



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



Walking in the Pyrenees



Creativity at Gudgenby Cottage



Do you know who's in your garden?

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

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NPA ACT activities report

In the absence of a president, the committee decided that it would be useful for a committee report to be included in the *Bulletin*. This first committee report highlights some of the NPA ACT's recent activities.

Rod Griffiths and Christine Goonrey appeared before the House of Representatives Committee on the Environment regarding a proposal to remove Deductible Gift Recipient status from environmental organisations that engage in advocacy. (See separate report in this issue of the *Bulletin*.)

Christine attended a briefing at the Conservation Council for the People's Climate March on 29 November, and the committee has provided the council with information on how NPA ACT will help with the event on Sunday 29 November. Check out their website at www.peoplesclimate.org.au/canberra#ACT

Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage was a great success with 11 people staying for one night or more. There were no sightings of the resident platypus but we had a very successful high tea with the neighbours and did a lot of walking, talking and enjoying ourselves. Plans are already underway for next year's stay, with people generally agreeing that a second Art



Week in autumn might be worth exploring and that October offered longer days and better light for our art than September.

NPA ACT has been given a Heritage Grant to develop a management plan for Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct. The grant's deed of agreement has been signed and work on the plan should commence shortly.

New members were invited to a meet-and-greet before the October general meeting and were introduced to the committee and working party conveners. It was so successful that the committee is considering making it a regular event.

Sarah May, the new policy officer for the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC), started on Monday 19 October and will work from the NPA ACT office under the auspices of the Conservation Council. NPAC is the peak body for national park associations in Australia.

The management committee extends its best wishes to all NPA ACT members and their families for a peaceful, safe and happy Christmas break and all the very best for the New Year.

Christine Goonrey and Rod Griffiths



NPA ACT finances 2014–15



NPA's financial status

Some members are asking why NPA ACT has a large cash balance at the bank. Shouldn't we be spending it instead of hoarding it?

In fact your Management Committee is committed to using members' generous donations and subscriptions to improve the ACT environment as part of a wider scheme to make life in Australia and on planet Earth more sustainable and to conserve the flora and fauna that still exist, some by the skin of their teeth. While we have now built up a strong financial base, a look at next year's plans shows that we aren't as comfortable as it may seem at first glance.

The Income and Expenditure pie charts for the financial year 2014–15 show a healthy society with many activities over the year which use up all

of the annual fees and most of the donations. But we also need money to pay for big expenditure items which come along from time to time and are integral to our work.

A very generous donation by Alastair Morrison back in the early 1990s funded the publication of the first *Field Guide to the Birds of the ACT*. That money was more than recouped in following years from sales, which funded, in turn, additional field guides. Our publications are a key tool to educate the ACT public about our precious local environment.

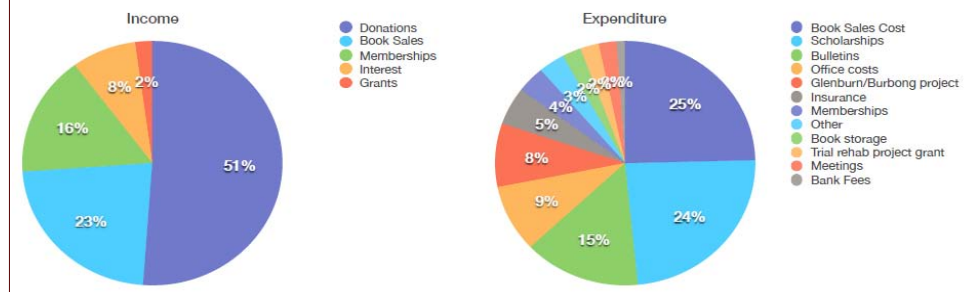
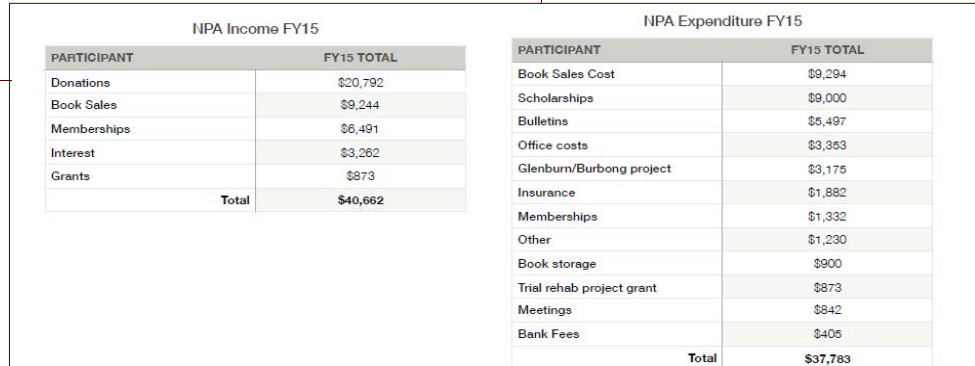
In 2016 we plan to print a new edition of our *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT* with many changes, to reprint our bird guide and to print a new *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT*. This will cost NPA ACT between \$70,000 and \$80,000, a big chunk of our 'nest egg'.

This cash turns into valuable stock. In addition we have earmarked \$9,000 for our fourth Fenner School scholarship, which will possibly be the first not covered by a dedicated donor.

We anticipate getting paid work done by other organisations with which we share strong environmental interests, including the Conservation Council, the Environmental Defenders' Office and National Parks Australia Council (NPAC). Currently having a dedicated NPAC policy officer working out of the NPA ACT office enables us to easily join with other environmental organisations working and lobbying for a sustainable future.

And then there is climate change. We have held, so far, three symposia focusing on the impacts of climate change, but we must do more. With both federal and ACT elections next year, the committee will be looking at how the various parties could improve our environment and how we can contribute to local and national efforts to lock in climate and environment-friendly policies and programs.

Chris Emery



These three pie charts show NPA ACT's Assets, Income, and Expenditure for the 2014–15 financial year.

Note that under Assets (above) 'Inventory' shows the amount of money tied up in NPA books currently in storage, while 'Receivables' are payments still outstanding for NPA books which have been sold.

NPA ACT opts for ethical banking

Members may be interested to know that, for ethical and other reasons, NPA changed its banker during the last financial year. We moved from the Commonwealth Bank (CBA) to BankMECU (now BankAustralia) to

avoid supporting a bank involved in fossil fuel investments and to benefit from improved online banking arrangements. At the same time we dropped our credit card Merchant facility with CBA and now rely on TryBooking for these

transactions. We also no longer use cheques for payments. In all cases we have benefited financially due to lower costs and higher interest rates on deposits.

Chris Emery, Treasurer

NPA ACT submission to the House of Representatives hearing into the Register of Environmental Organisations



The National Parks Association of the ACT recently made a submission to the Federal House of Representatives Environment Committee which is inquiring into 'the administration, transparency and effectiveness of the Register of Environmental Organisations under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.' The key terms of reference are to have regard to 'activities undertaken by organisations currently listed on the Register and the extent to which these activities involve on-ground environmental works'; and 'reporting requirements for organisations to disclose donations and activities funded by donations'.

The inquiry is widely held to be an attempt by the Abbott government (no longer with us) to restrict tax deductible gifts to environmental organisation which only plant trees. Any form of advocacy for environmental issues was openly discussed as becoming grounds for loss of tax-deductibility status.

NPA ACT submitted to the committee that our members and donors find it very hard to distinguish between advocacy and on-ground activities. For example NPA ACT advocated for a national park for 24 years while at the same time conducting scientific surveys, walking and working in the bush. It achieved a highly significant public asset which protects Canberra's water supply,

provides recreation and tourism opportunities and protects important natural assets. What is the value of advocacy in this instance?

We pointed out we meet with government officials on a regular basis, make submissions to both local and Federal parliaments and advocate strongly for protection of the environment across a range of issues and locations. At the same time, over just the last ten years, our income, based on membership fees and donations, has enabled us to lead over 2,000 day walks, car camps, snowshoeing and pack walks; carry out over 150 work parties in remote areas of the park for over 13,000 hours repairing walking tracks, removing rubbish, barbed wire, wild pines, broom, blackberry and other feral plants; publish field guides to the bird, tree, orchid, frog and reptile populations of the ACT and the Namadgi book.

We gave each committee member a copy of the Namadgi book and it was very well received, several committee members prefacing their remarks with compliments on the book. It was a wonderfully clear example of the interaction of advocacy and on-ground activity.

We also spoke about our academic scholarships for research and pointed out the connection between supporting such research and then advocating for the

research and then advocating for the protection of the species and areas identified in that research as having key environmental values. Many of the committee members seemed to agree with us.

We concluded by pointing out that, for our members, 'advocacy' is another word for community and government dialogue and engagement. It enables constructive and co-ordinated information gathering, problem solving and negotiating. We gave the example of NPA ACT working closely with the ACT government on developing sound sustainable fire management processes in Namadgi. NPA members have an intimate knowledge of the ACT's reserves and of Namadgi National Park and other reserves which is of enormous use to government land managers in drawing up long term management plans. We pointed out that a community voice has a passion and conviction which public communications cannot have. We tabled the pamphlet on Yerrabi Track which illustrated this approach and asked: 'was this partnership or advocacy'?

Either way, we submitted, it is certainly deserving of tax deductibility.

We await the final report in coming months.

Christine Goonrey

National Parks Australia Council meeting

**Hobart, Tasmania,
30 October–1 November 2015**



The National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) is the peak organisation representing the views of Australia's national parks associations and other like-minded organisations. It provides a unified voice on national conservation reserve issues and has had a long history of lobbying on behalf of Australia's biodiversity. The NPA ACT has been a strong supporter of NPAC and has supplied many of NPAC's key office holders over the years.

Rod Griffiths and Kevin McCue were NPA ACT delegates at the recent NPAC meeting hosted by the Tasmanian National Parks Association, held from Friday 30 October to Sunday 1 November 2015. Seventeen delegates

from the seven member states and territories attended. WA and NT were not represented.

To achieve NPAC's objectives, member organisations decided this year to augment the regular contributions of time and skill from member organisations' staff and volunteers by increasing their financial commitment.

