



OFF News

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Protecting the local environment since 1955

<http://off.oatleypark.com>

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STOP THE SALE OF OATLEY BOWLING CLUB LAND

Georges River Council has prepared its [draft operational plan](#) for the reclassification and rezoning of the former Oatley Bowling Club site to allow its use for an aged care facility. The site forms part of the Myles Dunphy Reserve, named after one of Australia's first environmentalists who lived here in Oatley. Myles helped pioneer the foundation of national parks and urged the council to spare the reserve from housing development. The reserve is home to various wildlife and endangered plant species. The high-density development would also threaten the bordering bushland and increase the risk of pollution of the nearby Georges River. The one-lane access and the hazardous exit onto Mulga Rd with limited visibility would cause traffic chaos, and it is also a bushfire zone! More details at: <http://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/>, www.change.org/p/stop-the-sale

INCREASING URBANISATION PROBLEMS

The [Conservation](#) magazine notes that globally, more people live in urban areas than in rural ones. Africa and Asia are urbanising faster than any other regions in the world. By 2050, 66% of the world's population is projected to be [urban](#). For example, [Nigeria](#) is projected to get an additional 212 million urban dwellers by 2050, China 292 million and India 404 million.

This rapid urbanisation poses challenges for sustainable development and public health; but the picture is grimmer for animals. Urbanisation is a new force that is dramatically changing the composition of animal communities.

During the process of urbanisation some animal species will disappear from the newly urbanised habitat; birds that feed on specific natural food sources will fly to other areas to search for food. Species that cannot move as fast as urbanisation is expanding will disappear.

The unprecedented rate of current urbanisation poses a major threat to biodiversity. It presents one of the biggest environmental challenges of our time. Understanding exactly how urbanisation affects wildlife is crucial to help animals to survive in our vicinity. <http://www.standupfornature.org.au/>

CONSERVATION OUR RESPONSIBILITY

OFF News in its 1970 [May Editorial](#) commented that in the 200th year since Cook's arrival "there is a growing awareness of past mistakes. The conservation bandwagon, well supported by worldwide concern over pollution, ill-advised planning and wildlife destruction, is running more smoothly, and is gaining momentum." -- "Since major issues are now receiving attention, it seems that small societies such as ours can serve best by taking an active interest in local problems - land usage, pollution of our waterways, parks and reserves." It quoted the Queen during her visit that year as stating, "We are the architects of the future and we carry today a great responsibility for the generations who will be living here a hundred years from now."

SMART CITIES PLAN

The Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has released its *Smart Cities Plan*. It covers a range of issues relating to Australia's cities, including infrastructure, planning, healthy environments and



sustainability. Submissions are invited until 24th June [Read more and have your say »](#)

THE GREAT BARRIER REEF CRISIS

The *Conversation* of May 31st has 132 articles about the GBR crisis, much at variance with those insisting that the problems are exaggerated. One of the 132 notes that the Great Barrier Reef "has been in the spotlight thanks to [severe coral bleaching](#) since March, leaving only 7% of the reef untouched. The bleaching, driven by record-breaking sea temperatures, has been linked to human-caused climate change. Apart from bleaching, the reef is in serious trouble thanks to a variety of threats. Many species and ecosystems of the Great Barrier Reef are [in serious decline](#).

It is now overwhelmingly clear that we need to fix these problems to give the reef the best chance in a warming world. In fact, the upcoming election is [arguably our last chance](#) to put in place a plan that will save the reef. We estimate that we need to spend A\$10 billion over the next ten years - about five times as much as current state and federal governments are spending - to fix up reef water quality before climate change impacts overwhelm it". <https://theconversation.com/au/topics/great-barrier-reef>

STAND AGAINST THE BULLDOZERS

The [Wilderness Society](#) [WS] is calling for a stop to the destruction of forests and woodlands in Queensland and NSW. It notes that bulldozers are ripping through forest and woodland, and bearing down on native animals like the koala and hairy-nosed wombat. WS is leading a campaign to get lasting, responsible action on land clearing, noting that the areas being knocked down include vital habitat of the koala, and the endangered northern quoll.

LEAVE FOSSIL FUELS IN THE GROUND

According to a report released by the [Climate Council of Australia](#), 90% of our current coal reserves need to be left in the ground for Australia to play its role in limiting warming to no more than 2°C. The report uses a "[carbon budget](#)" approach. This figures out how much carbon can be let into the atmosphere while limiting warming to 2°C, and is a different method to the "targets and timetables" method favoured by international climate negotiators. These are highly complex, difficult to interpret and put into practice. A carbon budget instead shows how much carbon humanity can spend without blowing the budget.

RARE SIGHTING IN LIME KILN BAY

Recently Jason Cockayne photographed a cryptic water bird in Lime Kiln Bay. It was subsequently identified as a [Lewin's Rail](#) by David Waterhouse. This species is rare in the suburbs and has only been detected by its call once before in Oatley in 2004. An interesting addition to our bird list.

CELEBRATING THE 2016 OFF DINNER

The event was held at Mortdale RSL on 19th May. It was a most enjoyable evening with 47 guests attending. The Macquarie room was an ideal location, and the service given by Lisa and her team of waiting staff and chefs was prompt and attentive. All the OFF guests seemed happy with the menu choices, and those on special menus much appreciated the care taken with their meals.

Thank you to all who donated to the raffle. There was quite an array of items - coffee machine to ladies' jewellery, and wines to a Swiss army knife. Many thanks to the enthusiastic raffle ticket sellers; making over \$200. Many thanks to all involved in organising the evening and to the OFF members attending. [Note from organiser Sue Howard]

Meetings of the Society are 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

[See OFF's whole year's program at: off.oatleypark.com/program]

June 27th (Mon) Meeting at 7.30pm with the film "[Man from Coxs River](#)" - The film is a great conservation success story about the removal of brumbies from the World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park. It is a very interesting story combining the magnificent Blue Mountains and the history and nostalgia of the brumbies.

