



PROTECTING KOALAS FROM EXTINCTION

As koalas in NSW are a threatened species under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*, the committee asked the Federal Environment Minister Melissa Price, to consider the impacts of two proposed housing developments on colonies near Campbelltown. An adviser promptly responded and undertook to take our submissions into account.

OFF member Sharyn Cullis (who recently received a St George Community Award as a long standing active OFF member for her dedication to conserving the koala) liaised with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, resulting in this article being published:

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/scam-developer-to-use-parkland-to-offset-koala-habitat-destruction-20181028-p50cfz.html>

Note: An offset is often a parcel of land set aside and 'conserved' in order to compensate for a consent that allows an owner/miner/developer to damage or destroy another parcel of natural land. Biobanking is a scheme whereby a proponent is given permission to destroy natural lands, so long as they purchase bio banked credits, that they can be used in a range of flexible ways to purchase or restore natural land elsewhere.

Lendlease wish to use their Koala credits (gained as a result of destroying Koala habitat on Gilead) to commit to rehabilitate and maintain the public reserve adjoining. They may be restoring habitat that already exists, but arguably that should be done by council anyway. Critics also claim they are not finding or saving an additional Koala habitat in compensation for what they are destroying, so there is a net loss.

Further bringing attention to this issue, OFF members Peter Mahoney, James Deli and Sharyn Cullis also featured in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* on 10 October, 2018 calling for action in establishing a Koala National Park after koala deaths on Heathcote Road. With koala numbers in national decline, their conservation and the protection of their habitats is a matter of urgency.

PUBLIC INSECT AND SPIDER SURVEY

Dr Lizzie Lowe, an invertebrate's researcher, along with a team of researchers from Macquarie University and the University of Sydney have developed an online public survey about insects and spiders. They want to know which insects and spiders you see in and around your home, and which products (if any) you use to control them. The survey will be open all summer. By taking part in their survey, you will help them develop guidelines for people to effectively and safely manage insects and spiders around their homes. You will also have the chance to win one of five \$100 Coles Myer group gift vouchers!

If you are curious about the insects and spiders living around your house, you will also have the opportunity to volunteer your household for a biodiversity survey conducted by researchers from Macquarie University. For more information and to complete the survey please follow this link <https://www.surveymonkey> or contact the research leader Dr Lizzy Lowe at lizzy.lowe@mq.edu.au Lizzie hopes to have the survey written up by mid next year, and will share the results.



PLANTING SATURDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2018

Georges River Council councillor Sandy Grekas has provided a grant of \$750 for planting in Moore Reserve which will take place on Saturday, 17 November from 10.30 am. Come along and help with the 'greening' of our area.

MOUNT TOMAH BOTANIC GARDEN WALK REPORT

To begin we had morning tea at a café in Richmond, after which we arrived at Mt Tomah Botanic Garden at 11.30 am. What a contrast to OFF's last visit here in June 2008 when the fog and mist surrounded the area. The low visibility created its own special magic on that cold day as we made our way through the garden. This time however, a perfect spring day greeted us, with the sun shining on a wonderful vista over the garden to the Blue Mountains.

We agreed that we would all go our separate ways and meet again for the return journey. Small groups headed off in different directions, consequently there were varied experiences throughout the day. We all enjoyed the wonderful waratahs which were at their best as were the rhododendrons. It was very difficult to come up with favourite garden sections as the area is wonderfully diverse owing to its former use as a cut flower farm and private European style garden. The property was gifted to the Botanic Gardens Trust in 1972 and after bicentennial grants were obtained in 1983 the challenging development of the garden we see today began. The garden was opened to the public in 1987.

Thanks to Graham Fry for arranging the day and driving the bus without which some members would not have been able to attend. Those of us who had visited ten years earlier noticed how the plants have matured and multiplied. A perfect day enjoyed by all! To view photos visit <http://off.oatleypark.com/?p=7443>

Robin Dickson



OFF CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Pop-Up Street Stalls

The Society plans to run pop-up street stalls in Oatley and possibly one in Mortdale, on Saturday mornings in December (1, 8 and 15) between 8.30am -12.00pm. We will be selling Oatley 2019 Calendars, greetings cards, and of course promoting our campaigns and projects, alongside Oatley Lions who will be selling their Christmas cakes. **If you can spare some time on any of those days, please email Liz Cameron at elsmere02@gmail.com**



Annual Christmas Get-Together

Members are invited to the annual Christmas get-together on Monday, 3 December from 5.30 pm at the Steamroller picnic area in Oatley Park. BYO food, drinks, chairs tables etc. Should it rain, the group will move to the Castle near Oatley Baths.

