



# OFF News

## Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 3/15

Mar/April 2015

### NSW ELECTION 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

Concern for the natural environment is important for many (if not most) electors. A questionnaire has been sent by O.F.F. to the three candidates for the seat of Oatley to gain insight into their position and/or opinion on a variety of environmental issues. The questions and their answers are published on the website as they become available. <http://off.oatleypark.com>

### ABORIGINAL RIVER KEEPER TEAM

The Georges River Combined Councils Committee [GRCCC] launched its Aboriginal Bush Regeneration team in September to restore bushland and establish ecological connectivity across 150 hectares of the Georges River catchment. The team is supported through Federal Government funding for the next three years. It has a project manager, a supervisor and four trainees, who will work towards TAFE qualifications in Conservation Land Management. The team will work at Myles Dunphy Reserve to control invasive weeds and undertake bush regeneration. Work has started at the southern end of the reserve close to Waratah St, and on the eastern side of the wetland. It will extend the good bushland border along the weedy wetland edge. This will happen for 3 weeks a year over 3 years with an impact on the Privet population. [Note from Heather Stolle, Bushcare Officer, Hurstville City Council]. More at: <http://www.georgesriver.org.au/Aboriginal-Riverkeeper-Team.html>

### FIRE FIGHTING LYREBIRDS

Recent research has shown that the iconic lyrebird reduces the risk of bushfire by spreading dry leaf litter and digging safe havens that help other species survive fires. They have reduced forest litter by up to 1.6 tonnes/ha in nine-months. Researchers have found the lyrebird's foraging reduces forest fuel loads, and risk of life-threatening fires. <http://www.theage.com.au>



### WARMER WEATHER AND HABITAT CHANGE

The *Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife* notes that record breaking heat, and the increasing frequency and severity of bushfires in some areas, and torrential rainfall and floods destroying lives in other areas, is impacting on biodiversity. Some habitats will alter so much that they will be unable to sustain species that have called them home. If a species cannot migrate to better habitats, its future is bleak. The Foundation has identified expensive conservation works, including wildlife corridors, to connect and improve remnant and fragmented habitats, and is seeking donations in support. [www.fnpw.org.au](http://www.fnpw.org.au) Susanna Bradshaw, CEO FNPW [mailto:fnpw@fnpw.cminteractive.net](mailto:mailto:fnpw@fnpw.cminteractive.net)

### HOW MUCH GAS DO WE NEED?

Gas developers have been ominously warning of impending gas shortages in New South Wales, with [official forecasts](#) from planning authorities pointing to steady or rising demand. Yet an [Australia Institute](#) analysis suggests that these forecasts are well off the mark, that gas demand in NSW will fall, and that NSW is facing an inevitable price shock, not a gas shortage. A report on gas usage by TAI shows that demand for gas in NSW could halve within a decade, and questions the need for a gas network. + [More](#)

### DHARAWAL NATIONAL PARK

Our first walk of the year on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb was a pleasant stroll exploring some of the features of our newest national park. Sharyn Cullis, who was very instrumental in getting Dharawal National Park declared, was our leader. and the 13 participants readily appreciated the very detailed knowledge she has of the park. The weather was cloudy but very warm and humid, which made for some trying conditions; fortunately, there was relief at the magnificent water hole at the end of the Jingga walking trail where some of us had a lovely swim while the remainder of the group had lunch in the shade of the lovely cool gorge. Even though it was still summer (just!) we were surprised by how many wildflowers were in flower, with at least four species of banksia in blossom. The flowers were attracting honeyeaters as they darted amongst the bushes after their little hit of nectar. Dharawal NP is very interesting because



although its bedrock is sandstone, much of the flora is different from the coastal parks we are familiar with, and so worth a visit, particularly if you like flowers. It

is very accessible and [NP&WS](#) has done a good job creating tracks and installing facilities for walkers.