The increased financial commitment has allowed a long term goal to engage a part-time NPAC Senior Policy Officer, Dr Sarah May. Sarah will assist NPAC to campaign for national parks and nature conservation before the federal election; assist with

(continued next page)

Community voices in reserve management in the ACT



On Friday, 11 September 2015 at 9:00am, the Director General of TAMS, Mr Gary Byles, opened the forum organised by Parks and Conservation, TAMS in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre on the northern shore of Lake Burley Griffin. Many Park Care groups were represented including the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group sponsored by NPA ACT.

The four sessions were split equally under Biodiversity and Conservation in the morning, and People and Partnerships in the afternoon. Daniel Iglesias, Director of Parks and Conservation, spent the morning with us. The morning included papers by Friends of Aranda Bushland on erosion control and vegetation monitoring in the Aranda bushland; on restoration of Pink-tailed Worm-lizard habitat; monitoring of Superb Parrots (apparently they are now breeding in the ACT), and planting success on Mount Painter. After morning tea, we dealt with weed management on Mount Painter, rehabilitation in Box-Gum Woodland in Watson and Nature Park management on Mount Majura.

The afternoon sessions were no less relevant for NPA. There were several

papers on bringing people into conservation management, others about the Murrumbung Rangers and engaging Indigenous people in Natural Resource Management. The Conservation Council spoke about Bush on the Boundary and Friends of Farrer Ridge, of Mulligans Flat, Jerrabomberra Wetlands, and Greening Australia presented papers.

It was invigorating to be with like-minded people working in the ACT's conservation/ecology space and sharing their experiences, their successes and their frustrations. The final Q&A session didn't really focus on the major issues facing our communities – the lack of rangers and money for essential management tools like weed and rabbit control; enforcing the law on threats such as vandalism and dog and cat control; and the vexed issue of bushfire management and the lack of transparency and cooperation by the fire agency.

On the Saturday a group of about 20 ParkCarers participated in a bus trip to the Gudgenby Valley where Michael and Christine Goonrey, Syd Comfort, and Fiona MacDonald Brand acquainted them with the successful rehabilitation

of the 1960's pine plantation and the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group's present activities.

We hope there will be further forums in the years to come, maybe with fewer speakers and longer time for presenters. Perhaps it could even be held over two days.

Kevin McCue

NPAC meeting *(continued)*

developing policy and communicating with federal decision and policy makers. Sarah will augment our individual state and territory voices and will be working from the NPA ACT office. This is a return home for Sarah who was awarded her PhD at the ANU Fenner School.

NPAC made a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment Inquiry into the Register of Environmental Organisations, and appeared at the hearing in Canberra. Committee members, having compiled a list of key priority focus areas for member organisations, also met Senators and MHRs to discuss environmental issues.

Friday was devoted to discussing member reports and talks by invited speakers. Nick Sawyer discussed the planning for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Glenys Jones talked about the Tasmanian lessons in

building a monitoring and reporting system that is Relevant, Reliable, Accessible and Resilient. Our last speaker, Adrian Pyrke talked about challenges to appropriate fire regimes in Australia's national parks. On Saturday we were bussed to Mount Field National Park for a walk and talk while the AGM occupied most of Sunday morning. It comprised further strategic planning for the year, including plans for updating the Jewel in the Crown document with Sarah's help.

Michelle Prior, President QNPA, agreed to stand as NPAC President for another year with Rod Griffiths as Vice-President.

More details will be posted at www.npac.org.au

Kevin McCue



NPAC attendees in Mount Field National Park; Tall Trees Walk. Sonja (NPA ACT), Nicki (NCSSA) and Jenny (VicNPA) at the base of Eucalyptus regnans, Swamp Gum. Photo by Kevin McCue.

Making the Great Forest National Park of Victoria a reality



This juvenile Leadbeater's Possum weighs just 25 grams. Photo by Emma Campbell.

Dr David Lindenmayer, Professor of Ecology and Conservation Biology, ANU, gave a talk to members and friends at NPA ACT's general meeting on Thursday 15 October. The title of his talk was *Possums, Parks and Politics*. In it he detailed the threats facing the Leadbeater's Possum because logging and fires are progressively destroying its habitat, the wet forests of Central Victoria. The proposed park would lie north-east of Melbourne, extending from Kinglake to the Baw Baws and north-east to Eildon.

Dr Lindenmayer outlined his research in the forests of NSW and Victoria and the push for a Great Forest National Park in Victoria. His answer to the question 'How can we actually help?' was to suggest applying pressure to the Victorian Premier by writing letters supporting the establishment of a Great Forest National Park. He also referred us to the website, <http://www.greatforestnationalpark.com.au/> which gives information, offers forest tours in Victoria, and the chance to join David Lindenmayer and his team in the search for the Leadbeater's Possum. Donations are very welcome too.

At right is a sample letter to the Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, with suggested points to include but it's preferable to use your own words and limit your letter to one page, ending with a question. Letters are more effective than emails.

Judy Kelly

Editor's note. See advertisement for the Great Forest Ecology Camp on the page 18. The camp is for the Errinundra Plateau in East Gippsland and isn't part of the proposed Great Forest National Park in Central Victoria. You will still see and learn about spectacular forest threatened with logging and be helping the campaign for vital forest protection.

Your Address
Date

The Premier of Victoria
The Honourable Daniel Andrews MP
Level 1
1 Treasury Place East
Melbourne Vic 2002

Dear Premier Andrews,

Congratulations and thank you to the Victorian Government for passing legislation that reduces the granting of leases over parks under the *National Parks Act 1975* from 99 years to 21. The action will prevent inappropriate development in Victoria's national parks.

However, I am very disturbed by the continuing logging and burning of our native forests, particularly the spectacular wet forests of Central Victoria which are the habitat of the Leadbeater's Possum. The Leadbeater's faces extinction, and other wildlife risk becoming endangered or extinct because their habitat is being destroyed.

Please support the initiative to establish a Great Forest National Park in Victoria before the forests are irrevocably destroyed. This is particularly important because of the impacts of escalating climate change. These include more frequent and prolonged droughts in SE Australia and more frequent and intense wildfires.

Through his research, Dr David Lindenmayer, Professor of Ecology and Conservation Biology at the ANU, has shown that VicForests' clearfelling and burning of the wet forests:

- destroys their canopies, exposing large areas of the understorey to the sun, drying them out, and making forest margins and the adjoining forest more fire prone
- destroys the forests' ability to act as a buffer against wildfires
- is uneconomic when VicForests are losing \$25 million a year. Plantation forests, of which there is a surplus, can provide timber for paper.

The wet forests are a repository of CO₂. Logging the forests and burning the remnants releases vast quantities of CO₂ into the atmosphere, exacerbating one of the principal factors behind climate change.

Informed ecotourism can provide greater economic certainty and benefits for small timber towns in the area as well as protecting water catchments and biodiversity, both essential for the wellbeing and survival of the human species.

The water catchment for Melbourne lies within the proposed Great Forest National Park. The park would thus protect the catchment, a vital consideration for the growing metropolis.

The Valley of the Giants Treetop Walk near Denmark, WA, provides a wonderfully enriching experience for visitors from all over Australia and from overseas. Victoria could provide a similar experience for what remains of its beautiful and majestic giant Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) forest. We need mature trees and intact ecosystems, not regrowth that simply cannot replicate the original.

Your government is also to be commended for releasing the 'Valuing Parks Report' which 'found that Victoria's parks generated \$1.4 billion a year in visitor spending, supported 14,000 jobs and, through their role as water catchments, provided filtration services worth \$83 million a year'.

This demonstrates the value of creating a Great Forest National Park in Victoria.

What action will you take to make the Great Forest National Park a reality, so that it will attract interstate and overseas visitors and benefit both the environment and economy?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
Signature

Bush Heritage and Scottsdale

Saving what's left

Australia, especially the corner of it where we are lucky enough to live, has a rich endowment of national parks and nature reserves set aside and managed to conserve special areas of our wonderful natural heritage and biodiversity. Preserving these areas is ongoing as new and competing interests emerge that would see even our national parks degraded for private gain or to reduce public spending.

But in our corner, even larger areas of natural ecosystems outside reserves have already been lost, or are under severe threat. Notable among these are the Box Gum grassy woodlands that, with their associated flora and fauna, covered much of this area before European settlement. Since then they have largely succumbed to the pressures of grazing livestock and cropping and, more recently, urban development.

Partnerships – Dananbilla and K2C

Several government and private initiatives attempting to redress this situation have emerged in recent years. This can be done by acquiring land and, where possible restoring its natural qualities, by encouraging landholders to adopt environmentally friendly management practices, and sometimes by using both approaches. An good example of is the Dananbilla project north-west of Boorowa that the NSW Parks and Wildlife Service is undertaking. NPA ACT has been very active there, conducting work parties to remove fencing from newly acquired land and planting trees. For details see the September 2013 edition of the *NPA Bulletin*.

Another example is the Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) Partnership with NSW and ACT government agencies, environmental and Landcare groups including NPA ACT, and Bush Heritage Australia. K2C is primarily concerned with the area from Yass to Batemans Bay, and south to the Victorian border. Its objective is to improve the resilience, extent and connectedness of natural vegetation and halt the loss of species across the region. Its activities focus on private and public lands where landholders are interested in voluntary cooperation and protection.

Bush Heritage Australia

Perhaps the most important link in the K2C chain was Bush Heritage

Australia's acquisition of the Scottsdale property in 2006. The 1,328 ha property is located between the Monaro Highway and the Murrumbidgee River just north of Bredbo, and is separated from Namadgi National Park by only the property Bullamanang, its neighbour on the western side of the Murrumbidgee. Visits

to both properties are described in the December 2007 edition of the *NPA Bulletin*.

The Commonwealth National Reserve System program, and two private sponsors – the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and David Rickards – funded Bush Heritage's Scottsdale purchase.