Oatley 2019 Calendar

A great idea for a Christmas gift, the 2019 Oatley calendar is now available through OFF, or can be purchased at AdventureCo, Mullane's Pharmacy, Povel's Deli and Sienna on Forest. Only \$8.00 for members.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS FOR 2019

A reminder that this is the time when we are calling for members to form a new Committee for 2019. You are invited to nominate at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 4 February, 2019. In particular the Society is looking for someone to manage the OFF website.

18 November 2018 – Field Trip to Stony Range Botanic Garden near Dee Why

This garden is an oasis of Australian native plants (many sign-posted) from many areas and is located in the heart of the northern beaches. In the 1950s, Stony Range was a disused stone quarry. Had it not been for a few visionary locals with a green thumb, the reserve may never have been established. We will meet at the garden car park at 810 Pittwater Road, Dee Why at 10.00 am. To access the car park coming from the south, turn right into Delmar Parade, the first street after passing the Warringah Rd/ Harbord Rd intersection with Pittwater Road. You can then do a U-turn back onto Pittwater Road and turn left into the garden car park. After the longish trip from Oatley (less than 1 1/2 hours), we can start the day with a coffee if desired; there is a cafe in Delmar Parade and/or a picnic area in the garden (don't forget your keep-cup). Viewing of the impressive garden should take about 2 hours. Easy walking with some sections wheel-chair accessible. If participants wish, we can then also do a slightly more energetic walk from Curl Curl Headland to Dee Why Headland along the cliff tops. If you have any queries please contact Graham Lalchere on 9580 3107, 0430 968 260 or glalch@gmail.com. (Note: this is before the next general meeting).

26 November 2018 – Monday Meeting and Social Supper

We will be joined by PhD candidate Reannan Honey, from The University of Technology Sydney, who was awarded an OFF grant last year. She will give us a brief overview of her research project on *Habitat Restoration for Hollow Dependant Fauna*. Please bring a plate of food to help with supper; tea and coffee provided.

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. We still have space for anyone interested.

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.

OFF PROGRAMS 2019 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 2019. He is looking for more outings for the program. They don't have to be walks but can be visits to interesting sites, ferry cruises, etc. Please contact Graham Fry fryg45@gmail.com with any suggestions.

SAMPLES NEEDED FOR FOX RESEARCH

Dr Alex Carthey, Macquarie University, Dr Thomas Newsome, Sydney University, and Dr Alison Towerton, Greater Sydney Local Land Services are continuing to research the urban and peri-urban red fox. OFF has received a request for assistance in the collection of the samples listed below, should anyone come across them.

Samples they are in desperate need of:

Fox ears: A whole ear or just a 1-2cm tip. Frozen or refrigerated, we will pick them up as soon as possible. These will be used to study fox population genetics (which will give us information about fox movements and genetic intermixing), across highly urban to more rural or natural areas. Therefore, we are interested in fox ears collected from any of these environments.

Fox carcasses: The fresher the better (however, all but very decomposed carcasses are of interest). The carcasses can be at room temperature, frozen, or refrigerated. The very freshest carcasses are the most valuable, if

you have a very fresh carcass please call us ASAP and we will come straight away - a matter of hours makes a difference. These will be used to intensively survey DNA expression revealing diseases and parasites carried by foxes across urban to more rural or natural areas.

Fox scats: Fresh fox scats are also of interest, please call us and we will collect. These can be stored in a refrigerator or freezer, or we can just collect as soon as possible so you don't have to store them at all.

If you do collect a few, it is best to stick them in the freezer and then contact Dr Alex Carthey on 0421 319 443 to arrange their collection. Note that the following information will need to be recorded for each sample collected:

- Date.
- Location, as specific as possible (an address, cross streets, or GPS point is ideal).
- Sex.
- Age where obvious (adult/juvenile).
- Any other information is also very helpful.

It is requested that the items are placed in double plastic bags and that the details listed above are written on the bag with a permanent marker and then put into the freezer.

You can also post the items to Dr Thomas Newsome at:

The University of Sydney
Faculty of Science, School of Life and Environmental Sciences
Rm 312, Heydon-Laurence Building A08,
The University of Sydney, NSW, 2006

Contacts:

Alex Carthey 0421 319 443, alexandra.carthey@mq.edu.au
Tom Newsome 0476 042 069, thomas.newsome@sydney.edu.au
Feel free to contact them even just if you have any questions.