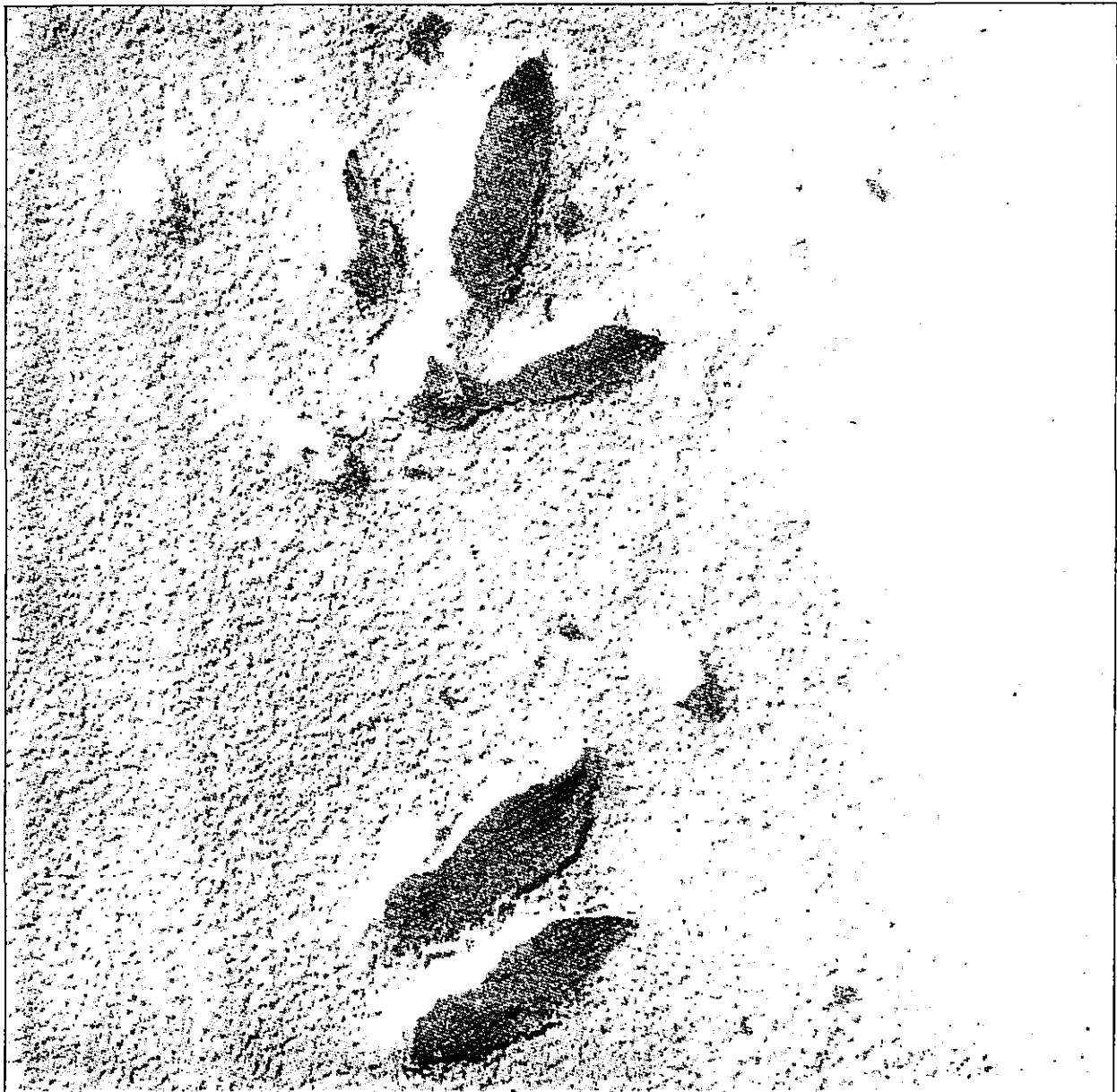


NPA Bulletin

Volume 26 number 3
September 1989

NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION (ACT) INCORPORATED



Mining the Murrumbidgee

The Wild Man meets Venus on the Shoalhaven

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Cover

Photo: Reg Alder.

As in the Association's emblem, an emu and a kangaroo tread the sandy shore of Lake Mungo. Sites of Aboriginal occupation date back to 40,000 years at Lake Mungo. The Aboriginal remains have been found in the eroding sands; the lake dried up at the end of the last ice age. Recent rains have wet the easternside of Lake Mungo, attracting a profusion of birds.

National Parks Association (ACT) Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objects of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery and natural features in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.
- Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.
- Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Co-operation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, nature conservation, and the planning of land-use to achieve conservation.

Office-bearers and Committee

Contact the office

Subscription rates (1 July - 30 June)

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Corporate members \$10 Bulletin only \$10

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Membership enquiries welcome

Please phone Laraine Frawley at the NPA office.

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Contribute to your *Bulletin*

Contributions of articles (news, description or fiction), black-and-white photographs and line drawings are keenly sought for the *Bulletin*. Creative works will be given a high priority for placement. Please label photographs with the name of the subject, the name of the photographer and the date. Letters to the editor should be brief (less than 500 words). Leave contributions at the office or phone the editor, Roger Green, on (062) 470059.

Articles by contributors may not necessarily reflect Association opinion or objectives.

Deadline for December issue: 1 November, 1989.

Material received after this date will be held over for a later issue.

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Beware the red dot

A red dot on the mailing label means that you are no longer a financial member of the association. Unless you renew your subscription this will be the last *Bulletin* you receive.

President's foreword

At the same time as the Federal Government launched its environment statement, advice has come that the New South Wales Government plans to continue moving in the other direction, with proposals to further weaken the National Parks and Wildlife Service – already suffering staff cuts. (Members will be aware of the disgraceful level of staffing already, for many of the parks.) Particularly affected would be the natural resources division of the service. The NPWS director, John Whitehouse, has indicated that the land conservation branch is likely to be stripped of staff and funds for land acquisition severely cut. Ultimately this means no new reservations nor additions to existing areas. Also, the service will have to withdraw from the valuable role it plays in 'off-park' conservation – such as responding to (i) clearing and cultivation licence applications in the Western Division, (ii) Crown leasehold conversion applications, (iii) environmental impact statements, and (iv) local and regional environmental plans. If you visit NSW national parks and other reserves why not spend a few minutes writing, or faxing in support of them.

Hon Nick Greiner, Premier of NSW

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Hon Tim Moore, NSW Minister for the Environment

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Over the last few years much attention has been focussed on alpine area conservation and it has absorbed a good proportion of the current committee's time. Following the Association's alpine conference late in 1985, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the three relevant state and territory authorities and

the Federal Government on co-operative management. As well, an Australian Alps National Parks Liaison Committee was established representing the responsible management agencies. In 1988 the scientific significance of the alps was the focus of the first Fenner Conference at the Australian Academy of Science. This meeting gave endorsement to a world heritage nomination for the area. Shortly after, Geoff Mosley, acting as a consultant to the NPAs of Victoria (which took the primary role), ACT and NSW prepared a World Heritage nomination evaluation which was published by VNPA.

Meanwhile in Victoria, the 30-year-long struggle to achieve a continuous alpine park continued, and was finally rewarded in May by the passage of the National Parks (Alpine National Park) Bill, 1989. In July the proposal for an alpine world heritage nomination was formally put to Senator Graham Richardson under the signatures of the three National Parks Association presidents (representing 13,000 members) and Brian Egan (President, Australian National Parks Council). Stay tuned for the next instalment...

In this, my last president's foreword, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the other members of the committee for their support and effort over the past three years. I would like to thank also, those who have contributed much through subcommittees and in other ways. The standing of the Association depends ultimately on the contribution it makes in the conservation field and hence on the work of its membership. There is still plenty of scope for more involvement, for example, in the subcommittees. To take one example, the environment subcommittee needs a few members to focus on ACT planning, especially as it affects nature conservation and open spaces.

The complex demands of contemporary conservation activity will continue to impose strains on voluntary committee members, especially those in full time employment. Increasingly, they will need to be supported by employed staff with the skills to efficiently carry out both specialist and time-consuming routine tasks. Our office in Civic with its computer facilities, the employment of a professional *Bulletin* editor (dramatically reducing the seemingly interminable problems with its publication), and recently, the employment of a part-time administrative assistant have all been progressive steps in this direction. It is worth stressing, however, that the role of such staff is to support voluntary effort not replace it.

In conclusion, I believe the Association is in a sound position to influence conservation policy in the ACT and region and my best wishes go to the incoming executive and committee.

Kevin Frazer

Advertising parks

A recent issue of *The Australian* newspaper featured a supplement on the environment. The National Parks Associations of the ACT, NSW and Victoria jointly funded an advertisement in this supplement promoting national parks.

Jervis Bay

The Association is planning to hold a weekend at Jervis Bay, tentatively scheduled for 28-29 October. The purpose of the weekend is to combine education and enjoyment, and will help members make comments on the forthcoming environmental impact statement from the Department of Defence on the Navy's proposed relocation to Jervis Bay.

ACT Government

A briefing paper has been prepared for presentation to the ACT Minister responsible for national parks and other reserves, Ellnor Grassby.

Julia Trainor

Shaping Canberra Nature Park

The March edition of *NPA Bulletin* contained background information on Canberra Nature Park and outlined the current activities of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service in raising awareness of a draft management plan for the park. Parks and Conservation Service officers also addressed the March meeting of the Association.

As previewed in the earlier article, the latter half of 1989 will be significant for Canberrans interested in their local environment. In August each household in Canberra received an invitation to participate in developing a management plan for Canberra Nature Park. Community organisations have also been invited to ask service officers to meetings to discuss the park and the community's part in planning for its management. Exhibits will be on display in local libraries and shopping centres.

Those individuals and groups who register their interest will re-

ceive further information, including a map of areas currently managed and those proposed to be added to the park. They will also receive resource statements on areas close to where they live and a questionnaire.

The initial public participation phase will be open until the end of October 1989. All written comments received by that time will be considered in preparing the draft management plan. The draft plan (which should be prepared by early 1990) will also be available for public comment.

If you would like to find out more about management planning for Canberra Nature Park or would like to register your interest in participating you can either contact the project officer on (062) 935327 or the southside office of the park on 861346.

Bernadette O'Leary
ACT Parks and Conservation Service

Map and guide for Namadgi

Several initiatives by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service are set to dramatically raise community awareness about Namadgi National Park.

The Namadgi map and guide was released in July and will fulfil a long standing need. When folded out one side forms a poster featuring a beautiful painting by Bev Bruen and photographs by Rob Blakers and Henry Gold. The text covers natural and cultural features, recreation and minimum impact.

The reverse side is based on the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group 1:100,000 Australian Capital Territory map sheet, redone to highlight the access roads and walking tracks in Namadgi. Each of the signposted tracks and six access roads has a paragraph of informative text. The map and guide is available for \$2 from the Namadgi and Tidbinbilla visitor centres as well as the ACT Administration shopfront in Civic.

Letter to the editor Jerrabomberra wetlands

I welcome the article by Ian Fraser entitled 'Jerrabomberra birdlands' which appeared in the June 1989 issue of the *Bulletin*. As is Ian's style, the article is generally well-researched, well-informed, communicative and to the point.

I particularly appreciate the fact that Ian has drawn attention to the **relative** value of Jerrabomberra wetlands. They are not the Macquarie Marshes or the floodplains of the Magela, but in the middle of Australia's largest inland city. They are a rare jewel indeed and one whose ecological, environmental and social values will grow exponentially as the modified environment evolves around Jerrabomberra.

I must take issue with one section of Ian's article. He paints a gloomy picture of the resources being made available for manage-

ment planning by our service. We could always use more people and more resources but for the record, we have now had a number of staff totally dedicated to management planning for many months. Namadgi and Bowen Island plans have been completed. The drafts for Jerrabomberra and the Murrumbidgee corridor have been released and public submissions are being reviewed. The new government is keen to push on with the process of finalising both plans, and staff have been allocated to the tasks.

