



FORMER OATLEY BOWLING CLUB SITE

As you may be aware Georges River Council has forwarded the Planning Proposal for the former Oatley Bowling Club Site to the Greater Sydney Commission for a Gateway Determination under section 56 of the Environmental and Planning Assessment Act 1979.

If this Determination is successful, the site will be developed into seniors housing facilities following reclassification of the site from Community Land to Operational Land and re-zoning. Operational Land can be leased or sold.

Our Federal Member of Parliament, David Coleman, has expressed his opposition to this proposal. He has further stated to some of our members that if residents are opposed to this proposal then they should also express their opposition to the newly elected Georges River Councillors.

Mr Coleman pointed out that this the Council's own development proposal and they can withdraw it if they are persuaded to do so. The Society has recently sent a letter to all newly elected Councillors on Georges River Council urging them not to proceed with the re-zoning of the Bowling Club site. We urge all OFF members to write their own letter to Councillors. To assist, here are a few points you might make:

- * the land is public land zoned for Public Recreation;
- * the site is not suitable as it is within bushfire prone zone;
- * access for emergency vehicles is inadequate;
- * building construction would have an adverse affect on surrounding Turpentine- Ironbark Forest, an Endangered Ecological Community.

A full list of Councillors and their email addresses is on OFF's website. Click on the following link <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=6895>

SPRINGVALE MINE - THE ONGOING SAGA

A year ago we reported in *OFF News* that the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) was appealing the decision to allow Springvale coal mine in the Blue Mountains to discharge large amounts of contaminated mine water into the river system that forms part of Sydney's drinking water catchment.

In August, the NSW Court of Appeal ruled that the mine needed to comply with the requirement that developments in the catchment must have a "neutral or beneficial effect" on the quality of the water. In October, the NSW Government moved to pass legislation in order to nullify the Court ruling thus seriously weakening the laws to protect Sydney's catchment. Lock the Gate has issued a Call to Action – to tell the Premier that a rogue coal mine should not compromise Sydney's drinking water. www.lockthegate.org.au/springvale_call_to_action

SEMINAR ON NEW LAND CLEARING LAWS

On 25 August this year, new laws came into effect for clearing trees and bushland in NSW, including the Greater Sydney area.

On Thursday 23 November, learn what these new laws mean for trees and bushland in Sutherland Shire and St George area and what you can do to help protect the area's special natural heritage.

Co-hosted by the Total Environment Centre and Sutherland Shire Environment Centre at Club East, 7 E Parade, Sutherland

Speakers: Jemilah Hallinan, Outreach Director Community Programs, Environmental Defender's Office NSW
Jeff Angel, Executive Director Total Environment Centre

Places are strictly limited and registrations are essential. Entry is by donation at the door. Please arrive at 6pm for a 6.30pm start. Finish 8.30pm
Please [RSVP online](#) today.

OATLEY LIONS FESTIVAL STALL

The Society held its annual stall at the Oatley Lions Village Festival on Saturday, 21 October. The weather was just about perfect after a rainy Friday had threatened to spoil the festival.

Featured on our stall this year were the EPA's Love Food Hate Waste campaign, our own Community Tree Watch Project and a display board of information about how you can recycle soft plastics.

Plant sales, sales of books, cards and the Oatley 2018 Calendar, brought in welcome revenue for future environmental projects. And Melissa Derwent's nature craft stall proved great fun for the young and young at heart.

Over the last couple of years we have been experimenting with spreading across two sites and sharing 'themes' with fellow community group stall holders such as Georges River Bushcare Volunteers and Oatley Heritage and Historical Society. This seems to work well and the committee will work with these groups towards a more effective integration of the stalls, allowing greater flexibility in layout and creating a better flow for visitors.



DIEBACK DISEASE FOUND IN MYLES DUNPHY RESERVE

Analysis of soil samples taken from an area of Myles Dunphy Reserve has confirmed that a significant section of the bushland is infected with phytophthora cinnamomi - a soil-borne water mould that produces an infection in many native plants resulting in dieback. Unfortunately the infection is permanent and while it can be controlled and measures taken to stop the spread, it will remain in the soil.

An article in the most recent Georges River Bushcare Volunteers newsletter - Tucoerah - provides more details about the disease and the precautions bushcare volunteers and those who regularly walk in the bush, should take to stop the spread of infected soil. Click on this link http://off.oatleypark.com/?page_id=6164

Members are invited to the annual
Christmas get-together on
Monday, 4 December from 5.30pm
at the Steamroller picnic area in Oatley Park.
BYO food, drinks, chairs tables etc



Coming OFF Events in November

27 November - Monday Meeting at 7:30pm - Alan Fairley - Travels in Iran

Join us for a talk and photos by Alan Fairley on **IRAN**, a fascinating and little-visited country, with a long history, magnificent ancient ruins and friendly people. Alan and Chiew toured Iran a year ago.

Also we will be joined by Reannan Honey the research student from UTS who was awarded an OFF grant last month. She will give us a brief overview of her research project on Habitat Restoration for Hollow Dependant Fauna. Bring a plate of food to help with supper; tea and coffee provided.

26 November - Sunday Field Trip Rivercat to Parramatta, explore historic buildings and parks.

This pretty walk will thread its way through this historic town. The second white settlement in Australia, it boasts over 90 historic buildings, so this will be just a taste. Taking a train from MORTDALE Station 8:15am (third carriage) we will catch the Rivercat from Circular Quay No 5 Wharf at 9:07am. (arrive 10:30 am). You may like to have a coffee when we arrive so remember to bring your Keep-Cup if you prefer a take away from the Parramatta Terminal Cafe, or have it there. We will then walk around Parramatta visiting historic buildings and leafy green parks. Bring a picnic lunch to have in Parramatta Park. We will return by bus through the suburbs to Hurstville or 2:30 ferry or stay longer in Parramatta if you wish. Leader Vicki Bolling mob : 0427 870 240

Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL and Community Club, 23 Letitia Street, Oatley from 7:30 - 9:30pm usually on the fourth Monday.