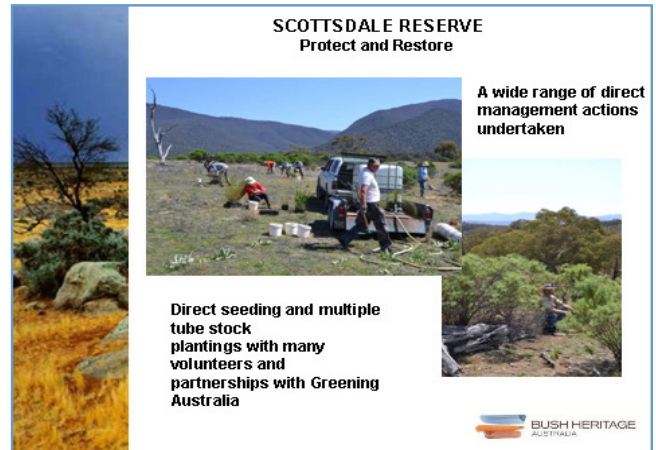
To get an impression of the role of Bush Heritage and Scottsdale, NPA invited Peter Saunders as guest speaker at its September 2015 meeting. Peter is the Healthy Landscapes Manager, South East Australia, for Bush Heritage Australia.

Peter began with a brief background to Bush Heritage. It was started in 1991, when Greens leader Bob Brown bought 241 ha of Tasmanian forest to save it from logging. His deposit was the proceeds of an environmental award, and the campaign to raise the remaining \$200,000 was the birth of Bush Heritage Australia. Today parts of this original purchase are UN World Heritage Listed, and Bush Heritage throughout Australia owns 35 reserves in its own right. Together with conservation partnerships with other landowners, it now has 6 million ha under protection. It provides employment for 70 staff, including reserve managers and ecologists.

Scottsdale

Significant species and communities under protection in Scottsdale include:

- animals: Rosenberg's Monitor, the Speckled Warbler, the Peregrine Falcon, and the Brown Treecreeper
- plants: Currawang (Spearwood), Curved Rice-flower, Button Wrinklewort, and Silky Swainson-pea
- vegetation communities: Yellow-box grassy woodland (nationally critically endangered), Scribbly Gum, Black cypress-pine forest, tablelands frost hollow grassy woodlands, and southern tablelands natural temperate grassland (nationally endangered).



Scottsdale is also home to a remnant of Australia's last ice age, the Silver leafed Mountain Gum.

To create an environment that favours native plants when there has been a history of fertiliser, grazing and cultivation at Scottsdale represents a big challenge. African Lovegrass infestations are a particular problem on former cropping areas, but solutions are being found. Native trees and shrubs have been planted extensively, and Greening Australia is helping restore 300 ha of woodland. Much work, including heavy earthmoving, has been done to improve the health of waterways and drainage systems. Research is underway to better understand and improve the health of the 4 km of Murrumbidgee River that flow through Scottsdale, carp and willows being the particular focus.

Scottsdale is dependent on continuing funding from a wide range of sources (including private and corporate sponsors as well as government). It also depends on technical support and scientific projects in conjunction with universities and government agencies, and substantial inputs from willing volunteers. After nearly a decade of effort in a very important and long-term project, real progress is starting to show.

Scottsdale is of national significance in the Bush Heritage program, as reflected by its selection for the official launch in March of the group's national Ten Year Conservation Science Plan, which provides for a doubling of Australian conservation science activities by 2025. With a theme of 'Saving Our Species' the Plan focuses especially on landscape connectivity, habitat refugia, restoration evaluation, introduced species, fire ecology and threatened species.

Max Lawrence

Vale Roger Good – former NPWS officer and alpine ecologist

As Graeme Worboys said in his notification of Roger's sad and untimely death, the environment has lost a champion ... Roger was that and more to so many. Over the years he befriended and worked with a number of us, and we shared not only his knowledge but also his quirky sense of humour, his optimism and his encouragement to keep working to protect the environment.

Roger was a semi-regular speaker at NPA meetings, a keynote speaker at their symposiums and could always be relied upon to assist NPA, the Conservation Council or individuals, when they needed help and advice with environmental issues. One early engagement was after the Transgrid destruction of the native vegetation under kilometres of power lines across long belts of Namadgi and Kosciusko national parks. Members of NPA ACT and NSW were guided through the rehabilitation processes that future recovery would entail.

Later Roger had a role in the International Year of the Mountains, and through that was able to demonstrate his love and life-long commitment not just of the alpine region but to all of those mountains across the ACT, NSW and Victoria. He told the international forum that our Australian mountains were very different from those elsewhere in the world. Theirs were made of rock. Ours were 'mountains of soil', and he went on to demonstrate the differences and the ancient character of our mountains and landscapes.

Roger's scientific contributions and authorship in many journals, articles,

books and government publications were legendary and will be used as source materials for a long time to come. He was a lateral thinker, far more than governments and the public ever gave him credit for. As the effects of climate change and the damage by feral horses increased, compounded by the long drought and other factors, Roger, with assistance from others, provided detailed costings and policy input to the federal government in a volume of work related to catchments, identifiable to us in the summary report entitled '*Caring for our Australian Alps Catchments*'. This report and its associated papers 'provided a climate change action strategy for the Australian Alps to conserve the natural condition of the catchments and to help minimise threats to high quality water yields'. Let's hope that this work and legacy will be implemented before the water losses impact further upon Australia's fragile natural areas but also on the economy and downstream towns and farming communities in these eastern Australian states.

During the early days of Roger's scientific career, he worked on the many aspects of soil conservation following the widespread erosion attributed to the previous fire and grazing regimes. Roger became one of the second generation of eminent, world-renowned scientists who specialised in the Australian alpine areas. Kosciuszko has been privileged that this intergenerational scientific inheritance continues today with further generations rising through the ranks. Only 18 months ago, members of the Southern Ranges Region Advisory Committee spent a full



Photo by Max Lawrence.

day's field trip with Roger along the Alpine Way. There he showed and explained the drainage, plots, rehabilitation and fire-damage remediation that he had worked on decades before, things that to our untrained eyes look so natural today. What a legacy!

In 2004 Roger retired from the NSW Public Service after working for 10 years with the NSW Soil Conservation Service and 30 years with National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Sadly for Roger, his family and the rest of us, he had much more to give, and far more to enjoy. Each of us will remember something of what he taught us and left us with. Thank you Roger for being such a generous, encouraging and unique person.

Dianne Thompson
October 2015

Two Kosciuskos

Hover at the local shops, waiting for a doctor's appointment. There's a note in a shop window. Local climber offers a trek in Nepal, crossing several 4,000 m passes. It sounds wonderful and I mention it to the doctor. She wags her finger at me: 'Gerry, 4,000 m is two Kosciuskos, you go and climb two Koscis!' Well I've been up there a few times, it's actually 2,200 m. Perhaps not the most attractive of mountain summits, nearby Mount Townsend is nicer, but it is the highest.

snow breeze
and the smell of zinc cream ...
plodding
through sunlit tussock
and the high plains stretching

That spring day snatched from the office. G and I take

advantage of a late snowfall. At Charlotte Pass, we lash skis to our bikes and ride up the old road to the snowline. Then we ski around the tops to Townsend and Kosci. The following day I'm so stiff that I can barely hobble in to see the masseur, let alone go to work.

And that summer pack walk from Kiandra. On the last night C and I bivvy high on Mount Tate, then we romp along the Main Range and breakfast on Mount Twynam. Then around to Kosci to join a hundred people celebrating Australia Day. We climb on each others shoulders to be photographed. The highest in the land. 'Yay, look at me, mum!'

snow gums
and flowering heath
stars underfoot
drifting clouds and blue sky
the wind blows through me

Gerry Jacobson

Bah humbug! Christmas beetles, curl grubs and scarabs

Brightly coloured beetles shining in the December sun seem innocuous enough ... right?

I learned the truth last summer when a horticulturalist told me those fat white grubs eating the roots of my vegies were larvae of scarab beetles. I was really interested after digging about 200 grubs from a 1x3 m bed – so many it took a pair of Currawongs 1.5 days to carry them all away (a few baby birds saved perhaps). And yes, I did actually count as I dug.

Online I discovered the link to 'Christmas beetles'. As I continued to dig other garden beds I started to find other stages in the life cycle and brought out my camera. The story was completed on a walk to the Aranda Bushland Snow Gums. Here clouds of scarab beetles

were devouring new foliage of these trees and going about producing the next generation – 20–30 eggs per female. (I have also counted numbers of grubs in individual pots!) I have mentioned the likely relationship between the white curl grubs in the garden and Christmas beetles to a number of gardening friends. To my amazement most seemed surprised. So here is the story in pictures.

Esther Gallant



A curl grub, larva of a scarab beetle.

Photos by Esther Gallant.

Disclaimer: I am not an entomologist and this is all based on circumstantial evidence of what I found in the soil and what beetles were emerging. There are about 35 species of scarab beetles in Australia and their larvae are all very similar.



Larva

There are three larval stages (instars). They may remain in this stage for 2 years.



Feeding and reproduction

note the fragmented leaves.



Pupa

Shown with the last larval skin (top). The pupal stage may last a few weeks.



Clean-up specialist

The Currawongs often swallowed 1 or 2 and then carried off another 3 or 4 per beakload.



Adult

A few weeks.

Postscript: a few days ago I realised that all green had vanished from a pot previously packed with roots and sprouts of mint. The pot now contained 38 very fat scarab larvae and not a scrap of vegetation. A Currawong was back to help and I had a bonus supply of pure 'worm' castings for the garden.

Esther Gallant

NPA ACT Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage 2015



From the cottage verandah

Pre-dawn,
Six flight paths in the sky,
Stretching east to west.
A sickle moon hanging high
Over the Black Salleees.
The wind gusting through the branches
Touching my hair,
A cold kiss on my cheek.
Then the yellowish glow of the rising sun
In the new day.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Fine art and high tea at Gudgenby Cottage

In October I joined a dozen NPA members who came down the Old Boboyan Road to stay at Gudgenby Cottage over a week to explore our nature through our culture.

Each found ways to absorb Namadgi's national park environment, such as painting, discussing, recollecting, socialising, writing, watching, photographing, crafting, stargazing, cooking, feasting, interpreting and just getting 'out there'.