### MORE EFFICIENT ELECTRICITY

The *Intelligent Grid Research Program* is an Australian collaboration between the CSIRO and five universities investigating technologies and practices to make our electricity networks more efficient. "Grid" includes all items that transport electricity from power plants to users. In all networks, some energy is lost as it travels, making distribution inefficient. An "intelligent" electricity grid has a minimal amount of waste and a highly efficient use of power, distributed energy resources, advanced communication, and control technologies to deliver electricity more cost-effectively, with lower greenhouse intensity. Distributed energy resources could involve wind turbines, solar panels, micro turbines, fuel cells and cogeneration (combined heat and power) - all closer to the users. Advanced control systems and smart electricity meters show real-time use and costs, and can respond to remote communication and dynamic electricity pricing.

<http://igrid.net.au/> & <http://www.csiro.au/org/>

**YOUR INVITATION**  
**60th ANNIVERSARY DINNER**  
**Thursday 14 May 7-10pm**  
**Gardens on Forest**  
**\$65 pp.**  
**Menus choices at March & April meetings**  
**PAYMENTS due APRIL MEETING**  
**Contact Sue Howard 95791718**

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

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting** with Crocdoc **David Kirshner** speaking on "**Crocodylians**," celebrating his recent book launch - a comprehensive review of current knowledge about the world's largest and most famous living reptiles.

**Mar 28<sup>th</sup> (Sat) Earth Hour 2015** between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time [see note below].

**Mar 29<sup>th</sup> (Sun) Field Outing Royal NP.** Meet at Upper Causeway picnic area 4:30 pm (enter via McKell Ave from Waterfall). Leisurely birdwalk followed by picnic tea (sunset is 6.54 pm) then a wander along Lady Carrington Drive looking for nocturnal wildlife. Wear hat and sturdy shoes and bring picnic meal, binoculars, torch, insect repellent, jumper, or raincoat (depending on forecast). NB There is an entry fee if without Park Pass; car-pooling can be arranged. An OFF Child Risk Waiver form must be completed for any children; please ask in advance for details. **Leader: Elizabeth Cameron** ☎9580 6621 ☎0419 280 473.

**April 27<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 7.45pm meeting** with Birder, environmentalist **Graham Fry** speaking on "**Bhutan: balancing conservation with development**."

**May 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) Field day: The Spit to Manly walk** - spectacular Sydney Harbour foreshore. **Leader: Erica Buzo.**

**May 25<sup>th</sup> Monday Meeting - 7.45pm** with OEH Officer **Ben Hope** speaking on **Vertebrate fauna of North Sydney reserves 'trapped' on camera.**

### SMIGGIN HOLES: 7 - 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

This year fourteen members and friends stayed at Smiggin Holes Chalet and we were very pleased to have the company of Rob and Robin Dickson. Happy hours brought everyone together in the lounge where we were kept snug with the Dicksons' fireside DVD (G classification) flickering away. A 1500 piece jigsaw was completed thanks to Alison Gilroy's dedication, and Robin taught us to make monks' cords by finger knitting.

Michael and Manuwai Korber completed the Mt Kosciuszko Summit circuit from Charlotte's Pass, returning via Blue Lake. Shorter walks included Porcupine Rocks (Jan Douglas' snow gum was full of small birds and looking very healthy), Mt Stilwell and Waterfall Track and the Sawpit Creek walk. There were drives to Adaminaby, Thredbo, and the Man from Snowy River Museum in Corryong and visits to Jindabyne and Alpine Eyre kiosk for coffee. Everyone gathered at Wild Brumby Distillery on Thursday for lunch followed by schnapps tasting and a stroll around sculptures in the landscaped grounds.

Flora and fauna sightings included big clusters of gentians, deep pink trigger flowers, and lingering daisies, Emus, Kangaroos, Raptors, Wedge-tailed Eagles, a young Peregrine Falcon, Highland Copperheads and White-lipped Snakes, and Mountain Galaxias in the streams.

### MOSQUITO RESEARCH FEBRUARY 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dr Cameron Webb was our first speaker for 2015 regaling the audience of 60+ members and guests with warm-blooded facts and anecdotes on mosquitoes and diseases associated with these pesky ankle biters.

Cameron has received quite a lot of airplay over the last 6 months coinciding with the mosquito season here in Sydney that (with dogged determination on the part of leaflet distribution from our president and others) may have helped to explain such a vibrant audience turnout.

Cameron cut his teeth in the saltmarshes around Homebush Bay prior to the Sydney Olympics; and by all accounts, the blood, sweat, and tears associated with his persistence in mosquito research showed more stamina and determination than a gold medal-winning athlete did.

We learnt of the many types of mosquitoes, their lifecycles, the conditions they thrive under, the diseases they carry, their possible role in the ecosystem, efficacy of mosquito repellents and so much more.

Cameron's over-riding desire as an environmental scientist turned entomologist is that his work will provide a better understanding of mosquitoes leading to better methods of control without harming the natural environment.

### CLEAN-UP AUSTRALIA DAY: 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH

OFF collected rubbish around Poulton Park for Kogarah Council this year. There were 7 of us hardy souls doing our bit for a cleaner environment on the bright clear Sunday morning. 12 bags of rubbish were collected, of which 3 were recyclable. On a positive note there was only about half the rubbish collected in past years, which we attributed to the work of the River Keeper team. [Note from Alison Gilroy- site supervisor]

### LIVERPOOL WATER RECYCLING PLANT: 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH

15 members attended the Sydney Water guided tour of its *Liverpool Water Recycling Plant* showing how sewage collected from the upper Georges River catchment areas is treated, recycled, or discharged to protect river health.

We started with coffee, muffins, and a comprehensive briefing on the treatment processes, and the Plant's place in the overall wastewater network, in particular the Georges River basin. The interest shown and questions asked meant this briefing extended for nearly an hour. The Plant serves a population of about 200,000 and can treat up to 46 Megalitres of sewage per day (= 20 Olympic pools!).

We were then guided around the plant starting at the inlet, and following each step in the treatment process, noting the birdlife (including black swans) on the holding ponds, to the point of discharge of the treated water. Normally this is pumped to the North Georges River Submain, which flows through Oatley on its way to Malabar, for discharge to the ocean. Occasionally, treated water is supplied to the Liverpool/Ashfield recycled water pipeline for use by businesses along the way. During wet weather, when flow into the Plant can be 5 or 6 times greater, under specifically licensed conditions, the diluted effluent can be discharged straight into the Georges River.

With modern technology the Plant can be operated largely from the control office on a 24/7 basis by a small team. 40% of the plant's energy needs are sourced from onsite cogeneration systems with gas emerging from the sludge digestion tanks generating electricity. Biosolids resulting from the treatment process are all recycled and ultimately sold for use as compost, fertiliser or on mine rehabilitation sites. One particular problem brought to our attention was the widespread use of "wet wipes," incorrectly assumed flushable; toilet paper breaks up as required, but other materials cause problems for machinery and treatment.

We were very impressed, and we thank the staff for the warm welcome and their obvious dedication and passion for their work. More at: <http://www.sydneywater.com.au/> on Sydney wastewater systems; & [www.sydneywater.com.au/SW/](http://www.sydneywater.com.au/SW/) re Liverpool WRP.

### FOR NOTING

**E**arth Hour Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March between 8.30 and 9.30 pm local time. [www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour](http://www.timeanddate.com/earth-hour)

During Earth Hour, hundreds of millions of people around the world turn off their lights for one hour to show their commitment to helping the planet. It is a symbolic reminder that the world's environmental issues do not have to overwhelm us. Please turn out your lights for one hour! <http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/earth-hour>

**M**yles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues Mar 24<sup>th</sup>. Details: Sharyn (☎9579 1262), Heather (☎0425 291 879).

**R**enew membership Details of OFF Membership and means of joining are on our [website](http://www.off.org.au/).

**New Members always welcome!**