June 29th (Wed) Field Day Exploring the edge of the CBD. We will meet at Oatley station to catch the 8.45 am train or the 8.47am from Mortdale, (third carriage). We will walk from Central for about 10 min to the ABC building [tour cost there \$8], and then on to Circular Quay via the new raised walkway, down to Darling Harbour, and along the harbour edge via Barangaroo. The walk will finish at approx. 3.30 at Circular Quay arriving back in Oatley at approx. 4 pm. 15 participants have already registered and there are still 5 vacancies. To register contact Leaders: Sue and Peter de Beuzeville ☎80686149 & 0419 625 373.

July 25th (Mon) Meeting at 7.30pm with Rob Brewster from [Rewilding Australia](#) speaking on [Returning carnivorous marsupials to the landscape](#).

July 31st (Sun) Field day walk from Stanwell Park to Helensburgh. Leader: Adrian Buzo

Aug 22nd (Mon) Meeting at 7.30pm with Rodger Robertson speaking on: "Flora and fauna of Northern Alaska"

Aug 24th (Wed)- Field Day: Discovering the diverse flora of the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney. Leader: Amanda Gibson

Sept 24/26th Weekend Field Trip Exploring Capertee NP. We have booked both the cosy homestead and cottage for the weekend to use as a base while we explore the park and enjoy its abundant wildlife. The accommodation has been reserved for 3 nights, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Members can stay as long as they wish over that period. There are 4 bedrooms in the homestead with beds for 14 people. The cottage has another 6 beds in two bedrooms. The cost will be \$50 per person per night. To reserve a place, please contact Graham Fry on fryg@zipworld.com.au or ☎9580 6621. Camping is also available on site.

23RD MAY TALKS

May's meeting was another well attended OFF event with the audience keen to hear from the two speakers,

Regent Honeyeater

NPWS officer Deb Andrew spoke on the plight of woodland birds, particularly the [Regent Honeyeater](#)* and her talk was fuelled by the recent NSW government announcement of changes to the protection of biodiversity. The proposed changes involve serious retrograde steps removing many of NSW's long-held environmental protections, removing "Green Tape" and placing decisions in the hands of those not overly concerned about biological diversity. [\[Note EDO's Review\]](#) Deb has been at the forefront of conservation management all her professional life and her crowning glory may well be the establishment of the Capertee National Park, a stronghold for declining woodland birds, that have suffered most from extensive clearing for agriculture throughout inland south-eastern Australia. The best known example is the critically endangered *Regent Honeyeater*, a beautiful bird whose most important breeding area is in the [Capertee Valley](#). There may be only several hundred birds left in the wild, and the Valley is now regarded as "the centre of the universe" as one of only three nesting sites of this enigmatic species. It was one of the first places in NSW to be nominated as an *Important Bird Area* on the [Register of Birdlife International](#).

We wish Deb all the very best for her impending retirement and look forward to her continuing activism.

Cameron and the other Corners

Tony Porritt was our second speaker. He has travelled extensively throughout Australia with his wife Kate in their "go anywhere truck" - a trusty 4-wheel drive.

Tony spoke of Australia's bizarre and remote border corners that define our states. These are: i) Cameron Corner (NSW, Qld, SA), ii) Surveyor General's Corner (WA/SA/NT), iii) Haddon Corner (SA/QLD), iv) Poepel Corner (SA/NT/QLD), and v) MacCabe Corner (SA/NSW/VIC)

We look forward to another entertaining armchair adventure with Tony at a future OFF presentation. [Notes by Matt Allison]

**FIELD DAY TO CURRA MOORS**

After a week with very changeable weather, Sunday 29th was a perfect autumn day for our walk. 18 members and friends enjoyed a beautiful walk through the forest and heath of the park, the banksias were at their prime and their flowers were very popular with the numerous honeyeaters. This walk is one of the best in this park as it samples a wide range of habitats from forest to heath to coastal cliffs. We had lunch overlooking the ocean but unfortunately only one whale was seen. Liz had prepared a simple quiz on the flora and fauna of the walk, this stimulated much interest and the winners were Kate Porritt and Sharyn Cullis. The walk concluded with a refreshing coffee and cake at the Audley Visitor Centre coffee shop. [Report by Graham Fry]

THE REGENT HONEYEATER *

EDO notes that the Department of the Environment has gazetted the National Recovery Plan for the threatened Regent Honeyeater, at the centre of a recent [EDO case win](#) for *Friends of Tumblebee*.

The key aims of the plan are: i) to improve the extent and quality of regent honeyeater habitat and to bolster the wild population, ii) to provide clear guidelines to ensure that any new developments do not impact on the long-term survival and recovery of the species, and iii) to increase awareness of the species and to involve community groups in recovery activities. [Read the plan »](#)

THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

The [Colong Foundation](#) has sent out an action alert noting that the Baird government proposes changes to our biodiversity and tree-clearing laws, that will impact on our wildlife, soils and climate. The Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2016 and Local Land Services Amendment Bill 2016, if adopted, will replace the Native Vegetation Act and Threatened Species Conservation Act. The new Bills are currently on [public exhibition](#) and submissions close on 28th June. [See <https://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/>]

FOR NOTING

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 28th June [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>

Rally for *Climate Change* is being organized by the Wilderness Society, and several allied groups on "Malcolm's turf" on Sunday 26th June at Steyne Park, Double Bay [10-minute walk from Edgecliff Station]; parking limited]. Please [RSVP](#) if you plan to attend.