Most stayed about three nights in the Bootes family's former summer stockwork residence of 1927, now restored as a heritage cottage that hosts artists, researchers and volunteers in one of the Territory's most beautiful places.

The three-bedroom kit cottage in the Brindabellas was built to last. Explorer Douglas Mawson chose a similar prefab 'ready-cut' hut for his expedition and it stands in Antarctica still.

NPA's 'arty' residents were not alone in the cottage.

Among their neighbours were Cunningham's skinks that scaled the outer chimney to sunbake on warm brick; a Highland Copperhead on frog-patrol between the gate and Hospital

Creek; grey kangaroos and their joeys that grazed around the cottage fence; and Welcome Swallows in their clay nests under the cottage eaves.

NPA's art crowd stayed for 40 bed-nights, raising \$1,200 for park finances. The weather was generally hot and two of the days had fire crews on notice. Of course, a cold change also set in so the traditional lighting of the fire could take place. Even the weather was creative.

ACT Parks' overseer Ben, with Sarah and their toddler Jocelyn walked across from nearby Gudgenby Homestead for a magical high tea in the little cottage, with scones baked by Hazel Rath in an oven wedged shut with a block of wood. Park staff Simon and Matt called in for afternoon tea, as did Mark the Gudgenby Ranger.

Word spread through the valley like jam on hot scones. At the end of the week, the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (Gudgenby Bushies) also came by for tea after removing barbed wire fencing in the valley to protect its wildlife – helped by NPA's multitasking Hazel and Sonja Lenz who mapped the fenced and unfenced experimental plots and surveyed plant varieties in the Peppermint Hill project area.

During creative moments, Hazel produced botanical art – a composition

of native wildflowers. 'I love art week', she said. 'Good time to get out bush and just do your own things.'

Other creative NPA folk who stayed in the valley included Michael Goonrey and Babette Scougall (photos), Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine (poetry, photos and birding) and Chris Slotemaker de Bruine (painting), Kevin McCue (Verbascum eradication, wood turning and raptor nest photos).

Christine Goonrey made art on the cottage verandah after organising a walk up Middle Creek, while Fiona MacDonald Brand recounted the exploits that mark a life in the national parks movement as well as her climbs of Mount Gudgenby (1,739 m), which rises behind the cottage and peeps craggily over an arm of the lower Scabby Range.

Adrienne Nicholson (who wove a recycled packing tape basket and collected wood knots destined to become weaving centrepieces) also led a party of NPA sundowners to a pool on the Gudgenby River for an evening platypus watch. No ripples were seen, but a Flame Robin watched the watchers.

Ross Andrews

Ross Andrews' spectacular photo on the back cover of this Bulletin shows the cottage on a dark but starry night.

White-faced heron

Still
Silent
In the reeds
Stalking its prey
Strikes swiftly – a catch
Dinner at last
Slides down
Gulp!

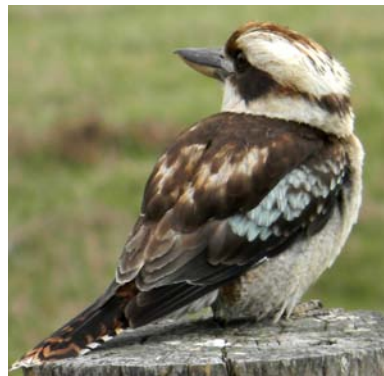
Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine

Bird List – 8–10th October, 2015 Gudgenby Cottage and surrounds

Kookaburra	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Welcome Swallows
Red Wattlebird	Galahs	Grey Goshawk
Willie Wagtail	Rufous Whistler	Masked Lapwing
Yellow-faced Honeyeaters	Flame Robin (female)	Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike
Grey Fantail	Australian Magpie (white backs)	Australian Raven
Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-faced Heron	Superb Fairy-wrens
Pied Butcherbird	Australian Magpie-lark	Wood Ducks
Australian Kestrel	Crested Pigeon	
European Goldfinch	Starlings	

Total 25

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine



Pictures from Art Week

Opposite page. The view from the cottage verandah (RA).

This page top row. **Some productive NPA creators.**

Left. Hazel settled down on the 'big flat rock' to capture the landscape (AN).

Right. Kevin set up his workshop to make a new handle for the cottage's damaged coffee pot (AN).

This page above. **Some of the local entertainers.**

Left. Kangaroo and her joey; the youngster entertained us with his exercising antics (RA).

Centre. Kookaburra kept an eye out for unlucky morsels on the ground in front of the cottage; well fed! (AN).

Right. Cunningham's skink that sunbakes on the chimney (particularly if the fire is lit in the daytime), or the front doorsteps (RA).

Photos by Ross Andrews (RA) and Adrienne Nicholson (AN).

This page at right. **Some of the work produced.**

Chris de Bruine's oil painting of the Gudgenby Valley.



Gudgenby

Twin peaks towering over the Boboyan Valley
 A landmark for all to see
 Symbolising nature's eternity
 And the need for one to just be.

Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine

Two weeks in the High Pyrenees

In September 2014 Jan and Philip Gatenby joined two others (Trevor and Bill) on a Coast and Mountain Walkers (CMW) trip to the Pyrenees. The walk was independently arranged and most of the organisation, such as route planning, was done by Trevor who also led the trip.



Port Neuf de Pinede. Photo by Jan Gatenby.

The Pyrenees forms a considerable natural barrier between France and Spain. It stretches for 430 km with 212 peaks over 3,000 m. Interestingly, the six highest are not on the border but are located exclusively in Spain.

Landscape features which distinguish the Pyrenees from other ranges in Europe are the rarity and height of mountain passes, the absence of large lakes and the height of the waterfalls. Our impression from the walk was that the Spanish side of the Pyrenees was drier and more barren than the French side. If so, it could be the result of the prevailing weather conditions, the local geology or a combination of the two. Three rock types – granite, limestone and gneiss – dominate the range. Its formation is widely accepted to be the result of subcontinental Spain pushing into southern France resulting in uplift of the landscape. An alternative view is that Hercules was so distraught by the death of his girlfriend, Pyrene, that he piled up rocks over her body as a memorial.

... a multitude of walking tracks

Like much of rural Europe the Pyrenees has a multitude of walking tracks. Well known are the Camino de Santiago, which crosses the range in a couple of places, the GR10 in France and the GR11 in Spain. The GRs avoid many of the higher parts. The Pyrenean Haute Route, on the other hand, provides a high-level traverse of the entire range, never far from the border. It takes about 50 days to complete. Although long, the Pyrenees are quite narrow and many of its highest points are accessible from both France and Spain in a day's walk.

... we settled on exploring a 100 km section of the range

We were after a high-level walk but wanted to walk for only a couple of weeks. In deciding where to go, *Trekking Atlas of the World*, the Cicerone Guide to the haute route, and notes from earlier trips by others in CMW were invaluable. In the end we settled on exploring a 100 km section of the range, roughly from Pic du Midi d'Ossau in the west to Monte Perdido in the east. Much of where we walked was in national park which protects some of the last wilderness areas of the Pyrenees. On the French side is the Parc National des Pyrénées which co-joins the Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido in Spain.

The first part of the walk was a 7-day linear hike, mostly in France, on part of the Pyrenean Haute Route from Lac de Biou-Artigues (which is about 60 km south of the French city Pau) to the village of Gavarnie in France. From here, once resupplied, we did a 7-day circuit, mostly in Spain, through the Valle Pineta, Ordesa Gorge and the Cirque de Garvarnie. There were many highlights, particularly the dramatic landscape with peak after peak, numerous waterfalls, the desolation of the Limestone Desert and the grandeur of both the cirque and gorge. All up we walked about 200 km in 15 days and climbed 15,000 m, including side trips to four peaks over 3,000 m.

Some meadows were covered in flowers, particularly blue irises.

The walk crossed a variety of landscapes which generally reflected altitude. Down low (relatively) we walked through forest. This gave way to meadow as we got higher, then rock and scree, surprisingly rugged in places. Some meadows were covered in flowers, particularly the blue irises. Thistles were common in number and variety as well as bluebells, daisies and gentians.



We didn't see much wildlife apart from marmots and a few isards, a relation of chamois. A highlight was a *Salamandre tachetee* (which we called a corroborree lizard because of its similarity in colouring to our frog). There was a variety of birdlife. We often saw vultures, while the robin-sized Alpine Accentor seemed to like the refuges and Alpine Choughs liked the rocky passes.

A pattern emerged to the walk. Often we'd climb in the morning, go through a mountain pass then descend, sometimes in the late morning but usually after lunch. These routes through the range must have been very important for many years to the inhabitants of the Pyrenees if the number of words for a mountain pass is any indication. Signifying culture and landscape the Cicerone Guide lists 16 words for a mountain pass.

Most nights were spent in pre-booked mountain refuges.

Each night, other than the two in villages, was spent in pre-booked mountain refuges, so we didn't have to carry tents or sleeping bags. Breakfast and dinner were provided. Sleeping was usually in bunkrooms with some having up to 30 bunks per room, stacked three high in places. Occasionally we got a room for just the four of us. Showers (generally cold) were available in most of the refuges. This wasn't always the case. On arrival at one of the refuges the manager said 'there's no shower but there's a great jacuzzi in the stream just outside the front door'. It was a bit chilly!

Most nights the refuges were full. This surprised us at first as we saw few people heading our way or in the opposite direction. We quickly worked out, however, that many come in from the north or south for a night or two to climb one of the numerous peaks. Overall we stayed in nine different refuges. All were in stunning locations.

We reached Lac de Biou-Artigues by taxi from Pau. Our plan was to travel to the lake by bus but we discovered at the last minute that the bus didn't operate on Sundays, the day we were to start. While the taxi was considerably more expensive than the €1 bus fare our driver was knowledgeable of places we passed and was able to drop us off closer to Pic du Midi and at a higher altitude than would have been possible in a bus. We started off in fog which

Blue iris, Photo by (continued next page) Jan Gatenby.