As the chief minister announced during the World Environment Day celebrations, we will be going to the citizens of Canberra in July to begin a major consultative exercise on the management plan for a Canberra Nature Park. One officer has been dedicated full time to the

CNP planning process for some months. We would welcome NPA's participation and assistance in the consultative process. It will mean a lot of hard work but also, we hope, a more responsive planning approach which the community perceives as a process they are able to shape and influence.

I believe that we have the opportunity in the coming months to achieve a number of important goals for conservation and national parks in the ACT. I believe that the new government has demonstrated a strong public commitment to conservation and I welcome the participation of the NPA in the work which must be done to fulfil that commitment.

Greg Fraser
Director, ACT Parks and Conservation Service

Queen's Birthday honours

Their many friends in NPA were delighted to read in the Queen's Birthday honours list of the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) to Pat Wardle and Robert Story: to Pat for services to community history and to Robert for services to conservation and national parks. Both are long-time members of NPA and one doesn't even have to be a member of the Canberra and District Historical Society to know of Pat's value in that field. Our warmest congratulations to both of them.

Robert arrived from South Africa to take up a research post with the CSIRO Division of Land Research in nice time for him to size up the local scene and become a foundation member of NPA. Before long he became a walks leader and took his turn as President. His enthusiasm and his expertise in the plant world made him a valuable member of the NPA team which in the early 1960s surveyed that portion of the ACT which we now know as Namadgi and which made the ultimately successful recommendation to the government for its preservation as a national park. He was co-opted from time to time by the authorities - by the National Capital Development Commission, for example, for its inquiry into the Cotter River catchment and by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service for its survey of the Kakadu region before it became a national park. He was

for several years our delegate to the Australian National Parks Council and for two years its president. But to the ordinary member of NPA he is a kind, helpful friend, generous with his time and energy as is his wife, Sybil. Their open house has been the locale for many a gathering for NPA, the Canberra Bushwalkers Club and the Kosciusko Huts Association. These three societies have shown their appreciation of the Storys' willing involvement in day-to-day affairs by electing them to life membership, both Sybil and Robert in CBC and KHA, and Robert in NPA.

To be a life member of three conservation societies must be rare and we are happy and proud that Robert's quiet, tireless, valuable work for conservation and national parks has been recognised publicly with his award of an OAM.

Sheila Kruse

Another friend of the NPA in the Queen's birthday honours list was Colin Watson, explorer of the Budawangs and member of the Coast and Mountain Walkers of NSW and the Budawang Committee. Colin was the man behind a number of the committee's excellent publications including the recent book, Fitzroy Falls and Beyond (see review on page 14). He was awarded an OAM for service to conservation and bushwalking.

History of NPA

As part of the research necessary to provide information on public recognition of the natural values of Namadgi leading up to its declaration as a national park in 1984 (*NPA Bulletin*, June 1989) a considerable number of the Association's records had to be read through and notated.

It seemed that this once-only effort would be wasted if the documents were not put in a sequence for easier reference, and an attempt made to provide some permanence to the collection.

Hence all the file letters, documents, and committee and general meeting references were copied and now have been bound into a hardcover volume. The collection has been titled *The Association's role in the declaration of Namadgi National Park*.

As an extension of this particular part of the Association's history, a companion volume, *NPA Bulletin Extracts*, has now been made up of collated articles from the *NPA Bulletin* from their inception in 1963 to the present. This volume of over 300 pages contains the names of all the committee members since the formation of the Association in 1963 plus chapter headings on editorials and presidents' forewords and all the principal Association projects with representative papers on the style of the *Bulletin* and outing programs.

Both volumes trace the development of the Association as a force in the community and should be of considerable interest to anyone requiring detailed knowledge of past activities and are interesting enough just to browse through. The volumes are in the NPA office.

Reg Alder

New administrative assistant

The Association now has an administrative assistant, Ann Taylor, who started work at the beginning of July. Ann is working one day a week, initially for three months, preparing submissions and keeping in touch with other conservation groups.

Ann's background is in the study of ecology, especially that of fresh water, at Canberra College of Advanced Education. In 1983 and 1984, in conjunction with Peter Cullen and Richard Norris

from the college, she studied the impact of Thredbo's sewerage on the Thredbo River. Since then she has worked in the chemistry laboratory of the Australian War Memorial and in the Wilderness Shop in the Griffin Centre.

At the moment Ann is organising support for world heritage nomination for the alps from other conservation groups in the region (see article on page 10). Ann's telephone number is 589668.

ACT Government stops taking sand

Mining the Murrumbidgee

The ACT Government will take no more sand from the Murrumbidgee River, in the ACT or NSW, when current contracts expire.

The Chief Minister of the ACT, Rosemary Follett, announced this significant conservation measure on 21 July. She needs and deserves letters of support (to the ACT House of Assembly, Civic, ACT 2601).

Ms Follett has called for a review of procedures by which the ACT Government secures supplies of sand and gravel. 'I am determined that the ACT will not contribute to environmental problems beyond our borders' she said.

Last year two academics from the Australian National University, CLEM LLOYD and DAVID BENNETT, prepared a paper on some of the legal and administrative aspects of sandmining in the Murrumbidgee River.

The paper was delivered at an ecopolitics conference in New Zealand in September and at the Australian Conservation Foundation Conference in Sydney in October 1988. They are presently preparing a longer version of the study for publication. Here are some extracts from the paper.

Among Australia's principal heritage rivers, the Murrumbidgee is exceeded in significance only by the Murray and the Hawkesbury-Nepean. Rising on high plains southwest of Canberra, it skirts the northern fringes of the Australian alps before making a mighty loop to the west of the national capital. After crossing the fringes of the southern tablelands the river meanders across the south-western plains for several hundred miles before joining the Murray. Its economic value is immense as its waters feed the major reservoirs of Tantangara, Blowering (through the Snowy

Mountains scheme network) and Burrinjuck, and provide irrigation water for the Murrumbidgee and Coleambally irrigation areas.

The river was progressively discovered and explored by Charles Throsby in 1821, Captain Mark Curry and Major Ovens in 1823, Hamilton Hume and Charles Hovell who crossed it in 1824, and Charles Sturt in 1829-30. Its historical associations with the development of Australia's pastoralism, its irrigation and its national capital are enormously rich. Murrumbidgee is an Aboriginal word meaning 'big water'. The poet Henry Lawson once described a New South Wales river as a chain of dry water holes, and the snow-fed Murrumbidgee is one of the continent's most important and reliable water sources. The river encompasses a rich diversity of habitats and ecosystems in its 1600-kilometre course. This paper focuses on a relatively small section of the Murrumbidgee from the northern border of the ACT to the backwaters of the Burrinjuck Dam. Here, the river forms an arc as it starts to swing from its northerly course to the west. There is no common name for this portion of the river but for convenience here it is referred to as the Cavan Reach, after the old parish name. (Cavan has attracted international notoriety in recent years as the country seat of the international newspaper nabob, Rupert Murdoch).

Canberra has encroached heavily on the fragile river valley, creating a series of major environmental problems.

Despite an abundance of other sources, the Murrumbidgee's bed has always been a prime source of sand and gravel. Its banks have also yielded lesser supplies of sand and loam. The building of Canberra has intensified in recent

years, particularly with the construction of the permanent Parliament House. Mining the Murrumbidgee bed and banks has not been the most logical source, either in terms of practical economics or day-to-day operations, but nonetheless large quantities of sand, gravel and loam have been extracted. For several years the significant Besser Boral Vibrapac company sited its brickworks in the Murrumbidgee Valley, drawing its sand supplies from the river. In recent years sand has been less important in brick-making, although considerable quantities have been required for bedding on Canberra construction sites.

Sand has been taken from the river at several points in the ACT. Although plans to take the capital's urban development across the Murrumbidgee have been abandoned, at least for the immediate future, Canberra has encroached heavily on the fragile river valley, creating a series of major environmental problems. The threat to the Murrumbidgee prompted the now-defunct National Capital Development Commission to sponsor a Murrumbidgee River Corridor Policy Plan which was released in May 1988.

A draft management plan for the corridor concluded that extraction of sand and gravel was inconsistent with the management objectives of the corridor as a protected area. Although the plan refers specifically to the river corridor in the ACT, the territory's boundaries with New South Wales are artificial in geographic and environmental terms; there are no pronounced features which differentiate the river in the ACT from the Cavan Reach downstream. The strictures made in the draft management plan apply just as much to New South Wales as they do to the ACT:

Several major sand and gravel operations have taken place within the corridor in the past. These have extracted material from within the river channel

and related fluvial deposits. Despite closure of these, rehabilitation for virtually all such sites is mostly still below acceptable standards. This is partly because original licensing arrangements did not place as much emphasis on environmental safeguards as would now be considered appropriate.

The [ACT Parks and Conservation] Service is opposed to any resumption of sand and gravel extraction from within the corridor, especially because of adverse effects on water quality and aquatic ecosystems downstream. [ACT Administration 1988].

The draft management plan pointed out that turbidity was already a significant water-quality management problem because of the rapid urbanisation of Canberra and it was undesirable to exacerbate this. Processing plants and heavy vehicle access were a necessary adjunct to sandmining on the riverbanks and this conflicted with recreational use. River mining operations occupied much space and were noisy. If, for economic or other reasons, it was necessary to resume extraction of 'corridor resources', detailed environmental impact assessment would be required.

Sand extraction causes increased saline intrusion, greater mobility of nutrients, blooms of blue-green algae, increased turbidity, destruction of aquatic vegetation that stabilises the banks, removal of sediment-dwelling food resources for fish, turtles and platypus.

Closing down sand mining in the ACT took several years and a messy court case. In circumstances of relatively high demand considerable benefits were bestowed on sand miners outside the ACT.

Undoubtedly sandmining raises



The Murrumbidgee River near Point Hut. Photo: Hedda Morrison.

several degrees of threat to the environment. There is the disturbance of the river bed, the removal of sand bars and, if dredging is extensive, changes in the river morphology from a series of pools, shallows and riffle zones into a continuous channel. Studies of sections of the upper Nepean which have been mined reveal that such morphological changes severely reduce instream turbulence and nutrient assimilation capacity. (Sydney Water Board, 1988) Assessment of other sandmining areas on the Colo and Hawkesbury Rivers has suggested that sand extraction causes increased saline intrusion, greater mobility of nutrients, blooms of blue-green algae, increased turbidity, destruction of aquatic vegetation that stabilises the banks, removal of sediment-dwelling food resources for fish, turtles and platypus. The Murrumbidgee in the reaches north of the ACT includes a number of threatened species including the eel-tail catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*), river blackfish (*Gadopsis marmoratus*), trout cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*), and Macquarie perch (*Macquaria australasica*), as well as platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*). A study of sand mining on

the Colo River reached a conclusion just as applicable to the Murrumbidgee: '... despite its small scale the ... dredging operation could have a disproportionately large impact on the river ecosystem through sedimentation, decreased water quality and geomorphological change' (Colo River Action Group, 1983).

Environmental remedies

1 The Council

Australian political parties have expended much money and effort in recent years in trying to attract, and hold, the environmental vote. Federal and state governments have sought to temper unbridled development with some recognition of the need for environmental planning. New acts and codes have been drafted and new authorities created. National environmental issues have been fought out in the Australian High Court and at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The fact remains that fundamental environmental issues are largely determined by Australia's 900 or so local government authorities where the essential development consents are given and regulated.

The Yass Council is typical of many non-urban local government

continued next page

Mining the Murrumbidgee

continued from previous page

authorities, its predominantly rural area hinged on a small country town. It differs from similar councils mainly in the proximity of the ACT which has brought numerous Canberra residents within its boundaries. This has created some problems for the council because Canberra professional people have shown a greater propensity to be concerned about environmental issues and apparent council tolerance of unregulated development. Although the council has been brought under greater pressure, its fundamental predisposition towards rural interests and an essentially *laissez faire* approach to environmental issues has not been fundamentally altered.

Canberra professional people have shown a greater propensity to be concerned about environmental issues and apparent council tolerance of unregulated development.