BRIEFLY SPEAKING





The **Oatley 2018 Calendar** is available through OFF (see email below) or can be purchased at Altra Nursery, Mullane's Pharmacy, AdventureCo, Povel's Deli and One 2 One Cafe.


Only \$8.00 to OFF members!


 The Society plans to run pop-up street stalls in Oatley and possibly one in Mortdale, on Saturday mornings in December (2, 9 and 16) between 8.30am -12.00pm. We will be alongside Oatley Lions, selling Oatley 2018 Calendars, greetings cards and, of course, promoting our campaigns and projects. If you can spare some time on any of those days, please email Liz Cameron at lizc@pacific.net.au


 The Society's Program Officer, Matt Allison, is looking for interesting speakers on subjects related to plants and animals for some of our meetings next year. If you have any suggestions contact him by email at cohabitat6@bigpond.com

 The Activities Officer, Graham Fry is putting together the OFF program for 2018. He is looking for at least another 4 outings for the program. They don't have to be walks but can be visits to interesting sites, ferry cruises, etc. Some of the outings already on the list include a bus trip to Mt Tomah, North Head walk, Victoria Military Barracks, possibly part of the 6' track, Newington Armory Train Trip. Please contact Graham Fry, fryg45@gmail.com

 We still have space for anyone who would like to have a lovely cool break in January staying at a nice ski lodge, Pygmy Possum at Charlottes Pass in the Snowy Mountains. We have made a nominal booking for the period from the 7th to the 14th January 2018. Currently, we have 13 OFF members booked in but there is still space if you would like to join us. If so, please contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or fryg45@gmail.com on how to make a booking.

 **Committee membership.** A reminder that this is the time when we are calling for members to form a new Committee for 2018. You are invited to nominate at the AGM on Monday 5 February. In particular the Society is looking for an Editor for the OFF News or at least someone with digital publication skills.

 At the last OFF committee meeting it was decided that instead of closing down the successful facebook page 'Georges River Council Elections - A Fresh Start', it should continue under a new name - 'Georges River Community Forum' - a place to raise and discuss issues about Georges River Council. **And, did you know** that you can view live the General Meetings of the GRC by going to the Council's website. Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of each month starting at 7.00pm. Unfortunately this clashes with OFF meetings but the webcast is available for viewing on the website for 6 months.

 A Significant Tree Register is being established by OFF to protect trees on public land. Everyone is invited to nominate their favourite tree. See the OFF website for details and the nomination form. www.off.oatleypark.com

THE FIRST STATE HAS BECOME THE LAST!

The Premier has recently stated that NSW will not ban single use plastic bags, despite all other Australian states and the 4 main retailers doing so. The first state has become the last state! However, our local member, Mark Coure, has a Ban the Bag petition on his site. Please log in and sign this petition; he needs our support for this important action: <https://www.markcoure.com.au/refuse-and-reuse>

The Society is to write to Coles and Woolworths applauding their decision to phase out single use plastic bags while urging them to keep, and possibly expand, the Redcycle program. Individual members are asked to send their own letters. See contact details at <https://www.coles.com.au/customer-service/contact-us> and www.woolworthsgroup.com.au/page/contact-us/general-enquiry/

MURRAY-DARLING PROBLEMS - 30 YEARS AGO

The fight for the environment is long and repetitive. Following Jim Vickery's October talk on the Murray-Darling Plan, I note that in *OFF News* (Oct/Nov 1987), there is an item titled "Murray-Darling Problems", which reports the "historic agreement to form a Murray-Darling Basin Commission". It suggests this is the result of growing concern about widespread land degradation, poor water quality, rising ground water levels, loss of wildlife and vegetation, over-grazing and clearing.

The item quotes the amazing statistic that more than 1.3 million tonnes of salt flows over the South Australian border each year. It is hoped that the Plan will mean for the first time governments will co-ordinate management approaches to this much-battered resource. How much has improved over the past 30 years???

Alan Fairley

BIRD SURVEYS

Birdlife Australia have released an app, "Birddata" which can be used to record bird observations while in the field. The app is free and is suitable for both [Apple](#) and [Android](#) phones and is available from the usual app stores.

Research has shown that long term regular bird counts are the most informative way of recording changes in populations and distributions of birds. We plan to establish a number of observational sites in the Oatley area in the near future and hope that our members will record their observations using this app. The app contains a number of options but the one that we will be standardising on is the 20 minutes, 2Ha survey.

All that is required is to find the survey point on the map in the app and then record all the birds seen or heard within the 2Ha area (200m by 100m) over 20 minutes. The app will advise when the 20 minutes is completed and then ask you to submit or edit. If you are confident on your observations just select submit and the data will be then sent to the Birdlife Australia database where it will be checked for consistency before it is formally added into the database. In 2018 OFF will run a number of workshops on how to use the app including practical demonstrations in the field. Three sites have already been set up in Poulton Park and anyone can now use the app to add data into the database. For more information see www.birdlife.org.au/projects/atlas-and-birddata

GUNGAH BAY ROAD TREES - OFF has received a letter from Council advising that the Tallowood trees along part of the eastern side of Gungah Bay road are to be removed by Ausgrid and replaced by Water Gums.

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Website: off.oatleypark.com