Two weeks in the High Pyrenees

cleared about lunchtime to reveal close by the splendour of Pic du Midi. Its cliffs are the preserve of climbers who appeared as specks against the rock face. We watched them from Refuge Pombie which we reached mid-afternoon and where we spent the first night.

The second day was one of our hardest – 19 km and 1,500 m of climbing over difficult terrain. It included a traverse of a rocky outcrop with the help of cables, then later a climb to the border over rocks and snow, followed by a short section in Spain, on an ill-defined track across a scree slope and back into France via Port du Lavedan (2,615 m), a narrow gap in the frontier ridge. More snow drifts and rock followed. Eventually we reached Refuge Larribet at 5:45 pm, over 10 hours after starting.

Another long day took us to Refuge Wallon. From here we climbed Grande Fache, a peak on the border just over 3,000 m and a day's return walk. A small shrine marks the summit.

Vignemale at 3,298 m is the highest point on the border and an impressive sight.

For the remainder of the first part of the walk the view was dominated by the massif of Vignemale. At 3,298 m it's the highest point on the border and an impressive sight. Climbing Vignemale requires crampons and ice axes as a glacier must be crossed. More easily climbed is a nearby peak, Petit Vignemale (3,022 m), for us a detour of an hour or so from Hourquette d'Ossoue (2,754 m), the mountain pass on the route between Refuge des Oulettes de Gaube and Refuge Baysellance.

On the descent into the village of Gavarnie we passed three caves on the eastern side of Vignemale, called Grottes Bellevue, excavated into a small limestone cliff. They were the work of an Irish-French count, Henry Russell, who in 1899 was granted a 99-year lease of the peak for 1 French franc a year. There were three caves – one for himself, one for the guide and one in case a lady turned up! After 7 days we reached Gavarnie with, as a backdrop, its famous cirque and waterfall. At 412 m the Grande Cascade is reputed to be the highest waterfall in Europe outside Scandinavia.

Piméné (2,801 m) offers spectacular views in all directions.

From Gavarnie we climbed to Refuge Espugettes. Arriving before lunch left the afternoon to climb the nearby peak of Piméné (2,801 m). Located on the



Cirque de Gavarnie and Breche de Roland. Photo by Jan Gatenby.

eastern end of the ridge between the Cirque de Gavarnie and the Cirque d'Estaubé, Piméné offers spectacular views in all directions.

Next day saw us heading into Spain to the Refuge Pineta. We climbed to the Hourquette d'Alans, then across the Cirque d'Estaubé largely through scree and on to Port Neuf de Pinede (also called Punta Nuova de Lera or La Forqueta de Lera depending on which map is used) – 2,466 m. Beyond the pass a very steep scree slope and a descent over 1,000 m greeted us en route to Val Pineta.

An area of exposed rock and patches of grass known as the Limestone Desert.

Climbing out of Val Pineta involved an unrelenting 1,200 m ascent before morning tea then a traverse of a barren plateau south of Monte Perdido. This area of exposed rock and patches of grass is known as the Limestone Desert. Refuge Goriz (our destination for the day) loomed large but turned out not to be so. Half of the refuge was a shell and had been so for a number of years as funds for expansion had dried up. The functional half was chocka!

Goriz sits at the top of Ordesa Gorge, one of the most spectacular locations in the Pyrenees. Unlike the surrounding plateau the gorge is well vegetated and includes numerous waterfalls. To explore the gorge we used the valley floor track and a track halfway up one side which follows, in part, a natural balcony, which at its highest is about 600 m above the valley floor.

... a side trip to the top of Monte Perdido (3,355 m), the third highest peak in the Pyrenees

We spent a night at Goriz, a night at the Spanish village of Torla then two more

nights at Goriz. This allowed a side trip to the top of Monte Perdido (3,355 m), the third highest peak in the Pyrenees; named the lost mountain because it's hidden from France by the 3,000 m high walls of the Cirque de Gavarnie.

Highlights of our penultimate day were an ascent of Le Taillon (3,144 m), at the opposite end of the Cirque de Gavarnie to Piméné, and crossing the frontier through Le Brèche de Roland. Le Taillon's summit was crowded with hikers on a one- or two-day trip from Gavarnie. The Brèche is a natural break in the limestone wall of the Cirque de Gavarnie, 30 m wide and 80 m high, formed by a collapse of the limestone. It's the stuff of legends, supposedly formed when Roland, a nephew of Charlemagne, tried to break his sword against the cliffs rather than have it fall into the hands of a Saracen army which had chased him across Spain. The cliff broke, not so the sword.

The only day of bad weather on a memorable walk was the last. We passed the wall of the cirque on the descent to Gavarnie. The Grand Cascade was now much larger and had been joined by numerous other cascades as a result of heavy rain since early morning.

Philip Gatenby

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- Hilary Sharp 2006, *Pyrenean Haute Route/Ordesa Canyon*, in Jack Jackson and Alfred Le Maitre (eds), *Trekking Atlas of the World*, New Holland Publishers, London, pp 50–53.

Reg Alder photographs: ACT Heritage Library exhibition

Reg Alder will be remembered by many NPA members as an outstandingly capable and dedicated member, and later, life member, of the association. Photography was one of the areas in which he made a memorable contribution. Never far from his camera, he had a particular capacity to identify subjects and situations and record them with individuality and integrity. His work ranged over a wide field but much related to the High Country, including Namadgi, and the many activities of the association.

After Reg's death in 2003, his daughters passed a collection of these photos to the association and these were subsequently accepted by the ACT Heritage Library for inclusion in its collection. Now the library has brought together some 30 of these photos as an exhibition in its Woden display space.

This is a solo exhibition, with the works being accorded the space needed for them to be fully appreciated. There is a good representation of the varied subjects that interested Reg, including some of historical interest such as the demolition of buildings in Old Jindabyne to make way for the development of the Snowy Scheme. Reg's strong attachment to black and white photography is reflected in the exhibition, which is exclusively in this mode. Interestingly, there are one or two black and white prints of early Kodachrome transparencies from the period when Reg was attracted to this, then novel, medium.

As the library's introduction to the exhibition notes, Reg's photos reflect his deep engagement with the countryside and his dedication to NPA ACT and conservation activities. Well worth viewing.

Syd Comfort

The Heritage Library is on the first floor of the Woden Library. The closing date for the exhibition has not been decided yet.



Photographs

Above. Cattle grazing in the Gudgenby Valley before the Gudgenby property was taken into the Namadgi National Park.

Below. The old Mount Tennant homestead as it once was, and well before even its ruins were destroyed in the 2003 bush fires.

These two photographs are from the NPA ACT's records of Reg Alder's photographs. They are not necessarily included in the Heritage Library exhibition.

[From the exhibition catalogue]

REG ALDER PHOTOGRAPHS

These photographs were donated by the ACT branch of the National Parks Association (NPA ACT) to the ACT Heritage Library, after the death of Reg Alder, photographer and life member of the NPA ACT.

Reg Alder was a lifelong bushwalker, joining the NPA ACT when he came to Canberra in the 1970s and being made a life member in 1984. He was active in many of the organisation's activities – opening up bushwalking routes in the Namadgi National Park, leading walks, teaching members the skills of map reading and navigation, producing the *NPA Bulletin*, serving on the committee, advocating for the inclusion of cultural heritage in the Association's aims and objectives and participating in work parties and rehabilitation projects. The restoration of Orroral Homestead and construction of Yerrabi Track are tributes to his contribution.

Reg Alder took all but one of these photos; the one of Reg up a ladder was taken by Len Haskew, another member of NPA ACT. The photos reflect his deep engagement with the countryside and his dedication to NPA ACT and conservation activities.

Information about the approximate dates the photos were taken can be found in the box list to the HMSS 0400 Reg Alder Photographs Collection, on the ACT Heritage Library website.



Bushwalks



Ramshead

Date: Sunday 13 September 2015.

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Peter Anderson-Smith, Sandra Brown, Margaret Power, Terrylea Reynolds.

Weather: Mostly blue sky; warm when out of breeze, which diminished in afternoon.

In 2009, the NPA hosted a winter excursion to Australia's fourth highest peak, Ramshead (2,190 m): three of us took Kosciuszko chairlift from Thredbo and snowshoed up it from the north in testing conditions (*NPA Bulletin* December 2009, page 16). Ramshead was, by default, again the destination in 2010 and 2011 when Cascade Trail was found to be bereft of snow. It became apparent that the ideal approach to Ramshead from the south was to climb from Dead Horse Gap (1,582 m), west of Bogong Creek, and return east of the creek, 9 km altogether. So that was what we did on this walk in the best conditions yet. The snow was substantial and firm. The breeze cooled us on the climbs but was slightly chilling on the summit.

Our Parks Permit was checked by rangers at Dead Horse Gap soon after we arrived from Canberra. We were then photographed by a policeman as we stepped onto the snow from Alpine Way

at 9:30am. Actually, he was an off-duty Queenslander and had been invited to do so. It was not our last encounter with the law – on the return trip my obscured numberplate attracted a warning.

Few skiers climb from Dead Horse Gap but we did find a tent half way up. Very soon we were below the 1,952 m. trig where regenerating Snow Gums, now 3 m high, merge with magnificent mature trees. There were numerous animal tracks. Beyond that point we were above the treeline, climbing to a saddle with the dome of Ramshead rising like the moon. We sheltered for a break.

Views changed abruptly as east became west; light intensified, snow dominated. Leatherbarrel Creek cut through to purple and black. However, the climb was not over; we chugged on, to the base of Ramshead, and then clambered up its ice-free surface. Except Margaret, who charged up without stopping – whew! We had a chatty lunch, guzzling scenery: the vast white stretch of Abbott Ridge, Kosciuszko and Townsend and beyond that to Victoria's snowy caps.

Peter led us down the north side, encountering a skier in shorts and



Sandra Brown, Terrylea Reynolds, Peter Anderson-Smith, Margaret Power on Ramshead. Photo by Brian Slee.

another with blaring music. Tracks in the snow took us east across two ridges (Bogong Creek rises between them) before we turned south to the AAWT. A skier's highway, descending through the trees, became increasingly obvious; the last stretch was steep and slippery down to the bridge where the creek runs into Thredbo River. Robins flashed briefly in the snow. The cars were in sight up the Way where we arrived at 3:15pm.