2 State authorities

Several state authorities were involved in ostensibly regulating and monitoring sand mining: the Soil Conservation Service, the Water Resources Commission (now the Department of Water Resources), the State Pollution Control Commission (SPCC), the Department of Environment and Planning (DEP). The Soil Conservation Service prescribed detailed requirements for action to regenerate mined sites along the river but these were left to the council to enforce and the council did not act. The SPCC, traditionally the most active of the state's environmental protection agencies, was responsive to complaints. Violation of the river banks was not its direct responsibility and SPCC officers were not anxious to intervene on another's turf. The Water Resources Commission was either indifferent or ineffectual in enforcing its permit and licensing

requirements for taking water from the river and protecting the foreshores. Despite its responsibility for state-wide environmental planning the DEP showed little disposition to intervene in an important environmental issue at the local government level.



3 Federal authorities

Since Federation the Federal Government has accepted responsibility for the Murray River in conjunction with the NSW and Victorian Governments and for the Murrumbidgee River within the ACT borders. Despite the Murrumbidgee's importance to the Snowy Scheme and to the rural economy, the Commonwealth has not accepted any general responsibility for its protection. The Taemas-Cavan area adjacent to the Cavan Reach of the Murrumbidgee, described by geologists as one of Australia's finest geological terrains, has been included on the register of the National Estate for its early Devonian limestone deposits. The Murrumbidgee within the ACT borders is registered for a variety of unique features. The long stretch of the Murrumbidgee between Burrinjuck and Tantangara Dams has also been nominated for the register as the habitat of highly endangered species of Australian native fish. This would include the Cavan Reach. Undoubtedly inscription on the register would reinforce the case against mining the river although the practical effect is uncertain.

[The paper examines other remedies, including politicians, the legal system, and the ombudsman.]

Conclusion

The major environmental battles are of course essential and the victories worthwhile. Despite some spectacular successes it seems very likely that the environmental battle is being lost by the accretion of hundreds of small planning and developmental decisions taken each year at the local government level. The struggles of the indefatigable individual in the environmental interest, such as Jacqueline Rees' confrontation of the sand miners, seem destined to futility under existing systems of environmental and planning law.

Conference on rivers

The ACT Government's stance on the Murrumbidgee shows that at least some politicians and policy advisers no longer see rivers as things to dam, drain or dump rubbish in. Rivers are now valued for recreation and their ability to sustain natural environments.

A conference on the state of Australia's rivers will be held at the Australian National University on 28 and 29 September. This is the second in a series of conferences on issues in water management at the university's Centre for Continuing Education. The conference is aimed at water users and the public.

The conference will examine the history, biology, recreation, river modification, legal and administrative structures, competing demands for rivers, the impact of uses, waste disposal, and health and disease.

The conference is being organised by the Centre for Continuing Education, the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at ANU, the Water Research Centre at the Canberra College of Advanced Education, the CSIRO Division of Water Resources and the ACT Planning Authority. For further information write to the Centre for Continuing Education, ANU, GPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601 or telephone (062) 494580.

Blue Mountains for world heritage?

Fresh from his work on the world heritage proposal for the alps, Geoff Mosley has written a world heritage submission for the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney, for the Colong Foundation. The Blue Mountains region includes the Blue Mountains National Park, Kanangra-Boyd National Park, Wollemi National Park, Jenolan Caves Reserve and proposed national parks at Nattai and the Gardens of Stone, though it is not clear whether all of these are included in the proposal.

The submission states that the Blue Mountains have:

- the best example in the world of an upland of sedimentary rocks deeply dissected by rivers over tens of millions of years
- major weathering forces which are still at work
- vegetation which is a classic representation of the xeromorphic (dry) forms which developed as a result of Australia's isolation and changing environment following separation from Gondwana
- diverse plant and animal life, including 157 threatened species
- sandstone soils which are among the most nutrient deficient in the world
- scenery which blends eucalypt forest and dissected plateaux
- the best open sclerophyll wilderness in the world.

Dr Mosley writes that world heritage listing for the Blue Mountains could lead to the NSW and Commonwealth Governments giving greater priority to conservation of the area, particularly the urgent need for sewage treatment and diversion in the central Blue Mountains. Other threats, such as the raising of the water level in Warragamba Dam, coal mining under parks and tourist resort development in inappropriate places, would be more likely to be decided in favour of conservation.

The Colong Foundation is seeking money to publish the submission, illustrated with colour photographs.

Colong Bulletin, July 1989

Cuts to NSW parks service

The National Parks Association of NSW says that recent staff cuts to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service could spell the end of the natural resources division of the service. Further cuts to staff and funding for land acquisition are being considered. This would mean no new national parks or nature reserves and no additions to existing parks. The service might also have to abandon its conservation work outside parks: in endangered species, applications to clear land in western NSW, environment impact statements and regional or local plans.

The association has urged concerned people to write to Nick Greiner, Premier of NSW, Parliament House, Sydney, fax (02) 2312 1110, telex AA 121269; with a copy to Tim Moore, Minister for the Environment, fax (02) 233 7195. State your views on staffing cuts in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and on the need for funds for land acquisition.

National Parks Association of NSW

Mining Mount Leseuer

The mining company, CRA, has plans to mine Mount Leseuer in Western Australia, the site of a proposed national park.

Mount Leseuer is an area of coastal shrub and woodlands north or Perth. The vegetation is diverse, with over 800 plant species, some of them rare. The botanical importance led the Australian Academy of Science, in 1962, to recommend the area's protection as a national park. In 1976 the Western Australian Environment Protection Authority recommended the same thing.

However, the state Department of Mines obstructed the proposal. CRA has now pegged the likely coal deposits in the area and now wants to build a private coal-fired power station.

Conservation News, ACF, June 1989

Meeting favours Nattai park

In April the Berrima branch of the National Parks Association of NSW held a meeting in Mittagong on the proposed Nattai National Park. Over 70 people, including farmers and business people, supported the idea. The main objection to the proposal appears to be the possibility of mining coal in the area.

The Colong Bulletin, May 1989

Victorian law prohibits mining in NPs

In May the Victorian Parliament passed the National Parks (Amendment) Bill which amends the National Parks Act to prohibit mining in national parks and wilderness areas. The Bill created five new parks, extended others and made specific provision for the identification of wilderness areas.

VNPA Newsletter, June 1989

Concern for NSW Crown lands

The National Parks Association of NSW has expressed concern over the NSW Government abandoning the conservation policy of the Crown Lands Office. In 1977, after the expression of public concern about the alienation and degradation of former Crown lands, the office adopted a policy to retain important areas of land in public ownership. This policy has kept about 1.3 million hectares of land, mostly timbered and of low agricultural value, from sale.

Following a review, the NSW Minister for Natural Resources, Ian Causley, has effectively abolished the policy. The association fears that significant areas of land will now be sold. Much of this land is potential parkland which will cost many millions of dollars for the state to acquire once it has been sold.

National Parks Association of NSW

THE ALPS

Victorian alpine park bill passed

The legislation to create a Victorian alpine park, the National Parks (Alpine National Park) Bill, was finally passed by the Legislative Council of the Victorian Parliament on 25 May. The Alpine National Park will be in a continuous piece from near Mansfield to the NSW border and will have a total area of 646,000 hectares. The park, which incorporates the Wonnangatta-Moroka, Bogong, Cobberas-Tingaringy and Wabonga Plateau parks, has still to be proclaimed.

Unfortunately the park, which has the prime purpose of protecting alpine habitats, flora and fauna, has been compromised by National Party amendments to the legislation. These will extend existing logging licences and allow 'once-only' logging in new areas, and will extend grazing permits for seven years. Graziers will be given special licences to engage in tourist activities (that shows how economically vital the grazing is!). Tour operators will have the right to exclude the public from huts in the park - this gives new meaning to the idea of locking up national parks.

The skiing industry will not be impeded by the creation of the park as the resorts remain under the control of the commercially minded Alpine Resorts Commission.

The Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands will prepare management plans for the four parts of the park. Weeds, feral animals and soil erosion will be significant issues for managers.

Myles Dunphy proposed a Snowy-Indi national park covering part of the Victorian alps in the 1930s. In 1949 the Victoria was made by the Town and Country Planning Association suggested a park of 500,000 hectares. The Victorian National Parks Association has been working on the idea since 1952. Judging by the compromises in the recent legislation, conservationists still have a long way to go in the battle for the Victorian alps.

Victorian resorts expand

The treasure hunt for the tourist dollar continues to threaten national parks and natural areas. Despite the good work on the Alpine National Park the Victorian Government is still trying to flog its mountain resorts. Plans for the expansion of Falls Creek, Mount Hotham and Mounts Buller and Stirling were announced in April. These resorts are all managed by the Alpine Resorts Commission which has an poor record of environmental management.

If implemented the plans would put ski runs through the homes of mountain pygmy possums at Mount Hotham and Mount McKay; replace parts of the alpine walking track with roads; place ski lifts, facilities, roads and carparks at Sun Valley and Mount Loch inside the new Alpine National Park; and push nordic skiers out of the resorts and into Swinders Creek, a catchment area described as 'exposed and remote'.

Worst of all, Mount Stirling, an attractive cross-country skiing area across the saddle from the high-rise development of Mount Buller, will be buried under a

mass of roads, carparks, a gondola and a village. Golf has been identified as a possible summer use for the area. The Victorian National Parks Association is mounting a major campaign against these reckless plans.

VNPA Newsletter, June 1989

NPAs lobby on world heritage

With threats such as those in Victoria world heritage nomination for the alps becomes more important as a means of establishing the region's importance and ensuring its conservation. As stated in the President's Foreword, the presidents of the National Parks Associations of the ACT, NSW and Victoria, along with the Australian National Parks Council, have written to the Federal Minister for the Environment, Senator Graham Richardson, urging him to support world heritage nomination for the alps.

The letter is an eloquent testimonial to the conservation value of the alps, referring to the support for world heritage nomination from Geoff Mosley's published proposal, the 1988 Fenner Conference of the Australian Academy of Science and other governments.



Near Kiandra in Kosciusko National Park. Photo: Hedda Morrison.

To follow up this letter, the Victorian National Parks Association is seeking community support. Write to Senator Richardson at Parliament House, Canberra, expressing your views on the conservation of the alps of the ACT, NSW and Victoria. Organise others to do the same.

The July environment statement simply stated that the Victorian, ACT and NSW governments were investigating the Australian Alps to see whether they meet the strict criteria for world heritage listing. No support or action from the Commonwealth was foreshadowed.

New Kosciusko advisory committee

The New South Wales Minister for the Environment, Tim Moore, has appointed a new advisory committee for Kosciusko National Park. This follows his dissolution of all national park advisory committees and state recreation area trusts in March (see *NPA Bulletin*, June 1989).

The new members of the Kosciusko National Park advisory committee are:

Christopher Handbury, a Cooma dentist, chair
Milo Dunphy, from the Total Environment Centre
George Freuden, representing the NSW Ski Association
Roger Green, representing the Australian Conservation Foundation
Ann Koeman, a Thredbo lodge operator
George Martin, a Tumbarumba newspaper editor
Donald Maxwell, representing farmers and graziers
Bob Ross, representing the Wilderness Society
Grahame Wells, of the National Parks Association of NSW.

In his letter to appointees Mr Moore said, 'Areas of conflict with park neighbours is a matter of specific concern to me and I would like the committee to consider at an early stage ways in which any existing conflicts can be resolved.'

The first meeting of the advisory committee was held on 25 August.

Steel path completed

National Parks and Wildlife Service workers have completed the elevated steel-mesh walkway from the boundary of Thredbo resort lease to Rawsons Pass below Mount Kosciusko. The five-kilometre path has cost \$700,000 and taken five summers to build.

The path has been built to prevent further erosion on this popular track. About 45,000 people walk the route each year, with about 1400 people on busy summer days. The old track has been restored with hay and grass seeds.

The steel mesh allows water and sunlight to reach the plants below which will grow to be level with the walkway. The steel was chosen to cope with the falls of winter snow.

Kosciusko Thredbo has promised to extend the walkway to the top station of the Crackenback chairlift.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Visitor centre on target

The spacious new visitor centre for Namadgi is being built on the Naas Road 2 kilometres south of Tharwa on target for completion at the end of this year.

