

## Secretary's Report to Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society's 64<sup>th</sup> AGM, 4 February 2019

On behalf of our committee, I present the Secretary's Report on the activities of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc. in 2018. A lot has happened.

Big news was the decision by Georges River Council to retain the Oatley Bowling Club site in public hands to provide open space and recreation; since 2006 OFF with other community groups and individuals, has campaigned tirelessly for this outcome.

Continuing on the campaign trail, our committee identified seven environmental priorities for the State and Federal elections. OFF's political efforts for the elections will be based on these priorities:

- Establish a Sydney Marine Park
- Create Koala National Parks
- A \$2 billion regional renewable energy fund
- A \$1.5 billion land and biodiversity fund to protect and restore bushland and forest habitat
- End logging of public native forests
- Remove feral horses from Kosciuszko National Park
- Legislate to ban single-use plastic bags

A major task for the Grants sub-committee was completion of the consultancy on restoration of The Castle in Oatley Park, a project funded by Georges River Council.

We have a good working relationship with GRC and our State and Federal Parliamentary representatives and they have provided financial support for OFF projects through a number of grants.

We provided research grants to two post-graduate students in 2018, funded from donations from members and supplemented by OFF funds. 2017 recipient Reannan Honey entertained the November meeting with an overview of her tree hollow project. OFF has also made donations to conservation organisations from the sale of produce and bird cards.

OFF oversaw the production of the 2019 calendar, *The Nature of Georges River*, which sold well at stalls and through supporting organisations and retailers, and made a surplus. Last year we ran stalls at two festivals and had four 'pop-up' stalls before Christmas - in Oatley, Mortdale and Lugarno. They are a good opportunity to promote our objectives, discuss environmental issues with the community, and sell calendars.

OFF featured in stories in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *St George Leader* and *Canterbury- Bankstown Express*; our website and Facebook page are well-'liked'. OFF's work was advertised with prominent signs at our planting sites. Last year 77 pairs of hands planted 1000 natives at two sites – River Road Reserve, and Moore Reserve, with funds from NSW Government and Georges River Councillor Grekas. Thanks to Matt Allison for doing so much of the spadework. OFF members did Bushcare in Oatley Park each month and we have committed to another monthly session to maintain our plantings.

We assisted Council staff to give away native plants on National Tree Day but, despite monitoring and frequent reporting by OFF members, trees continue to die and be removed illegally in our area.

Some environmental campaigns we supported were People's referendum on Coal and Gas, banning mining under water catchments, investment in renewable energy, a plastic-free Oatley, reducing pollution in our waterways, and saving the Streamwatch program.

Under the new GRC Place-naming Policy, OFF recommended names for two locations – Boorea Reserve for the River Road Reserve where we planted, and Myles Dunphy Creek for the waterway in Myles Dunphy Reserve.

For our meetings, Matt Allison arranged a line-up of excellent speakers that began in February with James Baxter-Gilbert's enthusiastic talk on urban water dragons to an audience of 75; over the year, audiences averaged more than 50. Matt, Graham Lalchere and the de Beuzevilles ensured the meetings were well-publicised.

Graham Fry scheduled 10 field outings for an average of 11 participants. Most popular were a bus trip to Mt Tomah Botanic Garden, a week-end at Capertee NP and the Bonnum Pic walk.

Sue Howard and Vicki Bolling organised another sociable Annual Dinner in June for a full house in the Oatmill Brasserie and the raffle raised \$190. The Christmas Picnic in Oatley Park on a fine evening was well attended.

Lime Kiln Bay was again OFF's site for Clean Up Australia Day; Alan Fairley registered 27 participants who collected 22 bags of rubbish, half of it recyclable. (It is pleasing to witness the success of the Return and Earn program which OFF urged the State Government to adopt as far back as 2012). In August OFF and Bankstown Bushland Society members supported by the Riverkeeper, cleaned up Beauty Point Reserve on the Georges River.

Regarding our membership, Melina Amerasinghe is resigning from the committee to spend more time with family; we are very grateful for the 16 years of service she has given, first as Program Officer, and more recently as Website Editor.

Adelina Cubelic has become Editor of OFF News, which is a great help to the Editorial sub-committee led by Alan Fairley.

Our Conservation Advisor Deb Andrew has provided valuable assistance with OFF's submissions on a number of environmental issues.

Sharyn Cullis was our nominee for a St George Community Environmental Achievement Award, particularly for her work in the Georges River Koala Network (of which OFF is a member) in south-west Sydney.

On procedural matters, Public Officer Julian Sheen oversaw the revision of OFF Rules to become a Constitution that was ratified in June; a Mission Statement was adopted to summarise OFF's objectives.

Last year we welcomed 11 new members and membership is just under 300. . The membership register was closed mid-year to ensure valid voting on the Constitution; thanks to Robin Dickson for chasing unfinancial members prior to that deadline.

Relegation of our meetings to the Sports Bar has not been satisfactory and we are investigating an alternative venue; this may become necessary if the RSL management proceeds with proposed renovations to this area.

Elizabeth Cameron  
Secretary, 4 February 2019