After a break at Jindabyne we were back at Calwell at 6:15pm. Ramshead is spectacular – a favoured snow destination. Great pleasure to have shared it with newbies, Terrylea and Sandy.

Brian Slee

Mount Kosciuszko

Date: Sunday 27 September 2015

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Margaret Power, Max Smith.

Weather: Blue sky with late cloud from west; warm; occasional breeze.

Mt Kosciuszko (2,229 m) has a dignity problem. Internationally it is scorned as the easily conquered continental highpoint which the cognoscenti necessarily must scale to complete a bucket list. Shapely Townsend, its slightly lower neighbour, draws attention to Kosciuszko's modest profile. The very name is often misspelled or dismissed as foreign. It is the only Main Range peak with a toilet at the front door and a road up its rear.

And it is generally considered an end-of-season destination by skiers, disregarded until it is the last bastion of snow. NPA's three previous snowshoe excursions to Kosciuszko were in October: each time the snow was poor and stained algal pink or, as at the last one in 2008, orange/brown by dust storms.

So one feels like apologising to the mountain after visiting it as we did this

time on a clear day with excellent snow and finding it a gorgeous place. And the only colour in the snow was delicate yellow, possibly pollen blown in by south-western gales the previous week. The 300 metre climb from Cootapatamba Hut to the summit, up Kosciuszko South Ridge, added to the spectacle as Abbott Ridge to the west and Etheridge Ridge to the east began to fill the view.

Getting to the Hut was straightforward: we departed Torrens at 6:10am, arrived Friday Flat at 8:30, rode the free bus to Kosciuszko Express (lift tickets \$35, concession \$27) and at the top of the lift were immediately on snow at 9:30. The steel walkway was mostly buried. Kite skiers were managing runs on Snowy River plain despite low winds. Anyhow, we turned left down Etheridge Pass and amid vast whiteness followed Swampy Plain River's vague outline to the red Hut. At morning tea we were joined by a carefree young couple, shod with spikes, who erected a tent.

On the climb to the peak we had a rare encounter – other snowshoers. We also met several skiers choosing between

death and glory as they contemplated launching off the prominent Kosci cornice. None were seen to do this. Evidence of a recent snow slump cum avalanche may have wielded its influence. A beaming West of Scotland lad, living the dream on a gap year, seemed a little lacking in sun protection.

After an Abbott's view lunch near the undignified concrete pillar adorning the summit, we descended at 1 pm to Rawson Pass, Max with blithe ease. Relief at the toilets was impossible: they were almost buried. So we kept going and found Eagles Nest more accommodating. Down the lift, back at the car at 2:30. 13.5 km on snowshoes.

We stopped for the usuals at Jindabyne before heading for Torrens, arriving 5:50pm (our driver survived the breathalyser at Berridale).

Thank you Mr Kosciuszko for a great day, we love you.

Brian Slee

Bushwalks *(continued)*

Molonglo and Murrumbidgee

Date: 26 July 2015.

Participants: Brian Slee (Leader), Peter Anderson-Smith, Allen Bills, Michaela Popham, Margaret Power, Annette Smith.

Weather: Scudding cloud; chilly wind; rainbows all day amid brief sprinklings.

If eagles in close view climb against a strong wind and stall, you hold your breath, even knowing they will immediately perform a smooth, shallow dive and carry on regardless. Such were the antics of two Wedge-tailed Eagles when we arrived at Shepherds Lookout. Against a panorama of cliffs and mountains and the Murrumbidgee flowing strongly north-west, their aerobatics had us enthralled.

So we climbed south, through Callitris, to the high point (570 m), behind where barracks once stood, and again observed them and other raptors in flight. Fleeting sunlight played across the hills, the Molonglo valley and Uriarra paddocks. Rainbow arcs intensified in the sky. We were in for a lovely walk.

That had seemed unlikely when we gathered at Stockdill Drive carpark at 9:30am. A week earlier the Molonglo low-level bridge, our access to Uriarra,

had been surging with water; 20 mm of rain had fallen since. The pessimistic leader was expecting a truncated outing. But leaving the high point and descending to the bridge, it was found to be barely submerged, albeit slippery. The adjacent Water Quality Control Centre obviously regulates flows.

After a break on the far side of the Molonglo, wind humming through the Casuarinas, we climbed the bank to Sturt Island and it started to sprinkle. As is the rule, it ceased when coats went on. A guy with a heeler stopped to chat. The once-weedy Murrumbidgee sand beds were considerably tidier than when NPA visited in 2008.

Emerging at Uriarra Crossing at 11:45am, lunch was in a shelter west of the river. Families with multiple children occupied another shelter. A fat and skinny pair of Black-backed Magpies came a'begging; silent Kookaburras in a nearby tree were having relationship issues.

It was still chilly when we set off for Uriarra East – the renovated picnic



The confluence of the Molonglo and Murrumbidgee rivers.

Photo by Annette Smith.

ground there was almost deserted. We followed the track up the hill, crossed Uriarra Road and descended the other side through a thriving eucalypt plantation. Soon back at the Molonglo, the river had risen slightly.

Wuthering weather accompanied us up the slope. Water droplets were being tossed in the air and spattered us; rainbows persisted. Back at the cars at 1:30pm, we fled to Strathnairn for warmth and afternoon tea. Only 7 km but quite an outing.

Brian Slee

What a difference a day makes at Ginninderra Falls, 2012



Ginninderra Falls captured in two very different moods.

Left.
Doug Finlayson found them under calm conditions.

Right.
Tim the Yowie Man caught this roaring flood after heavy rain.



Cultural Sub-committee

David Large is the convener of the Cultural Sub-committee and the Terms of Reference are:

- To promote, protect and conserve Aboriginal and European Cultural Heritage in the Parks and Reserves of the Australian Capital Territory
- Cultural heritage may include, but not be limited to, Indigenous sites, homesteads, huts, ruins, yards, fences, gravesites, other structures and their associated histories
- The Sub-committee will work to ensure that cultural heritage is managed in accordance with the Burra Charter
- To stimulate the appreciation of cultural heritage through organised field outings, work parties, meetings and any other means

- To cooperate with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives
- To provide regular reports to the the NPA ACT Management Committee.

Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct news

*One of the Cultural Sub-committee's projects is the **Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct**.*

Heritage grant

The NPA has been awarded a heritage grant to pay for half the cost of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) to be prepared by consultants, with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service paying for the other half.

Committee Member David Large and I attended the function when the grants were announced.

It is expected that the CMP will be completed in early 2016.



*Minister Gentleman presenting documents to Col McAlister for the heritage grant to the NPA ACT, September 2015.
Photo by Howard Moffat.*

The name of the precinct

On 12 October, I reluctantly agreed that the name on the Deed of Grant for the heritage grant be 'Conservation Management Plan for the Kowen Cultural Precinct'. (The NPA's grant application and Minister Gentleman's offer of the grant both referred to the 'Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct, Kowen Precinct'.)

I wrote to ACT Heritage asking that the name of the precinct in the final heritage listing be the 'Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct, Kowen Forest', since it is the name that the Parks Service and I have been using. I

had previously provided such advice to the ACT Heritage Council on its provisional listing, and have made similar submissions to Ministers Gentleman and Rattenbury. I believe that names are important identifiers.

Publicity

I have approached Gang-gang of the *Canberra Times* and the editors of *City News* and the *Queanbeyan Age* for publicity on the heritage grant and the precinct. Tim the Yowie Man has said that he would endeavour to come up with a feature on the Glenburn/Burbong Heritage Trail when it is nearing completion in April 2016.

Drive/walks in the precinct

On Sunday 11 October, I took NPA Committee Members Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue and David Large on a drive/walk through the precinct to show them developments and to explain future work priorities.

At a couple of sites we met a group of 15 walkers from the Brindabella Bushwalking Club who were doing a circuit of the precinct. I pointed out to them the route to Atkinson Trig, which they had not intended to visit. When we met up again later on, they said that they very much appreciated the views from the trig and the interpretative sign that sets out the precinct's geographical and historical context.

On 21 October, Max Lawrence and I conducted another drive/walk through the precinct for U3A members. Twenty people attended, bringing the total number of U3A visitors to the precinct in the last couple of years to around 100. (U3A has since made another donation to the NPA for work in the Glenburn/Burbong Precinct.) At the Charcoal Kiln site we came across 18 members of the Wednesday Walkers group. So the precinct had almost 40 visitors on the day!

Meeting with Parks Service Staff

Max Lawrence and I met with Colin Schofield and Anthony Fordham of the Googong depot of the Parks Service on Tuesday 11 October to consider aspects of the Glenburn/Burbong Heritage Trail. It is expected that the 13 kilometre walking and cycling trail will be completed around April 2016. We discussed the range of works to be completed to achieve that goal.

Col McAlister

Stop Press.

The ACT Heritage Council decided to place '**Glenburn Precinct, Kowen**' on the ACT Heritage Register on 19 November 2015.

Items of interest

The reward of a work party

NPA's Broom control work party of 24 October ranged out from Brayshaws to search out and check a number of marked infestation sites. We had mixed results at the sites found. Some were beautifully clear of Broom but others were still quite densely infested, giving the workers plenty to do. Some of the sites could not be found at all, but those searching for them made other exciting discoveries. Philip and Brian found this wonderful Lyre Bird's nest, much more engaging than crawling around on the ground picking out hundreds of Broom seedlings!

Photo by Philip Gatenby.



FORESTS FOREVER

EASTER ECOLOGY CAMP



Photo credit: Julie Dekard

WHEN
25-28 March 2016

WHERE
Goongerah, 70km north of Orbost

COST
\$75 for the weekend, \$35 for one day (concessions available), under 13s free.

CAMP among Peppermint and Manna Gums on the Brodribb River.

SPOTLIGHT for wildlife.

EXPLORE ancient and beautiful forests with expert biologists.

BE INSPIRED to help save East Gippsland's spectacular forests.