The centre will feature interpretative displays and an inspirational audio visual. These projects are well into the design stage. The Parks and Conservation Service is pleased to have NPA contributing to a display on the establishment of the park.

These initiatives represent a great opportunity to set a standard of care for Namadgi that will enable the park to cope well with increased numbers of visitors in the 1990s.

Joss Haiblen

ACT Parks and Conservation Service

New reserve protects wort

The NSW Government has established a nature reserve near Queanbeyan to protect the button wrinkle wort, *Rutidosia leptorhynchoides*. It is the first reserve set aside in NSW to protect an endangered plant. The daisy grows in small groups in NSW, the ACT and Victoria. One population on Capital Hill was destroyed by the construction of the new Parliament House.

There are only three populations of the button wrinkle wort in NSW. All are near Queanbeyan. Two are threatened by suburban development. In May the NSW Minister for Environment, Tim Moore, announced that the third, containing about 1600 plants, would be fenced into the 2.24-hectare Queanbeyan Nature Reserve.

The reserve, mainly red gum woodland, adjoins the old Queanbeyan tip in the suburb of Letchworth. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service will seek community cooperation in the management of the reserve. It could be used by schools for environmental education.

The last ACT population of button wrinkle worts is threatened by development.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Book on Throsby Park

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Wingecarribee Shire Council have published a book on Throsby Park Historic Site and the history of the Throsby family. Dr Charles Throsby came to New South Wales in 1802, pioneered settlement southwest of Sydney and explored the southern tablelands and the Limestone Plains.

Throsby Park - An account of the Throsby Family in Australia 1802-1940 was written by Rachel Roxburgh and costs \$14.95.

The Wild Man of Bungonia meets Venus on the Shoalhaven

On page 88 of *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond* (reviewed by Stephen Johnston on page 14) there is a brief account of a three-week walk of mine in January 1941 from Nerriga to Tallong and Joadja to Wentworth Falls.

The exploration turned into a real adventure with the breaking of the drought, turning the normally placid rivers into flooding torrents. In the war years it was difficult to take your holidays as and when it suited you best. With a lull in the work between converting ships into troop transports I was told, 'You better have some leave, Alder' and so I cast around for some companions to accompany me on a walk I had planned for some time.

So it was not because of any charm on my part that the only walkers immediately available were two schoolteachers. The news spread and soon I was to have five companions, all female. The record of 'four women' in *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond* is slightly incorrect and I think they deserve names: Doris Young, Edna Stretton, Mary Stoddart, Joan Athill and Winifred Duncombe. Why now five you



Bearing gifts in an old sugar bag, the Wild Man of Bungonia, Bill Wells, dresses up in his Sunday best – note grimy shirt collar – to impress the ladies.

Photo (1941): Reg Alder.

might ask? The original number at Nerriga was four but because of illness Joan went home after the first night. She rejoined us later at Mittagong, accompanied by Win, for the second leg of the walk. So there were three companions in the first week and five on the second and third weeks.

We travelled by mail coach (few could afford to own a car) from Nowra to Nerriga to make camp on a grassy flat just downstream from the Endrick bridge. Tents up, it started to rain and before we had finished unpacking we were inundated with about 20 centimetres of water coming from a previously dry gully, swirling over the flat and through our floorless tents. Feverishly, near naked, we began chasing articles of food and clothing across the flat to hang them on any convenient branch. Rescuing eggs was particularly difficult. The rain stopped but the Endrick continued to rise overnight and next morning it was obvious that our plan to walk downstream past a gorge was out of the question.

Plans were changed to walk to the Shoalhaven junction over the ridges and by lunchtime we were clambering down a very steep ridge to rejoin the Endrick about a kilometre from the junction. To my great surprise the Endrick was clear and placid – had I made a mistake? This seemed impossible so we settled down to lunch pondering where last night's water had gone. Were we on another river? It was soon answered as suddenly, with a roar, a wave of filthy water about a metre high came down the river. Last night's flood!

'Feverishly, near naked, we began chasing articles of food and clothing across the flat . . .'

Realising our plight, since we were then on the wrong side of the Endrick, we rapidly went down to the junction, as success for the walk depended on being on the western bank of the Shoalhaven. The Shoalhaven had already risen and with the water at about a metre deep we just managed to



Lake Louise, or Louise Reach, on the Shoalhaven River in 1939. Floods later destroyed grassy banks and flats. Photo: Reg Alder.

(17/18/19 November-Ski Lodge Weekend
Charlottes Pass Ref: Kosciuszko 1:100 000
Leader: Ian Haynes Ph 51 4762

Contact by the 3rd of November to confirm accommodation bookings. Arrive Friday evening or by 09.00am Saturday. Do your own thing, join an organised walk, or just relax. Bring sheets pillow slips (or sleeping bags) and food (cook your own). NPA Members only. 420 km drive.

18/19 November Pack Walk (3/F)
Bundanoon Area Ref: Bundanoon 1:25 000
Leader: Phillip Gatenby Ph 54 3094

Contact leader by Wednesday for details of this exploratory walk in Morton National Park, near Bundanoon. No tracks, steep climbs and rock hopping are likely. 300 km drive.

19 November-Sunday Walk (1/A)
Mt Ainslie-Duntroon-Mt Pleasant Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Gary Schnelder Ph 54 9801

Meet at the car park behind the War Memorial at 10.00 am. An easy day walk (approx. 5 hours) with excellent views of Canberra and RMC Duntroon. Visiting General Bridges' grave, Chengi Chapel, Duntroon Chapel, Duntroon House (outside only), and the Duntroon Dairy. Bring your lunch and binoculars.

22 November-Mid week Walk (2/A)
Lyons to Lyneham by Bush Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Les Pyke Ph 81 2982

Meet at the corner of Archibald and Dryandra Streets, Lyneham at 9am (car shuffle). Walk from Oakey Hill (Woden) to Scriver Dam to Green Hills Pine Forest, Black Mt and Bruce Ridge.

25/26 November-Pack walk (4/A)
Cascades Hut Ref: Thredbo 1:50 000
Leader: John Hutton Ph 58 7334

Contact leader by early for details as there is a limit of 10 on this trip. The plan is to follow the Cascades Trail over the Thredbo River to Cascades Hut. Then to explore the area around the hut before returning via Horse Flat. 420 km drive.

26 November-Sunday Walk (1/A/C)
Ginini Swamp Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Lyle Mark Ph 86 2801

Beginners/Family walk. Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and Cotter Rd at 08.30 am. A 6 km walk from Mt Ginini through Arboretum No. 26 and across Ginini Flats / Swamp. Lunch at Ginini Cascades. 100 m return climb to Mt Ginini summit at a leisurely pace, but is optional. 120 km drive.

26 November-Sunday Walk (3/A/C)
Stockyard Spur to Mt Gingera Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000
Leader: Len Crossfield Ph 41 2897

Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and the Cotter Road at 8.30 am. A steep (very) climb up Stockyard Spur (900 metres total) then along the ridge to Mt Gingera. Magnificent views cloud permitting. 100 km drive.

2 December-Saturday Walk (3/A)
Rendezvous Creek Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000
Leader: Dianne Thompson Ph 88 6084 H 89 5043 W
Meet at Kett St next to the Kambah Village Shops at 8.00 am. A 16 km walk mostly on tracks, to Nursery Swamp via Rendezvous Creek. 300 metre climb. 100 km drive.

3 December-Sunday Walk (2/A)
Canberra Skyline Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Peter Roe Ph 91 9535

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 09.00 am. A 12 km walk up and over Mt Taylor (200 m) and across to Farrer Ridge. Up to Mt Wanniasa Trig then return to the cars by a round trip.

10 December-Sunday Christmas Party
Orroral Valley Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: The President

Meet at Orroral Valley picnic grounds at 3.00 pm. For the annual NPA Christmas get together. Members and friends welcome.

14 January 1990-Sunday Walk (1/B)
Corroboree Frog Search Ref: ACT 1:100 000
Leader: Will Osborne Ph 51 3829

Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and the Cotter Rd at 08.30 am. A walk in the Ginini Flats Area in search of the Corroboree Frog with the expert. 100 km drive.

Points to note

New faces to lead, new places to go. Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead a walk occasionally. Telephone the walks convenor, Steven Forst, on 516817 (h).

All persons joining an outing of the National Parks Association of the ACT do so as volunteers in all respects and as such accept sole responsibility for any injury howsoever incurred and the National Parks Association of the ACT, its office bearers and appointed leaders are absolved from any liability in respect of any injury or damage suffered whilst engaged in any such outing.

The Committee suggests a donation of FIVE cents per kilometre (to the nearest dollar) be offered to the driver by each passenger accepting transport. Drive and walk distances quoted in the program are the approximate distances for return journeys.

Outings program

October 1989 to January 1990



Outings guide

- Day walks** carry lunch, drinks and protective clothing.
Pack walks two or more days, carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER BY WEDNESDAY.
Car camps facilities often limited or non-existent. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. BOOK EARLY WITH LEADER.

Other activities include nature rambles, environmental and field guide studies and ski tours.

Walks gradings

Distance grading (per day)

- 1 - up to 10 km
- 2 - 10 km to 15 km
- 3 - 15 km to 20 km
- 4 - above 20 km.

Terrain grading

- A - Road, firetrail, track
- B - Open forest
- C - Light scrub
- D - Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- E - Rock scrambling
- F - Exploratory.

The walks program contains additional information. If necessary, contact the leader.

1 October-Sunday Walk (1/A/B)**Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000****Leader: Lyle Mark Ph 86 2801**

Meet at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve Information Centre at 10.00 am. A 6 km walk at a leisurely pace across the eastern slopes and meadows of the reserve. An excellent walk for the beginner and the whole family. There is an optional climb to a lookout peak for the more adventurous. 60 km drive.

4 October-Wednesday Mid week Walk (1/A)**Mt Arawang Ref: ACT 1:100 000****Leader: Margaret Aston Ph 88 7563**

Meet at the top end of Kathner Street Chapman at 09.30 am. A very easy 4 km morning walk around Mt Arawang part of Canberra Nature Park. Bring binoculars to look for birds and the views of Canberra.

7 October Saturday Walk (1/B)**Murrumbidgee River Ref: ACT 1:100 000****Leader: Margaret Aston Ph 88 7563**

Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and the Cotter Rd at 09.30 am. An easy 6 km walk through lightly timbered private property following Bulgar Creek. Lunch at the Murrumbidgee River. Lots of horses and maybe a wallaby or two. Suitable for beginners and families. 16 km drive.

8 October-Sunday Walk (2/A/C)**Tidbinbilla Peak- the Pimple Ref: Tidbinbilla 1: 25 000****Leader: Len Crossfield Ph 41 2897**

Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and the Cotter Rd at 8.30am. A 14 km walk with a steep climb (total 700m) to the peak, then some rock scrambling along the ridge to the pimple. Returning via Camel's Back. Splendid views. 60 km drive.

12 October-Thursday Sub-committee Meeting**Walks Program for January to March 1990****Leader: Steven Forst Ph 51 6817 H 74 8426 W**

This Meeting is to be held at Steven Forst's place, 46 Wybalena Grove Cook, from 7.30 pm. The contents of the next outings program will be discussed, along with any other business. All welcome.

14/15 October-Pack walk (4/D)**Namadgi Peak Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000****Leader: Frank Clements Ph 31 7005**

Contact leader by Wednesday for details.
Camping high up on Middle Creek. 100 km drive.

15 October-Sunday History Drive / Walk (1/A)**History Tour - Various Sites Ref: ACT 1:100 000****Leader: Doreen Wilson Ph 88 5215**

Meet at Chisholm Shopping Centre at 9.00 am for a tour of the axe grinding grooves, canoe tree, rock shelter and Farrer's grave. Bring lunch. 40 km drive.

21/22 October-Car Camp**Weddin Mts - Grenfell Ref: Grenfell 1:100 000****Leader: Reg Aider Ph 54 2240**

Contact leader early for details. Camping and walks in the area to see flowers and birds. An easy drive of 420 km.

21 October-Saturday Walk (3/A/B)**Naas River Historic Sites Ref: Collinton 1:25 000****Joint KHA / NPA walk Michelago 1:25 000****Leader: Maurice Sexton Ph 88 3699****Steven Forst Ph 51 6817 H 74 8426 W**

Meet at Tharwa Village Shop at 8.30 am. A joint KHA / NPA walk in the Naas River area to visit historic sites. Further details available closer to the date of the walk. 80 km drive.

