



STREAMWATCH PROGRAM FUNDING DEBACLE

OFF member Sharyn Cullis wrote an excellent letter to *The Leader* printed 26 September 2018, regarding the funding debacle jeopardising Streamwatch. In her letter, Sharyn argued that funding this water testing program should be a 'core' business for Sydney Water, who originally set up Streamwatch and encouraged the local community to become involved. Yet decades later, raw sewage overflows continue every time it rains. The Sydney sewer system is collapsing under the pressure of growing population, making the continued monitoring of waterways vitally important.

Interestingly, Sharyn points out that Sydney Water reported a record profit of \$447 million in 2016-17. It would cost only \$100,000 per annum to support the entire network of more than 50 Streamwatch groups testing more than 150 waterway sites throughout Sydney. The Australian Museum is currently looking for a new organisation to host the program from mid-2019. To read the letter visit:

<https://www.theleader.com.au/story/5660413/water-scrutiny-unwanted/>



NSW BACKDOWN OVER SYDNEY'S MARINE PARK

A month after announcing a plan to further protect sea life, the State Government has abandoned plans to ban or restrict fishing in new protection areas in the proposed Sydney Marine Park. The proposal to increase marine life protection in 25 zones from Newcastle to Wollongong would have imposed restrictions on line and spear fishing in some zones, and banned fishing in others.

The Government has caved-in to a noisy fishing minority and pre-empted the public consultation process. Conservation groups condemn the decision as it makes the new park potentially ineffective in protecting marine life. Proposed additions to the Reserve include Cabbage Tree Creek and areas off Royal National Park.

OATLEY PARK NATURE BASED PLAYGROUND PROJECT

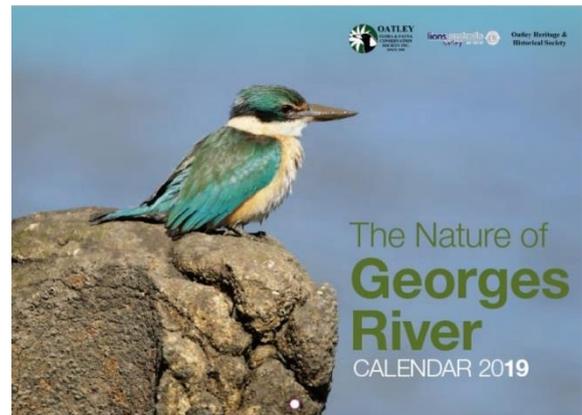
Georges River Council is seeking public comment on the design of a "nature-based adventure playground" in the Steamroller Park (however there are no designs on the council website). The project includes replacement of the old existing playground with a new nature-based inclusive adventure playground.

Submissions close on 20 October, 2018. For more information, visit:
<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/About-Your-Council/Local-Projects>

Oatley Village FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2018

A reminder that OFF will have a stall at the Oatley Village Lions Festival. Come along and have a chat – the new 2019 Oatley calendar will be available for sale.



QUARANTINE STATION NORTH HEAD FIELD TRIP

Six OFF members and their guests participated in a field trip to Quarantine Station at North Head on Sunday, 23 September 2018. It was a glorious spring day which coincided with the 10th birthday of the Q Station's new chapter. There were free history tours, stalls, entertainment, and various 'mock' re-enactments of historical events.



The complex operated as a quarantine station from 1832 to 1984. The concept behind its establishment was that the Colony of New South Wales (as it was then known) was susceptible to ship-borne diseases. Those who might have an infectious disease would be kept in quarantine until it was considered safe to release them. The importance and future role of North Head was reinforced by Governor Darling's *Quarantine Act 1832*, which set aside the whole of North Head for quarantine purposes in response to the 1829–51 cholera pandemic in Europe. For more information and photos visit: <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7382>

Coming OFF Events in October/November 2018
OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: off.oatleypark.com/program

22 October 2018 – Conservation Success Stories from Bhutan, with Adjunct Professor Ross Jeffree

Adjunct Prof. Ross Jeffree shows what is possible with “*Conservation success stories of Bhutan*.” Dr Jeffree is an Adjunct Professor in the School of the Environment at the University of Technology, Sydney and fellow of Ecoethics International Union. Bhutan is a Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas determined to live sustainably and in peaceful co-existence with the natural world true to the metaphysical beliefs and environmental perceptions of its culture. The original religion of Bon Shamanism inculcates reverence for the local deities and spirits that are believed to inhabit components of the landscape.

27 October 2018 – Field Trip to Mount Tomah Botanic Gardens, Blue Mountains

The Mt. Tomah Botanic Garden is located in the Blue Mountains and contains plants which naturally occur in cool areas. The gardens contain a mixture of Australian plants and exotics such as rhododendrons. We are hiring a minibus to provide transport to the gardens due to the distance involved and the lack of public transport to the area. The bus can only hold 20 people and is now full. Pick up details will be emailed to participants. Additional members are welcome to drive themselves if they wish and should aim to arrive at the gardens at 10.30 am. If you have any queries please contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or fryg45@gmail.com.

Advance Notice – Trip to Snowy Mountains in January 2019

As has been the tradition, OFF will again be going to the Snowy Mountains in January. OFF have reserved rooms at Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlottes Pass for the period 6-13 January, 2019. If you would like to come for the week or any number of days during that period contact Graham Fry on 9580 6621 or fryg45@gmail.com for booking arrangements.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Club, 23 Letitia St, Oatley (lower level sports room) from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on the second Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 pm. Meet at the entrance on Douglas Haig Street.

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings.

GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION CITIZENS PANEL Applications close Sunday, 14 October 2018. Visit: <https://www.greater.sydney/citizens-panel>

OFF ENDORSEMENT OF POLICIES FOR NEXT ELECTION

OFF has decided to endorse the Nature Conservation Council's top five priorities to take to the next State election set for March 2019.

It is calling on all parties to commit to:

- Establish a Sydney Marine Park to protect this world-class coastal region.
- Create a Great Koala National Park on the north coast and save the species from extinction.
- Set up a \$2-billion regional renewable energy fund to fast-track the transition to clean energy away from dirty coal.
- Set up a \$1.5-billion land and biodiversity fund to protect and restore bush land and forest habitat.
- End logging of public native forests to protect what is left.

OFF also adds two additional priorities:

- Removal of feral horses from Kosciuszko National Park.
- Legislate to ban single-use plastic bags.

PRESCRIBED BURNING STUDY

Prescribed burning is the most widespread management tool for reducing fuel loads and thus decreasing the intensity and extent of wildfires. Fuel hazard is often assumed to increase with fuel age, but a recent study comparing fuel hazard in recently burned and long-unburned forests has put doubts over this assumption.

Research conducted by the CSIRO and published in the *International Journal of Wildland Fire*, 2018 measured overall fuel hazard in Eucalypt forests and woodlands at 81 sites where the time since fire spanned 0.5 years to 96 years. The probability of high fuel hazard was highest 0.5-12 years post fire, and lowest where the fire had not occurred for at least 96 years. Frequent burning maintains forest understorey leading to higher overall fuel loads. Thus protecting long-unburned sites from fire may benefit fuel-hazard management within forests in the long term.

AUSSIE BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 22-28 OCTOBER, 2018

The #AussieBirdCount is a great way to connect with the birds in your backyard no matter where your backyard happens to be — a suburban backyard, a local park, a patch of forest, down by the beach, or the main street of town.

Each count should be for a 20-minute period; you can count as many times as you like during the week. Your bird counts will help BirdLife Australia to understand more about the birds that live alongside people.

You can register online and download the Aussie Bird Count app at: <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>

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