



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 10/16

Oct/Nov 2016

RATIFYING CLIMATE POLICY

Australia will be locked into significantly more ambitious climate policies by the end of the year, as one of the key conditions of the far-reaching Paris climate deal was met overnight and the remaining condition appears merely a formality.

The Paris climate deal, aiming to cap average global warming as low as 1.5°C, will come into force within 30 days after it is ratified by some 55 countries representing some 55% of total emissions.

Another 31 countries, including Mexico and Brazil, and many vulnerable Pacific island neighbours, signed the deal. That took the running total to 60, and 48 % of emissions, including biggest emitters China and US.

Another 14 countries, including the UK, France, Germany, and Australia, then promised to ratify the deal by the end of the year. This will ensure that the second condition will also be reached, and the pact will be in place before end of 2016 a year after the agreement was reached in Paris and signed in April.

<http://www.echo.net.au/ambitious-climate-policies/>

ENHANCING KOALA HABITAT

Landholders in the north west of the Lismore local government area are being invited to take part in a project aimed at improving koala habitat.

The landholders will be assisted to manage, enhance and protect biodiversity on their properties as part of the Council's biodiversity management strategy.

The Environmental Strategies Officer, Angie Brace, said the council wanted to hear from landowners in koala corridors, who have evidence of resident koalas.

"We are offering people in the north west of the LGA the chance to improve habitat for local koalas by planting trees on their property or by having work done in areas where weeds are restricting koala access to food trees". <http://www.echo.net.au/>

STOP THE CARMICHAEL COAL MINE

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) is continuing to fight the proposed mega mine - with its production capacity of some 60 million tonnes a year - from going ahead in Queensland's Galilee Basin.

"If the Carmichael mine proceeds, its coal will create 4.7 billion tonnes of climate pollution over the proposed life of the mine, wiping out Australia's efforts to reduce pollution and contributing to more frequent and severe bleaching events on the reef," Kelly O'Shanassy, ACF's chief executive, stated.

"It is extraordinary that in 2016 a federal Environment Minister can argue in court that a mega-polluting coal mine will have no impact on the climate and the Great Barrier Reef," she said. "We'll do everything we can to stop this mine." <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/>

VICTORIAN BAN ON CSG

The Victorian government is to permanently ban CSG exploration and fracking. The ban, to be introduced into parliament later this year, will prohibit the exploration and development of all onshore unconventional gas in Victoria. However, in NSW the fight against unconventional gas continues. www.echo.net.au/2016/08/

THE FORMER OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

The Georges River Council advises that the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP) has considered the Development Application and resolved to approve a lot consolidation and boundary adjustment for the area formerly known as Oatley Bowling Club. More at: <http://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/>.

Among the many problems in the proposal is the failure to recognise the historic status of the Myles Dunphy Reserve of which the area is still a part, and the doubtful benefits of establishing seniors housing there.

THE MAHOGANY GLIDER

The Glider ([Petaurus gracilis](http://www.petaurus.com.au)) is an endangered gliding possum, and one of Australia's most threatened arboreal mammals. It is listed as 'Endangered' under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Restricted to the southern Wet Tropics of north Queensland, from the Hull River (east of Tully) south to Ollera Creek, usually below 120m elevation, it is highly mobile and dependent on continuous open forest or woodland to range freely.

Clearing has had a dramatic impact on the habitat. Only 20% remains available, and altered fire regimes, weed invasion, and intensive grazing threaten the structure and ecological integrity of remaining fragments.

Isolation of populations and the decline in habitat quality are major threats to the species' survival. Forests suitable for mahogany gliders are converting to pioneer rainforest communities because of altered, reduced fire regimes. These changes threaten the necessary structural components (i.e. hollows, open canopy) and food sources MGs require.

The current recovery plan recognises the multiple land uses and values within the mahogany glider's distribution so, wherever possible, recovery actions are designed to advance the aspirations of all interested parties. The recovery team includes representatives of groups affected by the plan - land managers and landholders, including Traditional Owners, on any land directly affected. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

OIL DRILLING IN THE BIGHT



Conservationists and environmentalists in Australia are celebrating a major victory after the [oil giant BP](http://www.bp.com) announced that it is abandoning its hugely controversial plans to drill for oil and gas in the Great Australian Bight.

BP had been struggling to persuade [NOPSEMA](http://www.nopsema.gov.au) that it could safely drill in this highly ecologically sensitive region. Three times the regulator has [rejected BP applications](http://www.nopsema.gov.au), finding the proposals environmentally inadequate. Environmentalists had called on BP to abandon its plans saying that the area could not be put at risk from oil exploitation. <http://www.ecowatch.com/>

Meetings of the Society are held at the [Oatley RSL & Community Club](http://www.oatleyrsl.com.au), 23 Letitia Oatley from 7.30 to 9.30pm, usually on the fourth Monday. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and excursions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[See OFF's whole year's program at: off.oatleypark.com/program]**Oct 24th Monday Meeting - 7.30pm with Laurie Derwent: speaking on "Oysters - canaries of the estuary"****Oct 30th Sunday Field day to Minnamurra Rainforest (with attached waterfall).** Meet at the entry to the Budderoo National Park Visitors Centre at 10.30, (earlier to enjoy a coffee). Go down the Princes Highway through Wollongong, turn right at the Illawarra Highway junction just north of Albion Park. Follow the sign to Jamberoo and the Minnamurra Rainforest. Just before you get to Jamberoo take a right turn - follow the sign. You turn right again about 3km along, and follow the signs to the park entrance. Driving about 1.5 hours, Park entry \$12 per car. The walk is about 5-6 km on a constructed pathway, not a bush track, rather steep in places, but we will be in no rush. Rewards include wonderful rainforest, birdlife, great waterfall and Minnamurra creek views. [Leader Julian Sheen ☎ 0415428744]**Nov 28th Monday Meeting & Social Supper - 7.30pm with Gary Schoer speaking on "An expedition to Spitzbergen"****Nov 30th Wednesday - Field day Cruising the scenic Port Hacking River.** OFF's final outing for the year will be a maritime excursion on 30th Nov exploring the upper reaches of Port Hacking, leaving from the Cronulla wharf (same for Bundeena ferry) at 10am. It will go for 3 hours, morning tea is provided, a sandwich lunch will cost \$6.50 (must be pre-ordered the day before), or you can provide your own. The cruise cost is \$25 payable on the day, lunches extra. We need to confirm numbers in advance, so please book with Graham Fry or Liz Cameron ☎ 95806621, or by email to fryg@zipworld.com.au. As they will be away from 3rd to 20th Nov, preferably book before 3rd. If by train, catch the Cronulla train at Mortdale at 8:54 or Oatley at 8:56.**Dec 5th Christmas picnic in Oatley Park. & Feb 6th 7.30pm AGM followed by member photos and supper**CAPERTEE FIELD TRIP: 24TH SEPT

For the fifteen OFF members and friends on this outing, the highlight was seeing gorgeous gold and black Regent Honeyeaters at close quarters. It was a fitting reward for those who had made artificial nests for a predation experiment run by ANU postgraduate student Ross Crates. One night Ross showed photos of predators, including Brush-tailed Possums, Sugar Gliders and Grey Shrike-thrushes, that had raided the artificial nests.



There were ambles along trails through different habitats that offered plentiful subjects for the photographers in the group. On the upland Airstrip Trail four different orchids were flowering and there was a sweeping vista of distant peaks that included Mt Marsden and Tayan Peak in Wollemi NP. By contrast the shaded grassy banks of crystal clear Ullumbra Creek sheltered maidenhair ferns and native violets, and supported massive river sheoaks on which fine-leaved mistletoes were flowering.

Driving back to the homestead after a late afternoon visit to the Valley Lookout, we were treated to a magnificent rainbow and encountered Wallaroos and Common Wombats venturing onto the river flats for their evening meal. Recent rains had put a fresh in the Capertee River and encouraged a chorus of frogs and crickets at night.

Many thanks to Deb Andrew who shared her intimate knowledge of the park and its rich flora and fauna.

TRAVELS THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA: 26TH SEPT

The talk grappled with the complex history of Central Asia, sometimes known as the five "Stans" (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). Culture, mixing history and geography, dealt with the nomadic tribes of the steppe and the limited influence of China. Stories of such exotic peoples and places as the Sogdians, the Parthians, and the Saminids with Samarkand, Bukhara and Ashkhabad were traced along the great artery of central Asia, the Amu Darya (or Oxus River). The backdrop was the towering mountains of the Pamir and Tianshan and the parched dry of the Karakum desert.

Alexander the Great made his mark here in 320 BC, later came the Islamic invasion, the contest with China and the growth of Persian influence leading to the golden age of the Islamic enlightenment (about 900-1200 AD). Much of this was swept away by the crushing impact of the Mongols in 1220 AD followed by the destruction brought about by [Tamerlane](#). Threading through this vivid historical tapestry of beauty, delicate

artistry, violence and terror were the Silk Road caravan routes to and from China, India, Persia and Europe.

In the 19th century when the region was fragmented and in decay, Imperial Russia moved in to face the British Empire active in India and Afghanistan; contestants in what became known as the *Great Game*.

From Russian rule came the Soviet Union that collapsed in 1991, bringing about the five republics we know today. [Summary by our speaker, Julian Sheen]

HAVE A SAY ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) is encouraging community groups and individuals to participate in drafting District Plans. These will outline the priorities for each of the six districts across Greater Sydney, be used for the State Government's coordination of service and infrastructure, and the Local Government's guide in the preparation of new Local Environment Plans for private development. Georges River Council area is part of the South District, and there are a number of local items meriting GSC attention. <http://www.greater.sydney/>

FOR NOTING

Advance notice -Kosciuszko NP, Jan 2017. This is not part of the formal OFF program of activities but for many years we have enjoyed a week in the High Country and are thinking of booking Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlotte's Pass again, from 8th January. Contact Graham Fry fryg@zipworld.com.au or ☎9580 6621 if interested.

Homegrown Power Plan is a joint project between [GetUp!](#) and [Solar Citizens](#), as reported in *The Guardian*, showing how to [power with renewable energy](#)

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

Nature Conservation Council NSW with links to 150 community organisations is committed to protecting and restoring the unique natural environment of NSW. <http://www.nature.org.au/about/>

Powerful Owl Project is co-managed by BirdLife Australia's Birds in Backyards program, and the Threatened Bird Network.

<http://birdlife.org.au/projects/powerful-owl-project>



SORRY - IT WASN'T MY FAULT