22 October-Sunday Walk (3/D)**Mt Gibraltar Ref: Tidbinbilla 1:25 000****Leader: John Hutton Ph 58 7334**

Meet at the Visitors Centre Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve at 09.00 am. A climb to the Pyramid and then onto Mt Gibraltar with spectacular views over Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. A steep climb of 200 metres is involved.

28/29 October-Car Camp**Jervils Bay Ref: Jervils Bay 1:100 000****Leader: Neville Esau Ph 86 4176****Tim Walsh Ph 95 7052**

Contact leader by the 14th of October to allow confirmation of camp site/accommodation requirements. A weekend trip to Jervils Bay party to enjoy the delights of the nature reserve its beaches and headlands. And party to inspect with officers of the Parks and Conservation Service some of the areas likely to suffer from the proposed Naval development in and around the bay. Numbers limited. 400 km drive.

28/29 October-Canoe trip**Shoalhaven River Ref: Braidwood 1:100 000****Leader: Chris Bellamy Ph 49 7167**

Contact leader by Monday 23rd for details. This is trip is based on the postponed trip for the long weekend in the last program. A canoe trip from Warri Bridge, near Braidwood to Oallen Ford, subject to water levels. BYO canoe or rent one. River grades 1 and 2 with car based camping overnight. Suitable for beginners. 150 km drive.

4/5 November Pack walk (1/A)**Quilty's Mountain Ref: CMW Budawangs****Leader: Fiona Brand Ph 47 9538**

Contact leader by Wednesday for details. A walk along the Endrick River to camp at the foot of Quilty's Mountain. Beautiful scenery and wildflowers. Only 10 km per day on tracks. 300 km drive.

4 November Saturday Walk (1/A)**Black Mtn Nature Ramble Ref: Canberra Street Map****Leader: George Chippendale Ph 81 2454**

Meet at the Belconnen Way entrance to Black Mountain Reserve at 09.30 am. A morning ramble to see the birds and flowers. Suitable for those aged 4 to 80. Bring your morning tea, your camera, or binoculars. Finishes at midday.

5 November Sunday Walk (1/D)**Glinini Falls Ref: Corin Dam 1:25 000****Leader: Lyle Mark Ph 86 2801**

Not for beginners. Meet at the corner of Eucumbene Drive and the Cotter Rd at 07.00 am. A 8 km walk from Mt Franklin to the falls and return. A demanding 550m climb. Worth it for experienced walkers who wish to see this 180m set of falls and cascades. 120 km drive.

8 November-Wednesday Mid week Walk (1/A)**Isaacs Ridge Ref: ACT 1:100 000****Leader: Margaret Aston Ph 88 7563**

Meet at the top end of Cabarita Street O'Malley at 09.30 am. A 4 km walk easy morning walk up Isaac's Ridge.

11/12 November Car Camp**Berrima - Box Vale Track Ref: Burratorang 1:100 000****Leader: Peter Roe Ph 91 9535**

Contact leader by Wednesday for idyllic car camp. Arrive by lunch time Saturday and spend the afternoon walking around the outskirts of Berrima. Sunday an historic walk along the Box Vale Track, possibly continuing along the Nattai River to Mittagong for the more adventurous.

12 November-Sunday Walk (4/D)**Base of Kelly Peak Ref: Rendezvous Creek 1:25 000****Leader: Frank Clements Ph 31 7005**

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.00 am for a walk to the saddle below Kelly Peak (705455). Steep climbs and some rough bush. Distance 22 km. 100 km drive.



Portaging Watto – weight 90 kilograms – four kilometres down to Louise Reach on the Shoalhaven River in 1942. Three trips up and down 600 metres were needed to carry all the gear. Photo Reg Alder.

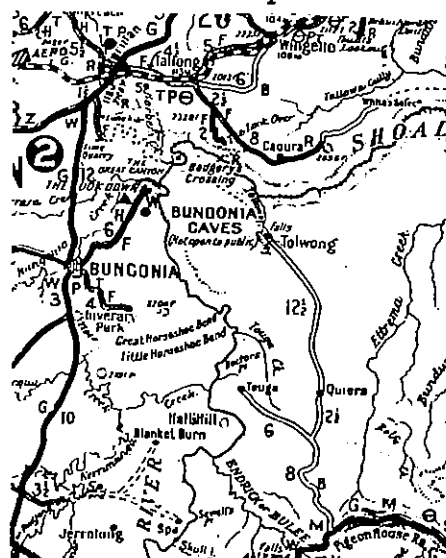
wade across the head of a rapid. Rain came again and with it the Shoalhaven continued to rise. We camped high on a sandy bank and noting the potential of the river to flood over it, I spent an uneasy night observing whether a white rock on the other bank was being covered.

It was obvious that our plan to walk and swim down the Shoalhaven was out and the flood showed no signs of abatement. So I decided to climb out since we had the Block Up to negotiate and none of us knew what other hazards there might be in between. The only map we had was the southeast tourist map of which a section is reproduced. We had little to go on.

The northern ridge at a large creek junction had a faint track and after reaching the plateau on a wider path we met a lone horseman – our ‘wild man of Bungonia’. He was dishevelled and dirty and created some misgivings in my mind as he led us to shelter, especially as he seemed to have taken a liking to one of the girls and called her ‘a pocket Venus’. He left us and we settled down to sleep on the floor to the sound of rain on the iron roof. His appearance and manner was such that with my imagination of all manner of eventualities, I half expected him to come back after dark. I said noth-

ing to my companions and propped the doors. Next morning he came back, all cleaned up, a clean hat, a near white shirt and a vest, albeit somewhat food-stained. The principal culinary delight that he brought us was a brown chunk of paste which he said was his soup stock – made by boiling down a sheep in a kerosene tin. It was accepted with apparent gratitude but soon consigned to a convenient bush as his standard of hygiene seemed low.

‘The flood showed no signs of abatement. . . The only map we had was the southeast tourist map.’



We carried on to Bungonia Gorge to find it also in flood with about 60 centimetres of water in the normally dry gorge. On the way out along the Shoalhaven we passed the long stretch of water, unbroken by rapids, now known as Louise Reach. In January 1939 on my first visit to the Shoalhaven, I remarked that this particular stretch of water looked like Lake Louise in Canada. I had been conditioned by the Canadian Pacific Railway travel poster of the pine-tree-lined lake. The long line of casuarinas on the banks created the illusion. The name stuck, changed a little by the Central Mapping Authority in giving it a more appropriate designation for a stretch of a river. The origin could probably be added to the dictionary of place names (page 118) in *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond*. The rain continued for the remainder of the time until we reached Tallong.

On the second leg the Wollondilly was in flood with difficult, wide rapid crossings. Later, going up Murruin Creek, we came across a deserted farm which had peaches for picking and a weed known as fat hen growing around the house. Win said it was as good as spinach. Since we had now been on spartan foods for a week and a half, we made a good meal of the fat hen with our dried peas, potato and bully beef. This was followed up with peaches. The next day all of us, except Win, were incapacitated with griping pains. After a short distance we called it a day. Bodies lay where they fell. Win said it could not have been the fat hen, it must have been the peaches – we all had weak stomachs. We recovered overnight and went on to find the Kowmung River pristine with fine weather and good walking and camping for the remainder of the three-week walk to Wentworth Falls.

Reg Alder

For further reading on the eccentricities of Bill Wells see The Man from the Misty Mountains – J.H. Sturgiss, The Budawang Committee, 1986, pages 137 to 140.

Beyond *Pigeon House and Beyond*

That remarkable group, the Budawang Committee, has done it again.

Following the great success of their book *Pigeon House and Beyond*, the committee has produced a companion volume, *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond*, covering the northern half of Morton National Park, to mark the park's 50th anniversary. The committee has maintained the same successful formula and appearance: a collection of contributions by experts in their field who have long associations with the Shoalhaven area, complemented by numerous colour and black and white photographs and well-drafted small-scale maps.

Interestingly, as with the previous volume, the section on natural history is left till last, preceded by chapters on the influence of people, recreation and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It seems to me the natural attributes of any area should always be examined first, before one considers human influence. Yet it's a minor criticism. *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond* provides a wealth of information which is worth reading from cover to cover and can then be referred to many times in the future.

If every large national park in Australia had such a comprehensive guide book I am sure the conservation cause would be advanced considerably. Too often however we get glossy coffee table books that are pretty to look at but have only the most superficial descriptions of the parks' features. Furthermore they make little or no reference to the history behind the parks' dedication – the battles, the delays, the castigation of park proponents and, even after gazettal, the attempts to excise areas for mining, logging and dams. All these facets of Morton's history are well covered in *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond*.

After reading Tom Hallyar's chapter on bushwalking in the area I was tempted to immediately apply for six months leave of absence and head north. Although the adequacy of walk notes can

only be tested when you follow them, Hallyar's notes appear very detailed and are complemented by clear maps which would be an ideal companion to the Central Mapping Authority 1:25,000 topographic maps.

If every large national park in Australia had such a comprehensive guide book I am sure the conservation cause would be advanced considerably.

Terry Barratt, Nowra district superintendent of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, has made some valuable points in his chapter on park management. An excerpt is worth quoting because the general themes have relevance to all national parks:

Changing traditional patterns of use and ways of viewing problems is possibly the most difficult task, and this applies equally to the bushwalker, the off-road-vehicle recreationist or the casual day visitor. For example the Budawangs present a number of intractable problems flowing from their popularity with bushwalkers and an inheritance of fire trails of dubious value. The difficulties here can be used as a positive lesson for the future of Ettrema. For example, the scenic attractions of the Budawangs have been added to by the production of specialist bushwalking maps and many other publications on the subject. The tendency to emulate this tradition should be avoided as far as Ettrema is concerned. Also, unlike the Budawangs, action to close unnecessary trails in the Ettrema area should not be delayed.

When I reviewed *Pigeon House and Beyond* for the *NPA Bulletin* I made special comment on the chapter by Roger Good on fire management. It was one of those

pieces that advance your knowledge a long way and to which you refer years later. I had never recognised that a complexity of vegetation patterns needs a complexity of fire strategies but then my ignorance was, and unfortunately still is, shared by many who should know better.

Good's chapter in *Fitzroy Falls and Beyond* is just as significant and I have referred to it a number of times when talking to people who trot out one of Australia's great environmental half truths, that 'fire is good for the bush'.

Good provides a concise description of his computer-based resource model, Preplan, and a telling critique of the consequences of adhering to a one-dimensional fire-management strategy based entirely on 'hazard reduction burning'. He says some success was achieved by regular burning of the plateau, ridge forests and woodlands in Morton National Park 'to the extent that some of the dry, exposed plateau woodlands were left with little or no understorey or ground-storey species'.

It is fitting to conclude by quoting from the book's preface by Mark Morton, son of M.E. Morton MLA, after whom the park was named: 'Fifty years have passed since the concept of the primitive reserve was implemented. Much management knowledge and expertise have been developed since, particularly with the creation and subsequent growth of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, under whose care the area has been placed. It is to be hoped that the publication of this book will assist in its own small way the better management, better understanding and better appreciation of a unique and beautiful part of our country'.

Stephen Johnston

Stephen Johnston is a journalist at the University of Melbourne.

AND OTHER PAPER PRODUCTS

New book on whales

The Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service has published the first field guide to cetaceans in Australian waters, a 48-page book called *Whales and Whale Watching in Australia*. It has been produced for the growing number of people who watch whales and dolphins from headlands, boats and aeroplanes.

The book has beautiful colour illustrations by Tony Pyrzakowski of 23 species of whales and dolphins and a distribution map for each species. Biology, history and conservation information is given and good spots to watch for whales are listed.

A set of guidelines on protecting whales from disturbance by boats or aircraft is included.

The book is available from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, GPO Box 636, Canberra ACT 2601, for \$9.95, including postage. Telephone (062) 466211.

High country women

Two sisters, Gladys Weston, 92, and Emily McGufficke, 89, have told the stories of their lives in the mountains in a book published in Queanbeyan recently. The book includes poems, drawings and photographs of huts and the landscape.

The book is called *If that man comes here, I'll shoot him - Reminiscences of High Country Women*, as told to Rosemary Curry. It is available for \$4 from Rosemary Curry, George Forbes House, Collett Street, Queanbeyan 2620, or from the Canberra and District Historical Society.

History of Braidwood

After nine years' research a former teacher of economics and commerce, Netta Ellis, has written and published a history of Braidwood and surrounding areas called *Braidwood, Dear Braidwood*. The book covers pre-

European times, settlement, the search for gold and more recent times, following family stories through the years. The book costs \$19.95.

Database of threatened mammals

The Hawthorn Institute of Education in Melbourne has prepared an educational database of 1179 threatened mammals for school students and conservationists. The database, prepared by Dr Colin Macpherson, is linked to illustrations and information in a reference book, *Rare Mammals of the World*, by John Burton and Bruce Pearson. The database operates on Apple IIe and IBM-compatible microcomputers. The package, which costs \$80, includes a teacher and user guide which describes activities in many fields.

For further information telephone Ms Kar-Tin Lee on (03) 810 3349. Order from Ms Anne De Ravin, Hawthorn Institute of Education, Private Bag 12, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122, indicating the type of computer.

The complete Australian fauna

For those who like the fullest and latest knowledge of Australian animals, the definitive reference work is gradually becoming available.

The Australian Biological Resources Study is a project which aims to provide an encyclopaedic reference to all known terrestrial and aquatic animals in Australia. The work is being prepared from research by scientists and from the CSIRO, universities and museums around Australia. In ten volumes the *Fauna of Australia* will describe the biology, taxonomy, evolution and history of discovery and economic significance of Australian animals. Illustrated keys to the family level are included.

The Australian Government Publishing Service has produced the first two volumes of the *Fauna*

of Australia. Volume 1A, General Articles, is a selection of background essays which serve as a companion for the other volumes. Volume 1B, Mammalia, covers the families of native and introduced mammals.

The casebound books are available from AGPS bookshops or AGPS mail order, GPO Box 84, Canberra 2601. Volume 1A is \$44.95, volume 1B is \$79.95.

The world's greatest environment statement

For those who missed it, the world's greatest environment statement, delivered by the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, at Wentworth in July, contained a number of references to national parks and closely related matters. Apart from platitudes and description, this contained a number of significant commitments:

- 'Through co-operation with the states, the government will continue to work towards a national strategy to ensure all ecosystems are represented in a reserve network' (page 21).

- An additional \$1.3 million in 1989-90 and \$1.35 for 1990-91 for the Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks.

- \$750,000 for research into the crown-of-thorns starfish in the Great Barrier Reef.

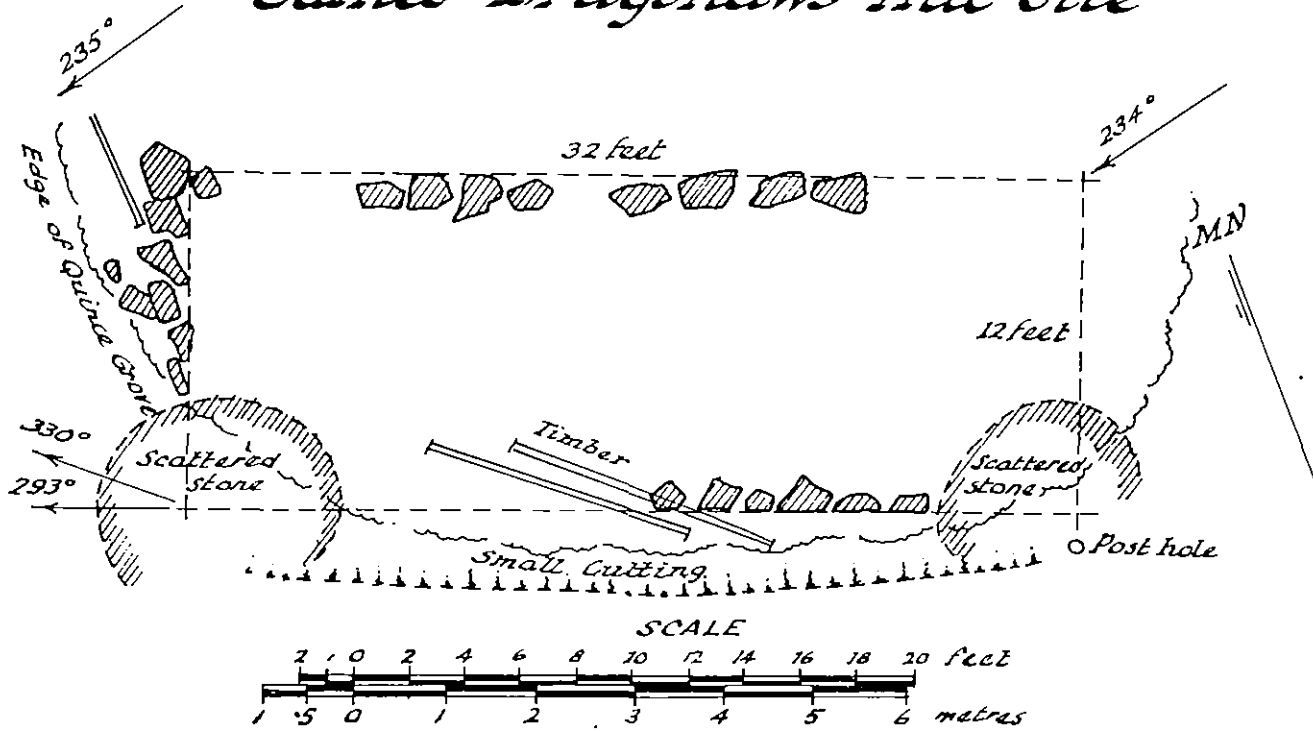
- Discussions with state governments on world heritage nominations for Shark Bay in Western Australia and the Nullarbor Plain in Western Australia and South Australia.

- Funding for the national wilderness inventory 'will be increased to allow rapid completion of all areas of Australia' (page 23-24). The inventory has been completed in Tasmania and Victoria and is under way in north Queensland and South Australia.

The full statement is contained in a 62-page booklet entitled *Our Country Our Future*, available from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Barton ACT 2601.

PLANS

Sketch Plan of James Brayshaws Hut Site



James Brayshaws Hut site, Namadgi National Park

Position: Map reference: Yaouk 1:25000 FA 791299. Measured from a wooden post labelled G544 on a sharp angle of the Old Boboyan Road, the edges of the site bear 234°M and 235°M and the distance is approximately 500 metres.

Description: The hut foundations measure 9.76 by 3.66 metres. The small cutting on the southern side is approximately 0.6 metres deep. The original positions of the scattered stones shown could not be determined. The post hole shown is the only one that could be positively identified: there may be others on the site. The timber shown is in a rotting condition and comprises bush construction poles three metres in length. Two cut holes were found in the northern arm of the creek, approximately 12 metres from the southwest corner of the hut on bearings of 293°M and 330°M.

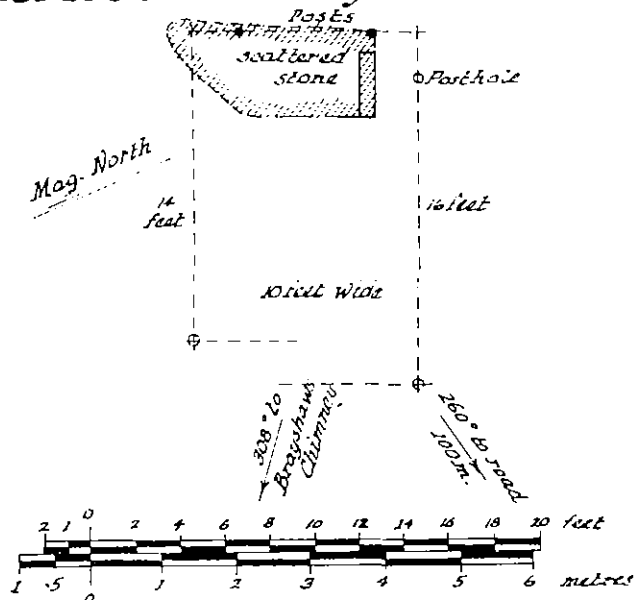
Boboyan (also known as Tin Dish) School site located near the Boboyan Road, Namadgi National Park

Position: Map reference: Shannons Flat 1:25000 FA 792278. The site is located in re-growth and bears 052°M from the chimney of Brayshaws Hut. It is approximately 100 metres from the road along a bearing of 260°M.

Description: On the eastern side two posts stand beside a pile of blue granite cut stones. An edge of laid stone is visible on the western side. Two set stones and a post hole are visible on the northern side and two post holes and three set stones on the southern side.

Information and sketch plans by K O Johnson and A Fenton based on observations made during a heritage walk on 23 April 1989 conducted by the National Parks Association of the ACT.

Sketch Plan Boboyan School Site





The Yerrabi Track working party, from left, Alastair Morrison, Barbara Bell, Brian Hammond, Glyn Lewis, Carolyn Armstrong, Peter Dunstan, Dave Rush (seated), Syd Comfort, Charles Hill, Bob Watchorn, Craig Richardson. Reg Alder took the photographs.

Detour on the Yerrabi Track

A group of NPA members recently helped a team from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service construct a detour on the Yerrabi Track. Heavy rains had waterlogged the grassy flat on the eastern side running down to Little Dry Creek. The original track went through the grassy flat and a detour to avoid the boggy places was needed.

This was undertaken on 24 May by a group of five service staff, led by Rob Watchorn, and supported by seven Association members. The new section of track now diverges to the north. Two short boggy stretches are crossed by 26 log steps and a small bridge. The walking surface of the logs was covered with wire mesh to prevent slipping. The log bridge over Little Dry Creek has also been improved by the addition of a further timber member. The task was blessed with beautiful weather and was a

very pleasant and happy occasion.

Apart from the boggy places now remedied the track remains in good shape. There has been no vandalism and all the information signposts remain intact. The track is attracting considerable numbers of visitors including school and Boy Scout groups on environmental awareness walks. The Parks and Conservation Service has issued a new brochure for the use of the public. Detailed natural

history notes to supplement the brochure have been prepared by several Association members.

Alastair Morrison

A four-year-old veteran of the track inspects the wombat home.



Two views of Bournda

Bournda State Recreation Area has been a regular venue for NPA June long weekends for a number of years. It is a beautiful camping spot beside Lake Wallagoot, southeast of Bega. The other attractions of the area, in addition to the lake, are a long surf beach; a smaller, swampy lake behind the dunes (good for birding); also a walking track around an interesting lagoon; and an 11-kilometre coastal walking track to Tathra.

Usually, Ian and Jean Currie have been the hosts but as Ian was recuperating from an operation, Syd and Barbara Comfort kindly hosted the weekend.

When John and I left Canberra on the Saturday morning to drive to Bournda it had been raining hard all night. The temperature was 4 degrees and there was a cover of snow on the Tidbinbilla Range and the Tinderries. It was very cold. We were relieved to find it was warmer at the coast.

Reg was graciously waiting to receive the Saturday morning contingent. That afternoon he led a few of us on a stroll north along the beach to the lake entrance. Following the recent high rainfalls at the coast, the lake was open to the sea with a deep, strongly flowing channel. We wandered along its edge looking for a possible crossing. As the channel flowed into the lake it spread out wider and shallower. Reg exclaimed that his feet were breaking a crusty surface on the seabed and sinking into a quicksand beneath. He persevered until the water tickled his thighs (most of us would have been in up to our waists by then) but as it was still getting deeper he had to give up.

Back at camp a pleasant and peaceful evening was enjoyed around the camp fire. During the night it rained heavily. Most of us were snug and dry but Olive was less fortunate having trouble with a leaking tent!

On Sunday morning the weather was still tending to heavy showers. As the lake entrance was not negotiable we drove around to the

boat club on the northern shore of Lake Wallagoot intending to walk part, if not all, of the coastal track. A strong wind shipped across the lake and the rain seemed to be closing in again. This put a few off the walk and a smaller group set off.

