in consultation with other stakeholders.

OFF requested remedial action by Sydney Water and Hurstville City Council, and has just applied for a community awareness grant to highlight the valuable role of wetlands and identify ways to protect them.

OFF has affiliated with several groups that seek to protect Sydney drinking water catchments from threats, including longwall mining and exploration for coal seam gas. Our speaker in November provided graphic evidence of the damage to upland swamps in Sydney's catchment.

SNOWY MOUNTAINS 2014

Sixteen members and friends stayed at Smiggin Holes Chalet this month. We missed the Dicksons, but welcomed the company of Janet Austin who regaled us with stories of previous OFF trips. Weather was fine and warm throughout, but on several mornings the valleys were blanketed with smoke from fires in Victoria. Starting with a stroll to Porcupine Rocks, most of the regular walks were undertaken. Our fittest members conquered Mt Kosciuszko before descending Dead Horse Gap to Thredbo River - a distance of 24 km.

Entertainment included nightly 'happy hours', jigsaws, listening to a DVD of Morricone's music, sharing photos taken on the walks, and sailing sardine tins on Spencer's Creek. There were sightings of a broad-toothed rat, wedge-tailed eagle, plenty of young flame robins, several copperheads, and mountain grasshoppers. Although many flowers were past their peak, it was the right season for gentians and leek orchids.

PROTECTING ICONIC NATURAL AREAS



The Nature Conservation Council is calling on communities across the state to protest against current mining developments with the potential to threaten iconic areas. It has produced a short film highlighting some of the areas threatened by coalmines and gas

fields. It can be found at <http://nccnsw.org.au/icons-film>

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

COMING EVENTS

Feb 24th (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting with Matt Mo speaking on "Frogs, Reptiles, and Timber Harvesting: the balance and the bright side". The practices for timber harvesting in Australia are changing - and so too should our view of this industry. Public perceptions of native forestry are plagued with generalisations and the outdated legacy of a former era. Forest and wood products are used by all, and the ecological sustainability of forestry is being realised through scientific research. Come with an open mind for an exploration into the balance between [herpetofauna](#) and timber harvesting.

Mar 1st (Sat) Field trip to the Sydney Observatory. It is now well booked, and some 18 attendees have paid the fees. Only a few places are still available; late comers [check with Alison] may not be with our group, and will have to book directly online www.sydneyobservatory.com.au to get a ticket. We will travel by train, leaving Oatley 7.13pm / Mortdale 7.15, to arrive at the Observatory for the 8.15pm start. The viewing will be about 1½ hours, including 3D in the planetarium, even if it is cloudy. **Leader Alison Gilroy ☎ 9580 5557**

Mar 2nd (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day 2014. The OFF registered site is at Jinna Rd Reserve, Peakhurst, from 8.30 to 1pm and meeting near the start of Jinna Rd. More details below..

Mar 22nd (Sat) Field day Bird watching on Botany Bay mudflats. **Leader Debbie Andrew ☎ 9570 2695**

Mar 24th (Mon) 7.45pm regular monthly meeting with Sandra Guy speaking on Friendly Flying Foxes.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY - MARCH 2nd

Help us clean up on *Clean Up Australia Day*. The OFF registered site is at Jinna Rd Reserve, Peakhurst. We will meet in the reserve near the start of Jinna Rd, starting at 8.30 and finishing 1pm. Details and "join this site" at www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/Jinna++Rd+reserve

SO MANY CONSERVATION ISSUES

The Wilderness Soc. notes that the government and big business have kicked off the year with a series of terrible decisions relating to the environment.

In January the Minister for the environment started a process to axe World Heritage protection from Tasmania's magnificent, towering old growth forests that had been added to the World Heritage list only last year.

www.getup.org.au/campaigns/save-our-forests/

Coal miners continue to risk our water, land, and climate with their various projects and *The Australian* newspaper argues in their support. There are so many conservation issues under discussion [and threat] now that it is not possible to deal with them comprehensively here. A list of the problems and constructive discussion on them can be found on conservation websites e.g. www.tec.org.au

<http://nccnsw.org.au/content/take-action-1> <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

EDO FACING RENEWED ATTACKS

The Federal Government has cancelled funding to Environmental Defenders Offices. EDO NSW will lose \$150,000 in 2014 and \$400,000 in the following years, severely limiting its ability to help communities address the many environmental issues they are facing. EDO is seeking our financial assistance. www.givenow.com.au/edonsw

MORE HEAT MORE POWER

Air conditioning during days or hours of extreme heat is placing severe stress on power supplies, and leading to calls for an expensive increase in power generation. Twelve years ago, Australia had half as many air-conditioners as it does today. In NSW 65% of homes are now air-conditioned, in Victoria and Queensland 75%, in Western Australia 86% and in South Australia more than 90%.

Queensland has introduced an approach that may help overcome the problem. Its electricity supplier offers customers cheaper electricity if they install remotely controlled "PeakSmart" air conditioners. As the heat rises, the electricity supplier sends a "ripple" down the line that can switch coolers off, or to a lower level of operation. The fan stays on so it still feels cool. The switch-off might last only a few minutes, not much longer than the automatic gap when the system is operated by a thermostat. PeakSmart reduces extreme power demand during heat peaks. www.smh.com.au/comment/its-switch-on-time-to-cut-the-demand-for-power

SAVING WATER

Water conservation is a critical factor in reducing overall water consumption, and the need for more dams. Surveys indicate our average water use is 200 litres per day, 5-10 litres for drinking and food preparation, and 190 litres for

showers, dishes, clothes, toilets, and the garden. Many ^[50%] spend six or more minutes in the shower daily, and waste even more water before entering the shower. We can all do our bit to help reduce water use, by not leaving taps running, avoiding unnecessary rinsing, fixing leaks, having shorter showers, and installing rainwater tanks. Water saving products work and, in the longer term, they save money and the environment. www.savewater.com.au/how-to-save-water/



AUSTRALIA DAY FESTIVAL: SUN 26th JAN

OFF had a stall at Hurstville City Council's Australia Day Festival and citizenship ceremony in Oatley. Council staff were welcoming and allocated us a prominent position next to their registration stand.

More than 10 OFF members operated the stall at various times, and we had plenty of visitors, including new citizens, nearby residents, and families from further afield. Many copies of our new brochures were distributed and elicited favourable responses.

FOR NOTING

Clean Up Australia Day 2nd Mar. The Day inspires and empowers communities to clean up, fix up, and conserve our environment. Further details of OFF participation will be provided at the February meeting. www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/

Colong Foundation, the successor to Myles Dunphy's National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, continues the battle for the wilderness. <http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

Earth Hour 29th Mar between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. www.earthhour.org/

Lugarno Progress Association meets 1st Monday of the month, at St Stephen's Anglican Church Hall. www.lugarnoprogress.org.au/

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

Nature Conservation Council in these challenging times for our fragile environment is involved in so many important conservation issues. <http://nccnsw.org.au/content/take-action-1>

Oatley Heritage & Historical Society: The next meeting and AGM is on 28th February at 10.30 am in the Oatley RSL, with Alan Fairley speaking about OFF. www.oatleyheritagegroup.com/

Oatley Park Walking Tracks: OFF has recently published a walking guide to 7 walking tracks in the bushpark. off.oatleypark.com/

Renew membership - Welcome New Members Details of OFF Membership are on our website at <http://off.oatleypark.com/>