BOOK YOUR SPOT
→ TO BOOK ONLINE or get more info visit: eastgippsland.net.au/forestsforever, email forestsforever@eastgippsland.net.au (preferred) or phone 03 5154 0145.
→ OR FILL OUT THE FORM OVERLEAF



VICTORIAN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION
The spirit of nature
www.vnpa.org.au

Environment East Gippsland
www.eastgippsland.net.au

Henry Hatch

Very, very sad news. Our friend and walking colleague Henry Hatch has died, it seems mercifully quickly. A great loss to the NPA and its walking program. As a memorial to this enthusiastic walker, Mike Smith took the Wednesday Walk which Henry was scheduled to lead on 25 November 2015.

A Visit to the Tip

A NO-WASTE TOUR

Thursday 4 February

Learn how recyclable waste is sorted and processed in a one-hour visit to Mugga Landfill. There will be an educational presentation and a short bus tour of the recycling facility. We will meet nearby at 9:30am as parking is limited at the site. Afterwards return to the meeting point then morning tea at local cafe. Group limited to 20. Contact leader for meeting place details and to reserve your place by 1 February.

Mob: 0429 356 212

Email: galla001@umn.edu

This outing is on the NPA's Outings Program.

Esther Gallant

PARKWATCH

Edited extracts from recent issues of journals and newsletters, and online sources.

Southern Highlands Koala Project

An intensive study is underway to build information on the Southern Highlands koala population which is under-studied.

In late 2013, a large fire occurred from Balmoral to Yerrinbool and into the Upper Nepean State Conservation Area. While moving away from the fire, several koalas were hit by cars and killed on a section of the Hume Highway, highlighting the need to know more about the koalas in the area.

The Office of Environment and Heritage, Wingecarribee Shire Council, the University of Sydney and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife are working together to build information on the koala population of the Wingecarribee Shire, including animal health, the quality of their habitat, threats, where they are living and how they are moving about the landscape. This partnership is strengthened by the Southern Highlands community who are reporting sightings to researchers.

enewsletter (October 2015), National Parks Association of NSW

Iconic species – Southern Corroboree Frog conservation program

With its bright yellow and black stripes, the Southern Corroboree Frog is a striking – yet camouflaged – resident of the sphagnum bogs in Kosciuszko National Park. It is also a critically endangered species threatened with extinction. The decline of this species is primarily due to a disease known as amphibian chytrid fungus, but feral pigs and climate change also pose serious threats.

Saving Our Species, an animal conservation program, aims to prevent this by fighting chytrid fungus, protecting frog habitat from pests such as pigs, and fostering a captive breeding program. It also intends building artificial habitats and monitoring wild populations for changes in numbers. Several project partners are also cooperating in a captive breeding program. By acting now, this conservation project may ensure that the Southern Corroboree Frog survives.

enewsletter (September 2015), National Parks Association of NSW

New hope for Point Nepean, Victoria

On 1 July 2015 the push to privatise a 64 ha lease in Point Nepean National Park was unsuccessful because the lease had lapsed. Although the contents of the lease remain secret, a key clause became known, stating that continuing the lease beyond 1 July 2015 was contingent on changes to the 2009 national park management plan and the Shire of Mornington Peninsula's planning scheme.

The amendment to the park management plan would have allowed for the destruction of threatened Coastal Moonah Woodland to build boardwalks and rock pools, while a 'Special Use Zone' in the shire's planning scheme would have allowed subdivision. Under the clause, if these changes were not in place by 1 July 2015, the lease would lapse and compensation of up to \$1 million could be sought by the developer. These changes were not made.

At the same time the Andrews' government revealed the lease had lapsed, it also committed to using the draft 2010 master plan to guide future planning at Point Nepean once a period of community consultation had helped refresh and strengthen its provisions.

The nature and timing of the community consultation remains unclear, although it is expected Parks Victoria will complete it by Christmas.

VNPA website, accessed 21 October 2015

Opportunity to protect Melbourne's grassland habitat

Native grasslands are among the most heavily cleared and endangered ecosystems in Victoria. However, new studies suggest that up to 30,000 ha of native grasslands, of varying quality, survive on Melbourne's western fringe. Despite protection through the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* and listing under federal legislation, legal and illegal clearing of grasslands continues through urban development and conversion from native pasture to more intensive agriculture.

A detailed plan for the new growth areas has been released. This follows a strategic assessment of proposed urban areas under the provisions of *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*.

The VNPA aims to work to increase protection of significant biodiversity and

habitat assets in all Melbourne metropolitan growth areas, with a focus on facilitating community input, sharing local ecological knowledge, raising awareness, and informing decision-making and reserve design in urban interface areas.

VNPA website
accessed 21 October 2015

Featured dive (North Head, Sydney)

North Head is a special place with a national park and harbour trust historic site. It also has some of the most spectacular and colourful marine life in the region. Recent surveys of marine life in Sydney have shown the area from Manly to North Harbour, which encompasses North Head, to be a biodiversity hotspot. Tropical fish recruitment is higher here than elsewhere in Sydney, and the diversity of species, particularly in Cabbage Tree Bay and North Harbour, is astounding.

The area has limited protection. North Head Aquatic Reserve stretches to the southern tip of North Head, but it's only in-shore and protects invertebrates, not fish. Fishing pressure is similar to elsewhere in Sydney; you won't get big schools of fish that you see around the corner at Cabbage Tree Bay. Rare and protected species along North Head include Black Cod, Weedy Sea Dragons, Blue Devil Fish and the ever-friendly Blue Groper.

If you are a diver, take all the right safety precautions and enjoy the experience – it will be one you won't forget.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59, No. 3
Spring 2015

Shark nets

Shark nets were first introduced in NSW in 1937 because politicians were worried about bad publicity if a shark accident happened during the state's 150th anniversary. Today, nearly 70 years later, NSW's coastline has a total of 250 km of shark nets, spread over 51 beaches. Do the shark nets work?

Shark nets are in the oceans for only 8 months of the year (from 1 September to 30 April) and not in place every day of the week. They are required to be in place for only 14 days of each month, usually over weekends. Shark nets don't discriminate. Anything that swims in the ocean can get caught in shark nets which, in NSW, have killed more than 16,000 marine animals since they were

(concluded on page 20)

established. There has only been one fatal shark accident on a netted beach since the nets were introduced. Can this be regarded as a successful program when there are no scientific data comparing netted and unnetted beaches? Even NSW Government's report state that: 'The annual rate of attacks was the same both before and after meshing commenced'.

Methods for preventing shark accidents and treating injuries have improved significantly since the 1950s. Today, lifeguards on netted beaches contribute to public safety by spotting sharks and clearing the water of swimmers when large sharks are sighted. Lifeguards are able to dramatically increase a shark victim's chances of survival by providing prompt first aid, which is critical in the case of shark bite incidents.

Such incidents are rare. On average, sharks kill 5 humans per year worldwide, whereas we kill more than 100 million sharks annually or more than 270,000 sharks a day. Sharks are apex predators and play a vital role in maintaining the ocean's ecosystem. Without them the entire ocean ecosystem is predicted to collapse. If the oceans die, we die, so the time has come for a new public debate about public education and beach safety regarding sharks.

Be beach safe and remember it is riskier to drive home from the beach than to go swimming with sharks.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59, No. 3
(Spring 2015)

'Bush Mates'

Over the next 10 years, enough homes are going to be built to house an extra 300,000 people in the South Western Sydney Growth Centre, enough houses for almost all Canberra's population! With an unprecedented number of people moving to the urban fringe we [NSW NPA] want to help them appreciate and value the high-quality remnant bushland at their doorstep.

We have brought together partners from the World Wildlife Fund, Greening Australia and the University of Sydney to deliver 'Bush Mates', a community engagement and education program to establish a respectful and sustainable relationship between communities, wildlife and habitat. The program will appeal to the multiple values that the community holds for the environment by intentionally including a range of activities that involve active recreation, learning new skills, and socialising, as well as appreciating nature.

Our activities will include reserve visits, bio blitzes, tree planting days, plant give-aways, open garden days, threatened species day and koala counts. Our website will raise awareness of the importance of local bushland and backyards for native wildlife with interactive local species profiles and ideas for kids to get out and experience nature.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59, No. 3
(Spring 2015)

Crown land must remain in public hands

A community summit held in Parliament House last June called for Crown land to remain in public hands. The summit responded to increasing concern about NSW Government proposals to dispose of these essential public assets. The Crown land estate represents approximately 33 million hectares, or 42 per cent of NSW. A white paper to reform Crown land management was released last year. It was excessively focused on raising revenue and reducing administrative burden. As a result, the reform proposals give inadequate consideration to the natural environment.

The NSW Government is reviewing the administration of Crown land in NSW and proposes to:

- establish a Crown Lands Division as part of a public trading enterprise
- promote economic growth ahead of social, cultural, local and environment concerns
- overhaul the ownership of Crown lands, which could result in their widespread sale or commercialisation by the government and/or transfer to local councils
- replace with a single Act eight existing Acts applying to Crown lands.

Speakers at the June summit included representatives from the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Better Planning Network and other community groups fighting to protect public parklands and open space from privatisation and development. Since the 2014 white paper, the NSW Government has been reviewing the management of Crown lands behind closed doors. There are concerns that the proposed changes to Crown land legislation and management include recommendations to hand over large parcels of public land to local government for management, as well as plans for sale. This could seriously reduce protections for high-conservation-value Crown land, including wilderness, as well as for urban bushland and parkland.

Bushwalking NSW has protested the sale of many Crown land easements that provided access to rivers and public forests. These considerations have been ignored, meaning that the remaining areas of public land are becoming less accessible. In less than 3 years, more than 5,000 publicly owned roads have been sold to private landholders for the short-term gain of \$43 million to the NSW Government.

The community summit passed a resolution seeking a parliamentary Inquiry into the governance of Crown land and the most appropriate measures to ensure Crown land remains a public asset for the benefit of all the people, the environment and the culture and heritage of this state. A second resolution called for a moratorium on selling, leasing and private development of Crown land until after the parliamentary inquiry reports and its recommendations are implemented. A Crown Land Action Group was formed to coordinate a community campaign to stop Crown land mismanagement and sell-offs.

