



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

Issue 2/16

Feb/March 2016

OUR 60TH AGM WAS ON 1ST FEB. AT RSL OATLEY

Details of the meeting are on our [website](#). Summaries of the Presidential Address and Secretary's Report for 2015 are presented here.

GRAHAM LALCHERE'S PRESIDENTIAL SUMMARY.

I would like to thank the outgoing committee, and to thank Sue Howard who has agreed to continue helping out with flyer distribution and dinner organisation, John Davoren continuing on as Editor, and the Hospitality and Welcome group - Val Douglas, Bev Watters, Sue de Beuzeville and Vicki Bolling.

We had a very good 60th year, including the successful celebratory dinner, among the usual high quality events, organised by our field and program officers.

"Thinking Globally, Acting Locally" is an old slogan but it is still relevant, in a world shrinking due to modern communication and transport.

An article, *It's in the Stars**, in *ReNew* magazine discussed the importance of choosing energy efficient appliances, reducing energy use and the production of pollutants, greenhouse gas emissions, and heat. We should not select appliances solely on cost, and should also take into account the life cycle costs, and energy use.

OFF does many things locally. The more we can make locals aware of environmental impacts, the less will there be. Our walks and talks are local actions with a wider educational value. Many would not learn of these things if they were not OFF members, and we must gather more members and visitors. The quality of our speakers is also important. Our first speaker in 2015, Cameron Webb, was consulted on ABC radio and quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as an expert on the topic of mosquito borne diseases. Thanks Matt Alison for a quality program.

OFF also lobbies the three tiers of government, presenting the views of locals on many issues, including sewer overflows into Dairy Creek, street trees, bushcare, Lime Kiln Bay GPT cleaning, Oatley Park Plan of Management, and dumping silt in Oatley Park. Participating in local events, and submissions on matters such as Sydney Water's sewage treatment licences, helps spread the environmental message. Reducing energy use at home, and possibly at work, will have effects both globally and on our pockets. This can be achieved by choosing the most efficient appliances. Quoting from the article I referred to above*, *"Achieving the best energy efficiency, becomes a combination of buying the item that uses the least amount of energy to achieve the functionality you require, and operating it in a way that maintains optimal efficiency over its life cycle."*

We should also address the question of the need for a specific appliance, whether it improves our life, warrants using the resources required in its manufacture, and how to recycle it. Most appliances contain a lot of materials and embedded energy and it is best to retain these items, and re-use them and avoid the production of replacements.

The Internet is very useful, with on-line petitions and submissions, and investment choices can also have an influence. Many superannuation funds are divesting from coal, and that can be an issue you can address with your funds, and investment vehicles.

Our actions for next year? Issues continuing from last year include our project in Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands, dumping of sediment in Oatley Park, sewage problems, street trees, Oatley Park PoM, increasing our membership, our strategic planning workshop, and possible council amalgamations.

LIZ CAMERON'S SECRETARIAL SUMMARY

For the Society's 60th anniversary Sue Howard organised a gala dinner attended by 50 members. Graham Lalchere reviewed OFF's recent environmental actions and Julian Sheen painted a picture of Oatley's history up to the founding of OFF. Alan Fairley updated his history of the Society - *Being Green* - with a chapter on the activities and challenges of the past decade.

A major initiative was the Lime Kiln Bay Wetland Awareness Project, funded by the NSW Environment Minister's Office and supported by Hurstville City Council. A team led by Kim Wagstaff produced and distributed a brochure on the Wetland's structure and function, its wildlife, and water quality. Drains in the catchment were stencilled with slogans to remind people that rubbish in gutters ends up in the Wetland, and Melina Amerasinghe posted comprehensive information on the project on OFF's website.

Methods of waste management were investigated on OFF outings to the wastewater and a garbage treatment plant in Western Sydney. On *Clean Up Australia Day* Alison Gilroy supervised an OFF site in Poulton Park, South Hurstville.

Fifteen OFF members at a 'pop-up' picnic at Woronora Dam publicised the threat to Sydney's water supply from underground mining, and OFF made submissions to inquiries into mine developments. Prior to the State elections, OFF canvassed the three candidates for Oatley regarding their green credentials, and posted the questions and their responses on our website.

Average attendance at meetings was 48. Matt Allison lined up excellent speakers including Dr Cameron Webb on Mosquitoes, and Dr Arthur White on Ghost Bats and Cane Toads. Field days arranged by Graham Fry attracted an average of 18 participants; most popular were Julian Sheen's walk in the Eastern Suburbs (31), the Riverboat Postman Cruise (30), and the December picnic in Oatley Park (40).

Shaun Keays-Byrne and Matt Allison were successful in re-establishing a Bushcare team in Oatley Park, meeting one Saturday a month. Also in Oatley Park, Alan Fairley led walks to highlight the local flora - one for 40 appreciative Australian Plants Society members, and another in co-operation with Hurstville Council on Wattle Day (25 participants).

OFF stalls operated at Hurstville Council's Australia Day Festival and Bushcare Major Day Out (both in Oatley Park), National Tree Day and Oatley Lions Festival. Two pop-up stalls in Oatley at the end of the year sold Oatley Heritage and Historical Society's 2016 calendar (for which OFF provided a seeding loan). Over \$3000 was donated to nine other conservation organisations, including \$1000 to the Environmental Defender's Office. Membership has grown to over 300, thanks to Robin Dickson's nurturing. Some older members resigned because they were leaving the district; notable was Dr Betty Hall (joined 1968) who congratulated OFF on the good work it does.

John Davoren received a Hurstville Council's Volunteer Recognition Award for the diligence and imagination he has put into *OFF News* over the past eight years. In its anniversary year OFF was recognised by an Environmental Achievement Award at the St George Community Awards ceremony.

EARTH HOUR 2016

During **EARTH HOUR**, hundreds of millions of people around the world turn off their lights for an hour to show a commitment to helping the planet, a *symbolic reminder* that environmental issues do not have to overwhelm us. So please, turn off your lights and show you will do your part to protect our planet. On 19TH March turn out your lights from 8:30pm for one hour to show your commitment to a better future. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/earth-hour>

Meetings of the Society held at the [Oatley RSL & Community Club](#), 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 [Note some dates changed from earlier announcements]

Feb 20th (Sat) Lime Kiln Bay Wetland Free guided walks. [Also Mar 19th as at http://off.oatleypark.com/?page_id=4453.]

Feb 22nd (Mon) 7.30pm regular monthly meeting, now at the Oatley RSL. Our speaker is **Dr Dennys Angrove** a former CSIRO Atmospheric Scientist, and his topic: **Is climate change supported by science?** Dennys is now a volunteer on the Climate Citizens Lobby.

Feb 27th (Sat) Field Day Coastal Walk from Scarborough to Thirroul. Meet at Scarborough Pub Carpark at 10.15am, for an easy walk of approximately 7.5kms. Pub cafe at the beginning if you arrive early, and walk finishes close to the Beaches Hotel at Thirroul, so refreshments are available, or bring your own everything, picnic food and swimmers are recommended. Public transport; 8.38am train from Mortdale, 8.40am from Oatley, change at Sutherland for 9.01am, arrive at Scarborough station at 9.45am. Walk 15 minutes south to our walk commencement point. Return in the afternoon, from Thirroul station at 2.53pm or 4.00pm. **Contact Sharvyn Cullis** ☎ 0421 714 391 or mailto: go_river@hotmail.com

Mar 6th (Sun) Clean Up Australia Day #. This year OFF is working around Lime Kiln Bay and the edge of Oatley Park. Everyone is invited to come for an hour or stay the whole morning. Meet at Jinna Reserve, bottom of Pamela Ave, 5th Peakhurst any time after 8.30am. Baas provided. but bring your rubber boots and gloves as it will be near high tide.

OFF HISTORY

In 2005, the Society published Alan Fairley's *Being Green*, a history to celebrate and record the achievements of our first 50 years. Now he has compiled the history from 2006 to 2015, tracking the activities and challenges of another decade for the Society. We hope to have printed copies available soon, and it is already on the [web site](#).

SNOWY MOUNTAINS EVENT

The Friends of OFF's annual sojourn in the Snowy Mountains changed this year from the usual Smiggin Holes Chalet to Pygmy Possum Lodge, at Charlotte's Pass.

Sixteen members stayed for various periods of up to a week. There were more stairs than at Smiggin, and the shared kitchen was a bit of a challenge, but it was a convivial party, and the lodge was comfortable. <http://www.eloueraskiclub.asn.au/lodges>

**MEDIAN STRIP NOW REMOVED**

It is noted with regret that the work on the Oatley Railway Station lift included the removal of the hedge [shown here >] growing for many years along the median strip of Mulga Road near the underpass. It will be replaced by a metal fence and low-growing *Lomandra*.

**NATIVE WILDLIFE AT RISK**

The Wilderness Society notes that Australia has the 3rd highest rate of land clearing of any developed nation in the world. In NSW alone, 1,000 native wildlife species are at risk of extinction. We must protect what is left of our natural environment to protect our heritage, ensure our children have access to clean air, fresh water and healthy food, and to preserve the future of farming. However, the NSW Government is planning to weaken the laws protecting our natural environment. A very similar process [recently undertaken in QLD](#) resulted in hundreds of thousands of trees being destroyed, killing countless native animals and releasing huge amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. <https://www.wilderness.org.au/>

VIRTUAL FENCES TO HELP SAVE WILDLIFE

Introduced to Australia by Sydney-based *Wildlife Safety Solutions*, "Virtual Fencing" is an active electronic protection system that prevents animals from crossing the road when a vehicle is approaching. The device activated by approaching headlights causes it to emit sound and light stimuli to alert, startle and prevent animals from entering the road. The audible alert and blue and yellow strobe-type LED lights are an innovative concept based on proven technologies. The devices are placed at 25 metre intervals along the road, as an effective "virtual" fence. <http://fnpw.org.au/>

In Dec 2015 BMCS made a [79-page submission](#) arguing against the proposed Western Sydney Airport. Summary ↵.

1. A second Airport is not needed in Sydney,
2. Growth in passenger movement along the east coast could be better handled by High Speed Rail,
3. Risk of impact on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area,
4. Risk of impact on the Sydney Drinking Water Catchments,
5. Risk of impact on declared Wilderness Areas,
6. Increased Greenhouse Gas Emissions,
7. Destruction of vegetation at the Badgerys Creek Airport site,
8. Risk of impact on eco-tourism in the Blue Mountains,
9. Risk of impact on Blue Mountains communities,
10. Risk to critical infrastructure near the proposed Airport site.

FOR NOTING

Clean Up Australia Day 2016 Sunday 6th March. Details of OFF participation noted at # above and at the February meeting. <http://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au>

Myles Dunphy Streamwatch, next meets at 9am on Tues 23rd Feb [Details: Sharyn ☎ 9579 1262, Heather ☎ 0425 291 879].

Oatley Flora & Fauna on facebook highlighting *Oatley & Surrounds* with latest news alerts <https://www.facebook.com/>

Oatley Heritage & Historical Soc. [OHHS] AGM Friday 26th Feb at the RSL at 10.00am. <http://www.oatleyhistory.org.au/>

Plant a Tree for Me The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife's new online campaign www.fnpw.org.au/PDFS/

River Keeper Tony Wales speaking on the *Georges River – Our River* at East Hills Group of Australian Plants Society, Wed 2nd March 7.30 pm, Lugarno Peakhurst Uniting Church Hall, 909 Forest Road, Lugarno. Visitors welcome.

White cockies with wing tags. The Royal Botanic Gardens, University of Sydney & Australian Museum are studying the movements of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos in the Sydney region. You can report sightings to cockatoo.wingtag@gmail.com or download an app; include date, time, street name and suburb where you saw the bird. <https://www.facebook.com/CockatooWingtags/>

CELEBRATING OFF DINNER 2016

The dinner will be at the Macquarie Function Centre Mortdale RSL on THURS 19th MAY at 7pm. Cost will be \$33 pp, with a minimum of 40 for us to hold the booking (payment by Monday 2nd May). It will be a 2 course meal, bread rolls, celebration cake, tea/coffee and buy your drinks at the bar. Menu choices will be on the OFF website; please make your 2 choices at one of the next three meetings, including any special dietary requirements - vegetarian, vegan, and gluten free.

There will be lucky table prizes and a raffle. Donations for the raffle will be greatly appreciated. [Contact Sue Howard ☎ 9579 1718.]