After an hour or so it did become rather unpleasant walking in these windy wet conditions. We stopped to consider whether to turn back. Eventually the majority were for continuing the walk while Syd and Graham kindly offered to return to the cars and drive around to Tathra to meet us.

The rain began to ease as we plodded on across headlands, down into gullies, out onto rocks and across small beaches. One of these beaches consisted of huge weathered pebbles and was aptly named Boulder Beach. We were now really enjoying the experience of seeing the ocean and coast in a wilder mood.

At the end of our walk, loud cackling laughter heralded our emergence from the bush – the laughter came from a group of men who stood drinking outside the local amateur fishermen's club. We had a sneaking suspicion it might be us – a band of bedraggled, muddy walkers – that caused their mirth.

Syd and Graham were at the carpark waiting and suggested a Devonshire Tea. What a wonderful idea! They even had a venue in mind – a little converted church called The Parish Pantry. I'm not too sure how the proprietors viewed the arrival of our dirty, damp party but took it in their stride – after all, business is business. When they did run out of scones they supplemented the fare with homemade banana cake. We really appreciated sitting cosily in the warm and tucking into scones, cake, tea or coffee.

Our camp fire gathering that night was less peaceful than the previous evening as Doreen decided to hand-feed a friendly little possum. The possum took it all too literally and thought

she was feeding it her hand – it took a couple of bites at her fingers and was reluctant to let go of this tasty dish! I patched Doreen up with bandaids and sympathy and hoped her anti-tetanus jabs were up-to-date.

On Monday we were rewarded with one of those balmy, bright, sparkling days that are like a sapphire gem set in the dull pewter collar of overcast and rainwashed weather.

On Monday we were rewarded with one of those balmy, bright, sparkling days that are like a sapphire gem set in the dull pewter collar of overcast and rainwashed weather. The day shone and dazzled with vibrant colour.

In the morning John and I walked south to Bournda Lagoon. It was interesting to see this in a different phase – the first time we had seen the lagoon some years ago it had been dark and still, the melaleuca trees mirrored perfectly in its black surface. Another year and at another season I had seen the lagoon shallow and clear with golden, sandy banks visible beneath the sun dappled water. Now with a strong tidal influence, it was different again. The first part was mud flats but further up where the tide was slight the dark reflections prevailed.

Water birds were fewer than on previous occasions but we did see a bright, flitting azure kingfisher.

We knew the suspension bridge was down but were curious to see what had happened to it, so kept on walking along the little track beside the lagoon. The fragile foot-bridge lay broken and twisted, half buried in the muddy creek bed with much debris caught in it. A large tree had fallen onto the securing lines at one end of the bridge and pulled the concrete base right out of the soft earth. The whole bridge must have then sagged and flood waters done the rest of the damage. I wonder if it

will be replaced – this is the third time it has been washed away.

John and I lingered at Bournda until about 3pm and although we travelled unhurriedly to Cooma, with a stop at the cake shop at Bemboka, we were unable to avoid getting caught up with all the traffic returning from the official opening of the ski season. Nevertheless, a June long weekend at Bournda had once again proved to be a happy and refreshing experience.

Judith Webster

Saturday morning two vehicle loads were off to Merimbula, wondering at the large gathering of locals in the main street. Was it part of the nearby forestry group's conservation rally? No! We had clashed with the annual Merimbula Jazz Festival and after a short wait we heard *The Saints Come Marching In*, well and truly led by children with their own small editions of washboards, et cetera.

A shoal of about 10 to 12 dolphins very close to shore giving us a wonderful display.

Leaving the excitement we drove to Tura Head, noting a vast nearby subdivision for a country estate, which brought various reactions from our group. After lunch five of us walked the length of the headland and, finding no way down the rocks, returned to cross a recently cleared area and eventually drop to Tura beach. The weather was delightful as we plodded the length, noting the tremendous erosion of the cliffs caused by recent exceptionally heavy rains, we presumed. Huge areas were washed away in gullies, bringing down white sand and water to lie in small lakes between the cliffs and the high water mark.

Eventually Bournda Island was reached and what a bonus! A shoal of about 10 to 12 dolphins very close to shore giving us a wonderful display.

Rounding the headland we were

met by the rushing waters from Bournda Lagoon, aptly named *The Jewel in the Crown* of the area. Our intrepid leader braved the narrowest point until depth and currents drove him back. While he tried again further into the lagoon we studied the map, knowing that the suspension bridge inland was washed away, thus leaving only one alternative, a long climb and bash through the dense melaleuca scrub to get around the lagoon and rejoin the beach. Eventually there was nothing else to be done: off with boots, socks, slacks while Syd kindly returned to the depths to lead us across a reasonable area, quite wide and up to our hips. We three females used a log held horizontally between us – a far better idea than a stick which, when used vertically, gets swept by the current. We then split again, some to plod along Bournda beach, barefooted and slackless, trying to dry out while most left the beach for the long winding road inland.

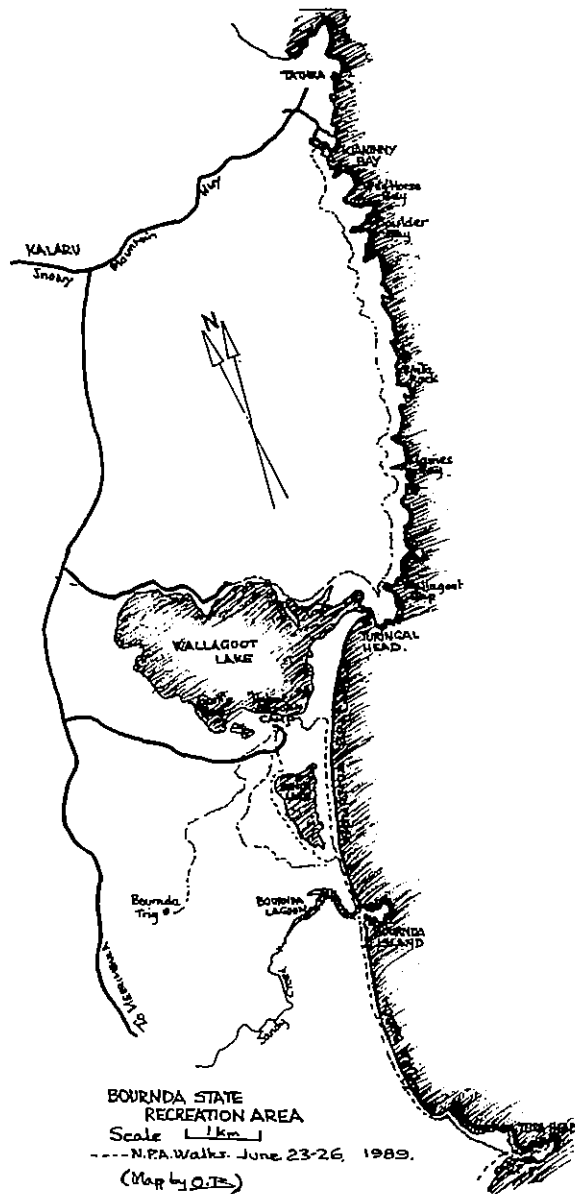
On Sunday nine hardy souls attempted the Kangarutha track. During the first part, over an open headland, the rain came down in buckets and at an early lunch near Games Bay, Syd kindly offered to return and bring his vehicle to Tathra should any decide to continue. At one point most had voted to return when a shaft of sunlight came through and suddenly minds (male and female) were changed. Graham also offered to return to enable us to have enough vehicles waiting at Tathra, leaving seven of us plodding on.

The track is well made and delightful and would be sheer heaven to walk on a lovely sunny day. Even as it was the rain eased considerably as we

left Games Bay to plod up well made log steps and along the headland, often through dense thickets of shrubs and trees. Each time a creek flowed into the sea on our right we had to drop, drop, drop to areas such as Boulder Bay and Wild Horse Bay. Exceptional rain had caused the creek crossings entering the sea to have widened, which added to the challenge of the track.

Eventually we glimpsed Tathra ahead and the track finally made a very long descent to Kianinny Bay, emerging near the local amateur fishermen's club.

Olive Buckman



A miserable refuge for Ben Hall

You reach Ben Hall's cave at the halfway point of a semi-circular track. The path climbing up to it is rocky and dusty and the bolthole itself is not visible until you are within about 50 metres of it.

This refuge of a luckless bush-ranger, betrayed to meet a bullet-ridden death at the age of 27, is located in what today is the Weddin Mountain National Park about 18 kilometres southwest of Grenfell in the central west of NSW.

(The shade of an embittered Ben Hall, who nevertheless demanded the gold of others with humour and courtesy, might be amused to know that today this region of 19th century hold-ups is yielding more riches than Hall could have imagined, through its Golden West tourist promotion designed to relieve the law-abiding car-borne of plastic dollars).

A National Parks and Wildlife Service handout says that 'It is widely believed that Ben Hall used the cave for shelter and to hide his belongings while also being able to watch anyone approaching from long distances.'

The cave has a wide opening and provides shelter from rain, sun and wind. But the roof descends alarmingly after the first few metres and you can only crawl. It looks a miserable place in which to have to spend more than a few minutes of your time.

The hills and gullies about here are thickly forested, the plains are some distance away. Ben must have possessed exceptional eyesight or bush sense to be alert to the searching traps. Perhaps he used the whole of this hilly area as a vantage point.

The Weddin Mountain National Park has other reminders of villainy. Some timbers and remnant mud walls of Jack Tarr's Inn, used by the bandits for supplies and as a place to shed their horses, are near the track to Ben's cave although my recent brief visit did not allow me time to search for

them.

A teenage desperado, Johnnie Bow, who rode with Ben Hall, once worked on a nearby property, now state forest, and is said to have had a hideout cave by what today is called Bows Gully. A Jack Bow, presumably Johnnie, faced the hangman's rope for his part in the £14,000 Eugowra Rocks coach robbery, but the sentence was commuted to life in gaol.

Apart from these historical curiosities Weddin Mountain National Park has attractions of a natural kind. A walking track takes you through black pine, ironbark and acacia stands to lookouts which present lingering views of faraway hills and spreading plains dotted with silver dams and brown and green fields.

A group of Sydney birdwatchers hunting treecreepers, honeyeaters and lorikeets with cameras and binoculars, was anxious to know if I had spotted any peregrine falcons at Euraldrie Lookout high above the carpark. The answer had to be 'No', although apparently the birds drift in currents above Euraldrie, while another vantage point is called Peregrine Lookout.

Ben must have possessed exceptional eyesight or bush sense to be alert to the searching traps.

Weddin Mountain National Park is within easy driving distance of Canberra. Take a route through Yass, Young and Grenfell - a distance of about 210 kilometres. Grenfell has tidy town status, but is more notable for being the birthplace of Henry Lawson; an obelisk marks the site of his tent home. It also has an extraordinary general store, a throw-back to the pre-supermarket fifties, in which on a Saturday morning townspeople gather to lean on the broad counter and

natter among homely clutter.

The Weddin Mountains rise more than 790 metres and the park is an important national asset because it conserves plants and animals once common on the cleared plains. Its strange name is derived from an Aboriginal work meaning to stop or remain. The Wiradhuri people lived in this area but today there is little evidence of their 40,000 years of occupation.

A second national park can be visited while you are in this district. The Conimbla National Park is further east - in hills about 18 kilometres outside Cowra which itself is about 55 kilometres from Grenfell on the Mid Western Highway.

The Wallaby and Ironbark walking tracks, which link to take you on a 90-minute stroll to dangerous cliffs overlooking the spectacular Cherry Creek ravine, are a lure to visit Conimbla. The trees below and opposite are a watercolourists' mix of greens while stark red lines on the cliff face are layers of sedimentary rock.

It pays to study the directions in National Parks and Wildlife Service leaflets about Conimbla and to take road maps with you because route and track signs are poor or non-existent - vandals have been active by the look of it.

Conimbla covers 7,600 hectares of open forests and dry heaths. It provides what is called a 'sample of the unique flora and fauna of the Hervey Range-Warrumba Mountain systems of the Central West'. Many species of shrub birds and parrots are said to inhabit Conimbla but in the four hours I spent there scarcely a twitter was to be heard.

Graeme Barrow

Canoeing the Mongarlowe

Where is the Mongarlowe you say? Well, the Mongarlowe commences its 60-kilometre trip just west of Araluen and crosses over the Kings Highway six kilometres inland from the Clyde Mountain. From thence it gathers speed and much more water heading north for the village of Mongarlowe after crossing over Clyde Road.

Mongarlowe village still basks from the glories of the gold rush days. Probably the biggest thing in town these days is the Mongarlowe River which last autumn was lapping the underside of the village bridge. From thence until rolling into Charleyong some 36 kilometres downstream, the river is not very accessible by road, except perhaps for Half Moon Flat. Charleyong nestles at the junction of the Shoalhaven and Mongarlowe Rivers.

So that's where the Mongarlowe is, but why canoe it? Whilst between Monga and the Highway the river is a squeeze to canoe in,

the falls in the section near *Woodleigh* are worth a look from the road. It is the first track to the right after driving across the bridge over the Mongarlowe, heading coastwards. A good starting point 14 kilometres upstream of Mongarlowe village is from the Braidwood side of the Kings Highway bridge, although a little bush bashing in your canoe will be necessary in the first two kilometres. The next access point is the ford five kilometres upstream from the village where the river crosses the Clyde Road. Near the ford a track leads to a good bush-camping site.

With a very wet autumn this year the river was flowing fast in all sections. The large rock pools were linked by some very enjoyable grade-2 rapids. Through much of this section were lovely green, forest-clad small gorges. We also encountered quite a few platypus obviously unused to people in orange canoes as they came up closer to check us out.

The 36-kilometre section from Mongarlowe to Charleyong and then the Shoalhaven is probably more reliable in summer as it has quite a few creeks joining it. The rate of fall in the gradient is however more gradual. To do this section one would need to plan to camp overnight along the way.

If you would be interested in canoeing some of the Shoalhaven starting from about Warri Bridge near Braidwood, I am organising a weekend trip for the weekend of 28-29 October. If you have a little experience but no canoe, they can be easily hired in Canberra. It is hoped to rely on car-based camping at night.

Chris Bellamy

Chris Bellamy can be telephoned on (062) 497167 at home or 662869 at work.

Coastal threats - 1 down, 40 to go

In 1988 the Bega Valley Shire Council, in spite of large protests, decided to introduce a new 7(L) tourist zone which would have allowed 11,000 hectares of relatively unspoilt rural land from Bermagui to Tathra to be subdivided into two-hectare lots. The present zoning restricts subdivision to 40 hectares or more.

In one of the NSW Government's first actions to restrain development, the Premier, Nick Greiner, vetoed the zoning.

However, one of the 40 or so other tourist developments proposed for the NSW coast threatens land near Narooma. Eurobodalla Shire Council is considering a proposal to rezone a 25-hectare beach-front property south of Narooma to allow the construction of a resort and convention centre. The property borders picturesque Lake Bullengella which contains important Aboriginal sites. The Narooma Now or Never Association and the Coastwatchers Association have vigorously opposed the rezoning.

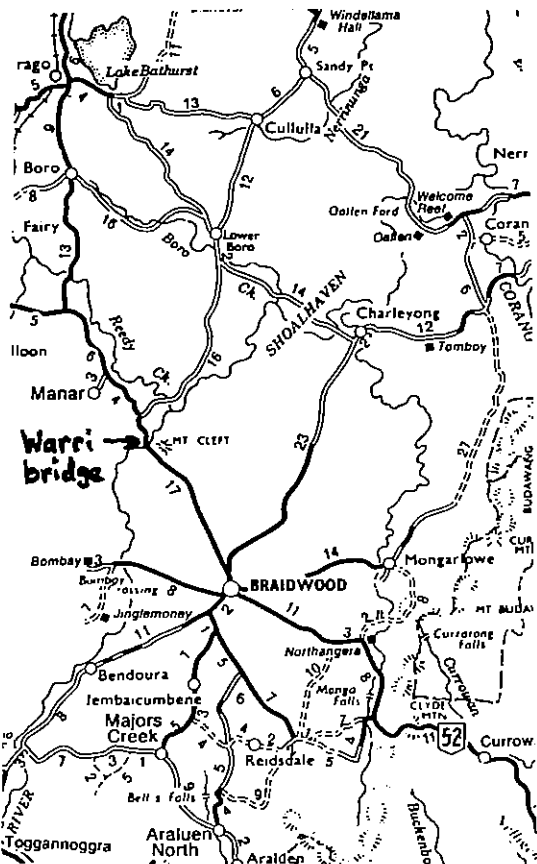
Total Environment Centre Newsletter, May 1989

Bug bites bitou

Caterpillars have been released on the north coast of New South Wales in an attempt to biologically control bitou bush. Bitou bush is the scourge of native vegetation on sand dunes and is rapidly moving down the south coast of the state. More physical control methods using hundreds of volunteers can barely keep up with the weed's spread.

The caterpillars of the moth, *Comostolopsis germana*, are expected to attack stem tips and damage new leaves and flower bud stalks.

The release of the caterpillar follows three years of research by CSIRO in South Africa, the home of bitou bush. The program has been supported by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Soil Conservation Service and the Department of Agriculture.



Environmental education at Birrigai

Children are running off into the bush looking for boxes of hidden treasure, or racing along carrying buckets of water which is pouring out of holes in the bottom, or crawling around under trees looking at the undersides of toadstools with a dentist's mirror. If you called in at Birrigai, the ACT's outdoor education school near Tidbinbilla, you might see any or all of these activities going on amid laughter and excitement and you could be excused for thinking that it is just some good fun and relaxation for children away from all the serious learning that goes on back in the normal classrooms in Canberra. This is far from the truth. The outcome of the programs run at Birrigai is vital for the continued well-being of us all.

Most of us in NPA are concerned with the deterioration of our environment and feel perhaps that one of the things needed is an increase in the quantity and quality of environmental education in our schools. If that is so, we should all be heartily encouraged by these programs run at Birrigai. They are available for students in ACT schools, both primary and secondary.

Concerned at the fragmented nature of most environmental education programs in existence, the *Institute of Earth Education*, with its chairman, Steve van Matre, a professor of environmental education at Aurora University in northern Illinois, started afresh; the institute develops coherent programs aimed at helping people live more harmoniously and joyously with the natural world. At present the staff at Birrigai run two of these programs on a regular basis and Birrigai is acting as a pilot school for a third.

The two programs, *Earthkeepers* and *Sunship Earth*, have the same aims: to help participants discover how life functions ecologically; what that means for them in their own lives; and what they are going to have to do to lessen their impact upon the earth.

The programs are designed with important common characteristics including the following:

- the activities are exciting, full of discovery and adventure;
- they emphasise major ecological understandings including energy flow, cycling, change and interrelationships;
- there is an easily recognised pattern linking all the activities together;
- they focus on building good feelings for the earth and its life as well as basic understandings of how it works.

To help the students to transfer their new knowledge and ideas to their everyday lives some of the materials needed are prepared in the classroom before the students

go to Birrigai and the program is carried on both at school and at home after the residential part at Birrigai is over.

It is surprising how few of the children have experienced walks in the bush before their stay at Birrigai. Many also have no concept of a wilderness-style national park but seem to picture a national park as a cross between the Big Pineapple and a recreation park complete with swimming pools, slippery slides and golf courses.

All members of the staff – office, teaching, kitchen, administrative and maintenance – cooperate to ensure that every aspect of living at Birrigai for the duration of the programs is relevant to their aims. The staff has been commended for the excellent quality of its work and we in the ACT are very fortunate that our children can experience these programs so readily.

Lois Perry

Recycle your precious rubbish

The ACT Recycling Campaign is trying to encourage and inform people about the value of recycling what is usually described as garbage. Information on recycling can be obtained from the Environment Centre or the Conservation Council in Kingsley Street, Acton. The Recycling Campaign meets at 12.30pm every Friday in the Peace Centre, which adjoins the NPA office and the Environment Centre.

The campaigners are also trying to convince the ACT Assembly and ACT Administration that recycling is popular. Write to Assembly members and ring the ACT Administration's recycling section on 462158 for information on recycling.

Places to recycle in the ACT

	Paper	Glass	Al cans	Garden	Oil	PET plastic
Ainslie tip Phillip Avenue	x	x	x			
Belconnen tip Parkwood Road	x	x	x		x	
Belconnen depot Jolly Street	x	x	x			x
Phillip depot Botany Street	x	x	x			x
Mugga Lane tip off Hindmarsh Drive	x	x	x	x	x	x

continued on page 23

New members

The following new members are welcomed to the Association:

Heather Allsopp, Woden; Nick and Narelle Blackaby, Flynn; John Hook, Florey; John Hutton and Jan Warden, Evatt; Graeme Powell, Kingston; Ken Thomsen, Stirling; Ian Tranter, Kaleen; Robert W. Olney, Chifley.

Bill Holesgrove

A former member of the Association, Bill Holesgrove, died in June at the age of 84. Bill came to Canberra eight years ago and, shortly after, joined the Association. He took a great interest in the *Bulletin*.

Bill was a very active bushwalker, with the Coast and Mountain Walkers, and very keen on conservation. He was a president of the NSW Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and served on groups responsible for Kosciusko and Bouddi National Parks. He worked on campaigns to get parts of the Blue Mountains protected by national park.

Recycle

continued from page 22

Pesticides and household chemicals - ACT Administration 463270.

Metal - See 'Scrap metal merchants' in the Yellow Pages.

Bottles - Banks are in a number of suburban shopping centres.

Paper collection - The Canberra Paper and Cardboard Recycling Company (telephone 805993) collects once a month.

Recycled paper - Edwards Dunlop and Ball in Tennant Street, Fyshwick sells Australian Paper Mills' Re-right, a light grey 80 gram non de-inked paper suitable for photocopiers, laser printers and other uses. A ream of A4 Re-right costs \$9.75, excluding tax.

The Wilderness Shop in the Griffin Centre, Civic, sells West German Ecopaper which is more expensive.

BOGONG BOOK & GIFT SHOP

Canberra and South-East Region Environment Centre
Kingsley Street Acton Phone 473064



Books (flora, fauna, peace, energy, politics, Aboriginal issues, cooking)

Posters (160 different designs)

Stationery

Clothing (big range of printed t-shirts and winter tops, kids' sizes too)

Gifts (local crafts, soft toys, puppets)

Household (soaps, detergents -non-animal tested, incense, oils)

Third-world tea and coffee

All proceeds to the Environment Centre

SUPPORT YOUR ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

Trading post

Here is a chance to add to your gear or find a buyer for items you no longer need. At future general meetings an area will be set aside for members to place items of lightweight camping, walking or skiing gear for sale. Just bring along your items labelled with your name and the price you seek and any helpful details, such as size. No large, heavy items please. We ask of course that all items be removed after the meetings.

Look out for it at the next general meeting.

Advertising rates

Black-and-white camera-ready artwork:

\$140 full page

\$75 half page

\$50 one-third page

\$2 per column centimetre

Add 50 per cent for typesetting and design.

Subtract 10 per cent for annual bookings.

Inserts supplied: \$120 for 10 grams or less.

For further information telephone Laraine Frawley on (062) 571063 before 2pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, or Roger Green on 470059.

Advertise in the *NPA Bulletin*

Get your message to more than 600 adventurous, well-read,
often-photographed members and their friends.

See rates on page 23.

For further information telephone Laraine Frawley, (062) 571063, on Monday,
Tuesday or Thursday mornings, or Roger Green, on 470059, at other times.

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General meetings

Held at 8pm, room 1, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic.

September – Thursday 21

Sue Hanley, president of the Jervis Bay Protection Committee, will speak about the campaign to protect Jervis Bay.

October – Thursday 19

Senator Norm Sanders, who is the Australian Democrats' Senate candidate for the ACT, has been invited to speak about environment policy for the ACT. This is subject to confirmation.

November – Thursday 16

Michael Bryden, professor of veterinary anatomy at the University of Sydney, will speak about large sea mammals such as whales, dolphins and seals.