Colong Bulletin, No. 260
(August 2015)

Highway robbery

Most VNPA members will be aware of the recent appalling loss of around 880 large old eucalypts as part of the duplication of the Western Highway between Ballarat and Stawell. Many of the trees had hollows used by birds and other animals. VicRoads had approval only for the removal of the 221 trees they estimated would need to be cleared. But this did not include many more 'scattered' trees in the path of the road, which were felled for debatable safety reasons.

Pressure from a local group, Western Highway Alternative Mindsets (WHAM), forced VicRoads to admit the mistake and revise plans for the next section to be widened, between Buangor and Ararat. The revised plans include using concrete and wire rope barriers to stop vehicles running off the road and hitting trees, rather than removing the trees themselves, and so narrowing the area to be cleared. These design improvements are positive, but won't do much to reduce the impact of the road through hilly land. The best option is to minimise road widening as far as possible, and focus on behavioural change to increase safety.

VicRoads was exempted by the former Brumby government from having to gain permits for removing native vegetation yet, in many parts of Victoria,

(concluded on page 21)

PARKWATCH (continued)

roadsides often have the best or sometimes the only, native vegetation remaining.

The VNPA believes that, public authorities should have to obtain permits for clearing native vegetation, and that VicRoads must give the protection of existing native vegetation much higher priority. We are in danger of losing the ecological and habitat value of our roadsides, as well as their variety, character and beauty, plus their importance for carbon capture and storage.

Park Watch (Vic. NPA), No. 262
(September 2015)

Leisure, not logging

The native logging industry is unprofitable (cost shifting, stealth subsidies and abdication of management of weeds and feral animals make losses less obvious), and undermines the plantation industry via those same stealth subsidies. Most of us, possibly many in the industry, recognise that logging is a huge threat to our native wildlife. Australian National University research has shown that forests managed for conservation instead of logging would result in substantial emissions reductions over the next century.

It is crucial to offer the government a viable alternative to logging: one that could provide jobs for regional areas and income for the government, while simultaneously achieving conservation goals and benefiting public health. That's why NPA (NSW) has decided to take this approach to ending logging: we believe that our forests are more valuable for social and recreational uses than they are for logging.

We are not advocating that all state forests suddenly became four wheel drive playgrounds or gymkhanas. Rather, careful planning will be necessary to ensure that opportunities exist for the varied recreation requirements of the public while also ensuring that natural values aren't eroded. We are continuing to engage these groups to achieve a common goal.

Nature NSW, Vol. 59, No. 3
(Spring 2015)

Threats to wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin

Wetlands, including those in the Murray–Darling Basin, are among our most threatened ecosystems.

Under the 2012 Murray–Darling Basin Plan, water consumption in the basin must fall by 2,750 gigalitres per year (GL/year) from 2019. The plan

allows for the fall to be less if basin states 'deliver water-saving infrastructure projects or change water delivery rules'.

Can such conditions ensure the viability of the basin's wetlands when climate change and long-term over-consumption of water are contributing to prolonged and more frequent droughts?

As a signatory to the Ramsar Convention, Australia must meet certain obligations to promote 'the wise use' and maintain the 'ecological character' of the wetlands. Is Australia breaching its international obligations?

Dr Emma Carmody, Policy and Law Reform Solicitor, from the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), NSW, says the answer is unclear, but failure to provide adequate water to the internationally-listed wetlands in the Murray–Darling Basin, could mean Australia is violating its obligations under the convention.

Dr Carmody recommends that climate modelling be undertaken for the entire basin, based on future trends, along with increased scientific monitoring for the next review of the basin plan in 2022. Information should be used to improve the plan when reviewed.

'In the meantime, the question remains: can these wetlands survive another drought?'

(Summarised from a short blog by Dr Emma Carmody, Policy and Law Reform Solicitor, from the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), NSW)

<http://www.edonsw.org.au/threatstowetlandsinthemurraydarlingbasin>
23 October 2015

Peter Murrell Reserves, Tasmania

The Peter Murrell Reserves, at Huntingfield, a short distance south of Hobart, are an example of reserves the Parks and Wildlife Service manages that are adjacent to the built environment. The total area is 277 ha and is one land management unit, the Parks and Wildlife Service being the managing authority. The reserves were named after the late Peter Murrell, first director of the Parks and Wildlife Service.

High biodiversity characterises the unit and includes a wide range of regionally important plant communities with over 200 native plant species identified including a large number of orchids. A small population of *Acacia gunnii* (ploughshare wattle) was identified only after the establishment of the reserves, following a controlled burn. A wide range of mammals, reptiles, frogs and invertebrates inhabits the area and

the many species of birds that have been identified in the reserves include the endangered forty-spotted pardalote.

While the Parks and Wildlife Service is the managing authority for the reserves, the Community Co-Management group has played a vital role in their running right from the start. The group provides a forum for discussion on management and recreational uses of the reserves and for working through any conflicts or problems that arise.

The Peter Murrell Reserves show that it is possible to strike a balance between conservation and recreation in an urban reserve, but only if there is a strong commitment by the managing authority along with high levels of support and hands-on engagement by the community – and a good working relationship between the two of them.

TNPA News, No. 21 (Winter 2015)

Compiled by Hazel Rath

NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar				
	December	January	February	March
<i>Public holidays</i>	<i>Fri 25, Sat 26, Mon 28</i>	<i>Fri 1, Tues 26</i>	—	<i>Mon 14, Fri 25–Mon 28</i>
General meetings	—	—	Thurs 19	Thurs 19
Committee meetings	Tues 1	—	Tues 3	Tues 3
NPA ACT Christmas party ¹	Sun 13			
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ²	Sat 12*	—	Sat 14	Sat 14
Glenburn work party ³	Tues 8	—	Tues 2	—

Further details: 1. NPA Christmas party, see notice this page.
 2. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9:15 am, or Yankee Hat car park 10:00 am.
 * GBRG Christmas party, notice this page.
 3. Friends of Glenburn meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 9:00 am, or at the locked gate off the Kings Highway at 9:20 am.

New members of the association



The NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Geoff Puleston

Kimberi Pullen.

We look forward to seeing everyone at NPA activities.



NPA Christmas party Sunday 13 December

from 11:30am

Orroral Tracking Station picnic area

This year's NPA Christmas Party will be at the Orroral Tracking Station picnic area in Namadgi National Park.

Meet in the car park at the end of the Orroral Valley road.

All the usual features; bring your picnic lunch and Christmas cheer – nibbles, Christmas cake and some drinks will be provided.

Check *Burning Issues* for details.

Contact a committee member if you need a lift out to the Orroral Tracking Station picnic area.



Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group

Christmas Party

Frank and Jacks Hut,
12 December

In conjunction with the usual work party (see Outings Program). Stay for Christmas lunch at the hut. Bring a plate to share, drinks provided.

Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9:15 am or Yankee Hat carpark at 10:00 am.

Contact:

Michael Goonrey, 6231 8395
mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au



About the NPA Bulletin

This *NPA Bulletin* was prepared by:
 Editor, Judy Kelly with help from the *Bulletin* team
 Sub-editor, Ed Highley
 Presentation, Adrienne Nicholson.

Contributions of articles, letters, poems, drawings and photographs are always welcome. Items accepted for publication will be subject to editing and may also be published on the NPA website. Send all items to the *Bulletin* Team, admin@npaact.org.au, or the postal address.

If possible keep contributions to no more than 1,000 words.

Deadline for the March 2016 issue: 31 January 2016.

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. A 25 gram juvenile Leadbeater's Possum (article page 6).
 Photo by Emma Campbell.

Insets. Left. Blue iris high in the Pyrenees (article page 12).
 Photo by Jan Gatenby.

Centre. Gudgenby Valley close up (article page 10). Chris de Bruine.

Right. Christmas beetles; adults among eucalypt leaves (article page 9).
 Photo by Esther Gallant.

Back cover

Top. On a moonless night, Gudgenby Cottage under the Milky Way (article page 10).
 Photo by Ross Andrews.

Bottom. The cottage as we usually see it. Photo by Adrienne Nicholson.

General Meetings

Third Thursday of the month, (not December or January)
8:00pm, Uniting Church hall, 56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor



No General Meeting in December or January

Thursday 18 February

Great Southern Koala Forest

Mike Thompson

NSW NPA

mike@nature.net.au

Koala recovery plans competing with Eden's Nippon-Paper Woodchip Mill triggered the Great Southern Koala Forest (GSKF) proposal (*Nature NSW 2015*). Carbon credits can protect forests for 100 years (for hollows-dependent species and tourism). Jobs, wildlife and 'climate action' motivate GSKF.

Thursday 17 March

Krakatoa

Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz

NPA ACT

Few national parks worldwide have had their genesis in a massive volcanic eruption as did Ujung Kulon National Park in Indonesia – Krakatoa 1883. Kevin and Sonja will talk about their recent visit with surprising Australian connections.

National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated

Inaugurated 1960

Aims and objectives of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage 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 and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of landuse to achieve conservation.

Office-bearers

<i>President</i>	vacant
<i>Vice-President</i>	Christine Goonrey 6231 8395 (h) cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au
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<i>Treasurer</i>	Chris Emery 6249 7604 (h) chris.emery@optusnet.com.au

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<i>Promotion and Engagement Sub-committee</i>	vacant
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The NPA ACT office is in Unit 14 / 26 Lena Karmel Lodge, Barry Drive, Acton, together with the Conservation Council. It is staffed by volunteers on an irregular basis. Callers may leave phone or email messages at any time and they will be attended to. The post office mail box is cleared daily.

Phone: (02) 6229 3201 (mob) 0410 875 731 (if urgent)

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheAct

Subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

Household membership	\$50	Single members	\$40
Corporate membership	\$35	<i>Bulletin</i> only	\$35
Full-time student/Pensioner	\$25		

All the above subscription categories reduce to \$11 if a donation of \$100 or more is made.

Advertising

The *NPA Bulletin* accepts advertisements and inserts. Contact the NPA office for information and rates.

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For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our website <http://www.npaact.org.au>
and follow us at www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheAct