



NPA *Bulletin*

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National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



**New
life member**



**Symposium
success**



**Enjoying the
bush**

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

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Musings from the Editor

Those of us lucky or old enough to have lived through the '60s thought then that peace, equal opportunity and prosperity would be the norm for future life on Earth. We didn't take account of that enormous human driver – greed. So now the reality is that war is endemic; equality a dim dream getting dimmer for all animals on the planet; and, as for prosperity, well that's for just a few.

The battles have to be continuously fought to keep the dreams attainable; the alternative doesn't bear thinking about.

On the positive side: NPA NSW is celebrating 60 years advocacy for nature, while NPA ACT has just signed off on its best NPA symposium this century, whose outcomes should help guide bushfire management in a new direction with

community input and support, a positive outcome for nature and human enjoyment of it.

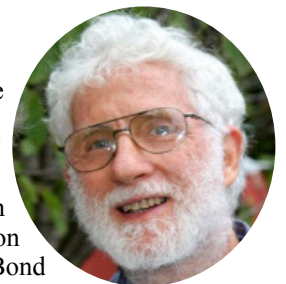
New education and citizen-science projects in our region have been initiated by NPA ACT (see articles in this issue of the *Bulletin*). They will inform our community and managers of Namadgi National Park and Canberra nature reserves. We have a vigorous and interesting outings program that takes people into the bush to enable them to interact with nature in the natural environment, and we must not ignore members' activities in preserving our heritage, both Aboriginal and European, for future generations.

Chaos theory suggesting that a butterfly wingbeat in South America will

influence life here on the other side of the planet has just been proven by the publication of the Suzi Bond team's delightful *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Australian Capital Territory* which already has happy readers all over Earth. If we teach people about the beauty of nature they will demand we look after it – isn't that what happened to all of us?

Our greatest reward as humans is to make Earth a better place than the one we inherited – roll up those sleeves!

Kevin McCue



Annual Report 2016–2017

One of the defining characteristics of the NPA ACT is the breadth of the work it performs on behalf of its members and the natural environment. Over the past 12 months, the NPA has continued to make contributions to the ACT and the local region through a range of activities. These have included:

- Taking the following members of the ACT Assembly walking in local reserves: Mick Gentleman, Minister for the Environment, walked through Goorooyaroo and was impressed with the beautiful lowland grassy woodlands and the important role they play across the ACT. Elizabeth Lee MLA walked out to Yankee Hat. She was awed by the beauty of the valley and its surrounding mountains and the significance of the rock art.
- A successful campaign during the 2016 ACT elections saw a feasibility study into the ACT's Lowland Grassy Woodlands enacted early in 2017.
- Hard work by the Publications Subcommittee saw the publication and very successful launch of Suzi Bond *et al.*'s butterfly field guide just in time for the Christmas shopping rush.
- Distribution of a set of environmentally themed children's books, *The Bilby Trilogy*, to all primary schools in the ACT.
- Installation of new signage and paths at the Glenburn Precinct coupled with a successful opening by the Minister for the Environment.
- Two more very successful art weeks at Gudenby Cottage taking place in spring 2016 and autumn 2017. Another booking has been made for spring 2017. The resulting works of art were exhibited at Namadgi Visitor Centre over summer, and another exhibition is planned for 2017–18.
- Planning began in 2016 for the bushfire symposium, 'Bushfire Management – Balancing the Risks' to bring together researchers, practitioners, the Rural Fire Service, other areas of Emergency Services and Parks and Conservation with members of the community from across the ACT. We hope the impact of the discussions will influence fire management across the ACT and, in particular, the development of the next Strategic Bushfire Management Plan. Many thanks to Christine Goonrey who conceived and managed this event.

- Expansion of the NPA's scholarship program, which helps support local environmental research. Because of a substantial donation, NPA can be even more proactive in supporting the efforts of local researchers developing our understanding and protection of local fauna.
- A small action group undertaking a project to recycle the coconut fibre in old mattresses. Because of their efforts, the fibre can be made into coir logs to prevent soil erosion in nature reserves.

The NPA is an active participant in the wider conservation movement in the ACT, NSW and nationally, through representation on the boards of the Conservation Council, Kosciuszko to Coast and the National Parks Australia Council. Locally, it has continued to support the work of the Environmental Defenders' Office, the Ginninderra Falls Association, the Gudenby Bush Regeneration Group and the Red Hill Regenerators. It regularly meets with representatives, at all levels, in Parks and Conservation, including the Conservator and the Director of Parks and Conservation.

Anyone who looks at the NPA *Bulletin* knows the quality of this publication. This is due to the work of the various editors over the past year, Philip Gatenby, Max Lawrence, Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz, and the strong support team of Adrienne Nicholson, Ed Highley and Hazel Rath. The *Bulletin* provides a wonderful platform to showcase the excellent articles, poems and photos submitted by members.

NPA members love getting out into the bush on bushwalks and work parties and we thank all walk leaders and work-party organisers for providing such an interesting outings program. Special thanks go to Steven Forst for collating the program and to Martin Chalk, Col McAlister and Michael Goonrey for organising the work parties. We also thank Brian Slee who collates outings statistics that tell us that NPA work parties are becoming increasingly more popular.

Thanks must go to the people who keep the NPA's administrative activities on track. These include the NPA's secretary Sonja Lenz, the minutes takers Esther Gallant and Max Lawrence, and the Treasurer Chris Emery, who is also our webmaster and computer guru. In the office, Clive Hurlstone can be seen

organising dispatches of our publications, and at general meetings and community events Adrienne always displays and sells NPA books. General support for running the office has been achieved through the office volunteers Annette Smith, Kathy Saw, Julie May and Debbie Cameron.

The NPA's subcommittees have been ably convened by Steven Forst (Outings), Kevin McCue (Publications), Graham Scully (Promotion and Engagement), Martin Chalk (Work parties), Quentin Moran (Cultural) and Rod Griffiths (Environment). Thanks go to the conveners and all the members who contribute to the work of the subcommittees.

A very pleasant Christmas party was held at the Namadgi Visitor Centre and we have enjoyed a marvellous range of speakers at our general meetings. Thanks to all who have helped with the setup and catering at general meetings, and to Quentin Moran for his coordination abilities.

At the 2017 AGM, Isobel Crawford stood down from the committee. Isobel's valued insights will be missed by all committee members and we thank her for her work over the past year.

Finally, it is important to recognise the contributions made by the NPA committee members and in particular the officer bearers: Vice-President Christine Goonrey, Treasurer Chris Emery, Secretary Sonja Lenz and Immediate Past President Rod Griffiths.



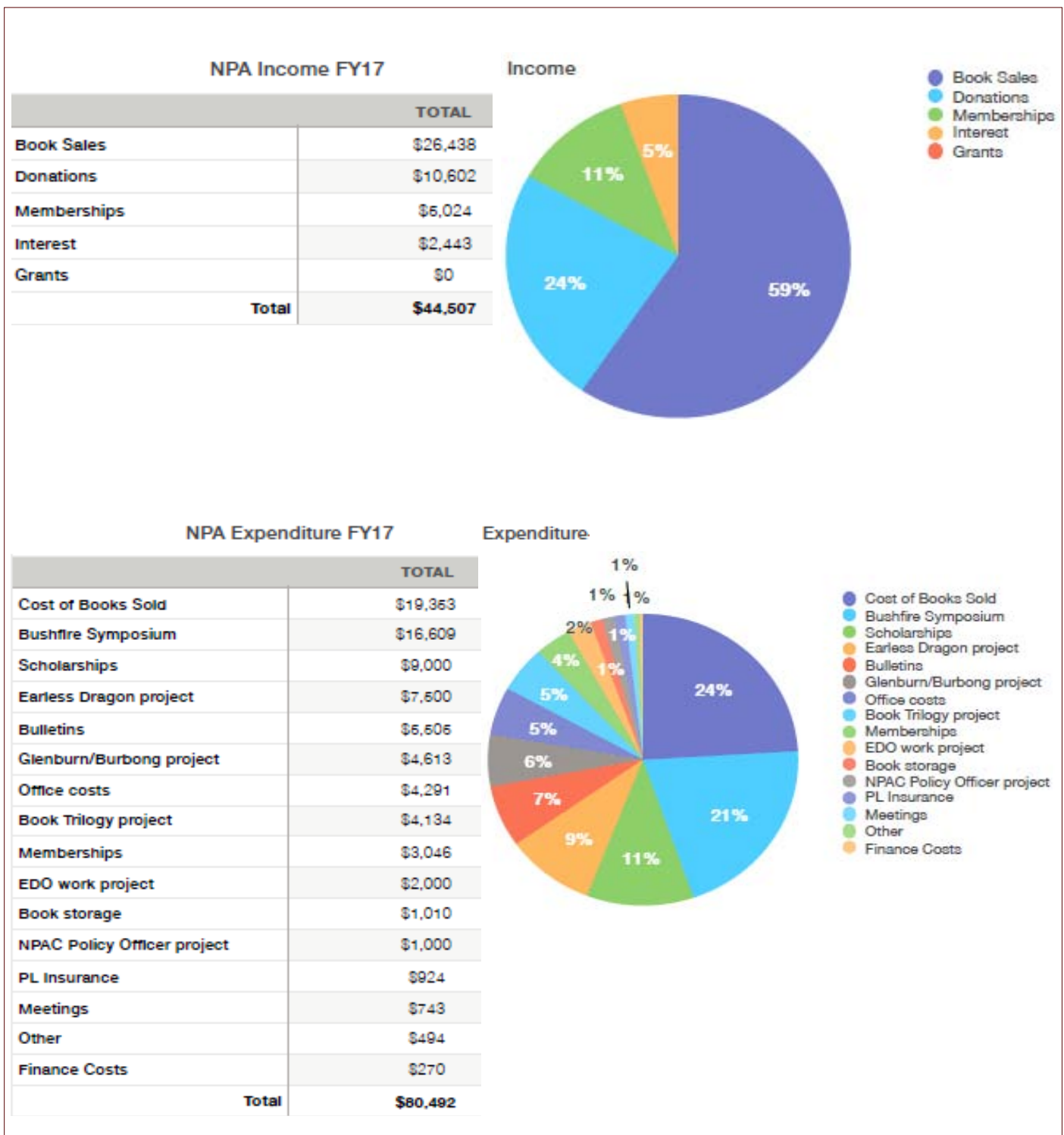
Financial report

This financial year has seen additional, satisfying expenditure on projects. The largest project was our Bushfire Symposium followed by the Earless Dragon research project at the University of Canberra. Sales of our new *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT*

exceeded expectations. Challenges include the cost of obtaining public liability insurance, as the major component is expensive membership of Bushwalking NSW; and our revenue from memberships no longer covers the cost of printing and distributing the

Bulletin, despite many people electing to receive it electronically. Welcome member donations enable us to successfully manage our ambitious program.

Chris Emery



Annual General Meeting 17 August 2017

Meeting report

Immediate Past President Rod Griffiths welcomed about 25 members and one visitor to NPA's AGM on a cold, wet winter evening. He acknowledged the original owners of the land being met on and paid respects to their elders past and present. There were many apologies from members who were either travelling or not able to attend the meeting because of health problems (the 'flu season seems especially bad this year).

Activities in 2016–17

After confirmation of the previous year's minutes, Rod presented the committee's report on activities in the year 2016–17. He emphasised that the committee, subcommittees, working groups and individual members had contributed to a whole raft of achievements and he thanked everyone who was involved.

The full annual report is at page 3. Highlights of the year were the preparations for the recent bushfire management symposium, the production and launch of the *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Australian Capital Territory* by the Suzi Bond team, just in time for the Christmas shopping spree, installation of new signs at the Glenburn Precinct and their launch by the Minister for the Environment, the expansion of NPA's scholarship program and two Art Weeks at Gudgenby, in spring and autumn.

Financial report

Treasurer Chris Emery then gave an in-depth report on NPA's finances throughout the year. He highlighted that NPA had financed far more projects than last financial year. They included preparations for the bushfire symposium, the purchase and distribution to all ACT primary schools of the environmentally themed children's books, *The Bilby Trilogy*, and the extension of NPA's scholarship program to students at the University of Canberra.

Unfortunately, the financial papers had not been audited, as NPA's new auditor was still overseas; they will be transmitted to her as soon as she returns to Canberra. For the same reason NPA cannot yet appoint the auditor for next financial year. This will be attended to in due course. For the financial figures see page 4.

Changes to the NPA Constitution

The committee had informed all NPA

members in July that it would put a special resolution to the Annual General Meeting of the association to make changes to the NPA Constitution to allow notice to be given to members by email as well as by post. The meeting accepted the suggested changes with two minor amendments. The following are the amended rules 27 and 41:

27. Notice

(1) Except where the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the association, the secretary shall, at least 14 days before the date fixed for holding of the general meeting, cause to be sent to each member a notice in writing in a manner provided in subrule 41(1) which specifies the place, date and time of the meeting. This will normally be published in the association's quarterly Bulletin.

(2) Where the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the association, the secretary shall, at least 21 days before the date fixed for holding of the general meeting, cause to be sent to each member a notice in writing in a manner provided in subrule 41(1) which specifies, in addition to the matter required under subrule (1), the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution.

(3) A member desiring to bring any business before a general meeting may give notice in writing in a manner provided in subrule 41(1) of that business to the secretary who shall add that item to the agenda.

and

41. Service of notices

(1) For the purposes of these rules, a notice may be served by or on behalf of the association on any member by:

(a) post to the member's address shown in the register of members; or

(b) by email to the member's email address shown in the register of members.

(2) Unless the contrary is proved:

(a) a notice sent by post is taken to be given 3 business days after it is posted; and

(b) a notice sent by electronic

means is taken to be given on the next business day after it is sent.

Rod also explained the reasons why the committee did not propose changing rule 40 to make committee meeting minutes available electronically to the membership:

- The provisions of the NPA Constitution dealing with inspection of an incorporated association's books (Rule 40) are fairly standard – see the Model Rules under the ACT Associations Incorporation Act.
- Significant issues arise with a proposal to allow other forms of access to the records, books and documents of the association such as by sending electronic copies to members. Unless such access can be controlled in some way, it effectively means that those documents become public documents available to the world at large. This raises important governance issues for NPA because it is unlikely that all records, books and documents would be essentially public in nature. It is difficult to envisage what safeguards could be put in place to protect the integrity of publicly released information (eg. by limiting the persons to whom the information is released) and how these safeguards could be effectively enforced (eg. by a penalty such as expulsion if there is a misuse of the information).
- All NPA members have the right to propose agenda items to the committee and also sit in on committee meetings when items of interest to them are being discussed.

Honorary life membership

Rod then informed the meeting that this year a nomination for life membership for Martin Chalk had been received and considered by the committee. He read out the citation that highlighted what a worthy candidate Martin was and the meeting accepted the proposal by acclamation. For the full citation see page 7.

Other Business

Mike Bremers informed the meeting of the upcoming launch of a book he and his daughter had recently published on the history of paddling on the Murray River.

(continued on page 6)

Annual General Meeting 17 August 2017; Meeting Report *(continued)*

Election of the management committee

Returning Officer, David Large, then took the floor and declared all committee positions vacant. He had received nominations for all executive and five committee positions. As there were no further nominations from the floor, David declared all nominees elected.

Management committee for 2017–18

<i>President</i>	Esther Gallant
<i>Vice President</i>	Quentin Moran
<i>Treasurer</i>	Chris Emery
<i>Secretary</i>	Sonja Lenz
<i>Immediate Past President</i> (ex officio)	Rod Griffiths
<i>Committee members</i>	
Cynthia Burton	Christine Goonrey
George Heinsohn	Julie May
Kevin McCue.	

A motion of thanks to the retiring committee was then put and endorsed by strong acclamation from the floor. Rod also thanked the new committee and especially the two new members, Cynthia Burton and Julie May.

Presentation on the bushfire symposium

The last agenda item was a presentation on the recent bushfire symposium by the symposium convener Christine Goonrey. [For a record of the symposium and Christine's presentation see pages 8 and 9 of this *Bulletin*].

Christine has been a member of the ACT Bushfire Council for the last decade and has long championed the notion that the public, government agencies, fire professionals and bushfire scientists should all be partners with a shared responsibility for bushfire

management. It was her idea to put together a symposium that would provide a place to voice all aspects of bushfire management.

Her very animated presentation was thoroughly enjoyed by her captivated audience and she was warmly thanked by all members present.

NPA policy on bushfire management

A new NPA Policy on Bushfire Management is envisaged to be one outcome of the fire symposium for our association. Please consider the draft NPA policy below and give your feedback to Christine Goonrey <mailto:cgoonrey@grapevine.com.au>.

NPA Draft fire management policy 2017

The National Parks Association of the ACT considers appropriate and sustainable fire management across the territory is of primary importance in conserving our natural heritage and protecting life and property.

NPA ACT supports:

1. Fire management regimes suited to different ecosystems, species, compositions and age classes, that take account of the impact of climate change on local ecosystems and exclude prescribed fire from

hydrologically and ecologically significant or sensitive areas.

2. Indigenous fire management as a key part of landscape fire management.
3. Long-term, systematic monitoring and research programs to better understand the fire ecology of ecosystems as a basis for fire management planning. NPA ACT will take an active role in promoting community awareness and understanding of fire management

research, science, policies and practice to ensure informed debate on fire management in the ACT.

4. Processes for community engagement well in advance of the review and development of the Strategic Bushfire Management Plan (SMBP), Regional Fire Management Plans (RFMP) and subsequent annual Bushfire Operational Plans (BOP).
5. A dedicated community-based 'fire in the environment' platform and network supported by the ACT Government.

New Committee members

Cynthia Burton

Cynthia is a long-term resident of Canberra with a deep love of Namadgi, where she regularly goes bushwalking. Cynthia has been the Canberra Bushwalking Club's (CBC) Conservation Officer for the past 4 years, preparing submissions on environmental issues of concern to the CBC, liaising with ConsACT, and acting as the CBC's

focal point for the Alpine Weed Project – a joint initiative with NPWS and Greening Australia. She joined the NPA environment subcommittee in early 2017. Cynthia has recently (mostly) retired from a long career as a humanitarian/development worker for both non-government and government aid agencies.



Julie May

Julie has always loved the bush and has covered many walks around Canberra, Australia and overseas. She studied science with a major in ecology at Melbourne University and did graduate diplomas in natural resource management and library and information

management at the University of Canberra. Julie is interested in the conservation of natural ecosystems and climate change mitigation.



NPA life membership to Martin Chalk

The following citation for Martin Chalk's nomination for Life Membership was presented at the AGM. Unfortunately, Martin had been unable to attend the meeting, but Rod Griffiths later presented him with his certificate at home.

Martin Chalk has been an active member of the national parks associations of the ACT and NSW for over 20 years. He has spent the past 18 years walking and working in Namadgi and our southern national parks and making a huge contribution to the conservation of these areas.

Martin has been the NPA ACT's Work Party Co-ordinator since 2003. This is a major role, entailing preparation of a detailed work plan in consultation with the national park rangers, ensuring publication of the work party program and arrangements in the *Bulletin*, and organising and making certain that all the equipment and materials needed are available, on location, on the day. On the monthly work parties that he leads, he and other volunteers undertake a variety of activities, mostly within Namadgi National Park, but also in surrounding NSW areas. Typical tasks include control of noxious shrubs and weeds, planting of native trees and removal of unwanted fencing. The results achieved are impressive, as are Martin's informative and succinct work party reports and accompanying maps.

As an ex-navigator of F111s, Martin has been generous in sharing his navigation skills (although at a much slower speed) and has led bushwalks and navigation courses for NPA ACT members.

In 2008 Martin organised the NPA ACT photographic competition

which centred on Namadgi National Park. The winning photographs were independently selected and published in a 2009 calendar. In 2010 he coordinated a photographic exhibition in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary celebrations for the NPA ACT. The exhibition, which took months of planning and preparing, was on display in libraries across the ACT for many months, re-located by Martin several times, thus spreading information about Namadgi and NPA ACT to new locations and audiences.

He has been an NPA representative on the Southern Ranges Advisory Committee of the NPWS and its various iterations for nearly 10 years, speaking up for the environmental values of southern Kosciuszko National Park and many more smaller but nevertheless significant national parks and nature reserves across southern NSW. This has involved a lot of travel over the years and extraordinary patience and wisdom in dealing with the many complex issues across this huge area. He has a particular passion for protecting the smaller, lesser-known national parks and reserves on the tablelands and western plains because they are the last remaining remnants of the bush as it was before agriculture took over. He has used this role to develop a strong voice for NPA ACT in the management of these parks and has organised a series of successful work parties at Dananbilla Nature Reserve in NSW to restore the woodlands and grasslands of an overgrazed rural property.

Along with Di Thompson and others he has worked to ensure NPA ACT has a



Martin in photographer mode. Photo by Max Lawrence.

clear and effective voice in the debate about feral horse management in KNP. Without the work this group is doing, the battle to control feral horses would already have been lost to the hostile lobby groups that resent national parks and apply tremendous political pressure to undo the work NPWS is trying to do.

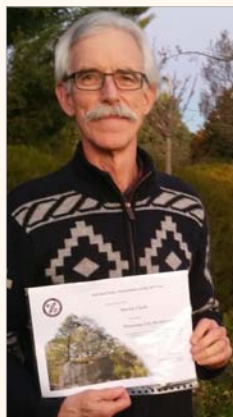
Martin was a founding member of the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group and has been undertaking ACT Waterwatch activities for this group just about every month since May 2003. It is painstaking and precise work and his data on stream and river health in Gudgenby are part of a national community water-quality monitoring program. Important information is provided on the health of the area as well as long-term data on the effects of fire, drought and flood.

Awarding life membership to Martin recognises his quiet, confident leadership; his thorough planning and long-term dedication to conserving our national parks and reserves; his willingness to share his skills and knowledge; and his ability to encourage others to contribute.

Dear NPA Members

I wish to thank you for your thoughtful award of life membership. I can still recall the evening, after work in my married quarter at RAAF Amberley, in late 1989 when I wrote two letters: one resigning from the QLD NPA and the other applying to join the NPA ACT. Little did I know then that the second letter would develop life strings that are second only to those of my family.

My bushwalking with the NPA has provided me with great experiences in Namadgi National Park and further afield. Some of those were uplifting and delightful while others were stress-loaded outings when things didn't quite go to plan. I can recall one Saturday afternoon, not long ago, when I led my colleagues down from the top of the ridge east of Nursery Swamp towards the Orroral Road; with destination not in sight and the sun rapidly becoming the same and the tangle of scrub taking issue with every step. Then quietly, Max piped up with 'next time, I'm going to get a letter from my Mum to say that I don't have to come'. That was just the



ticket to lift the mood and give me a nudge in the pants. These are the relationships that build a life.

The work parties were undertaken at the request of Namadgi National Park management in response to the devastation caused by the 2003 fires. Their initial focus was as part of the bushfire fire recovery program but eventually they developed a momentum of their own. Some of our long-term activities, like exotics control in the Blundell's Flat area, now have a strategic significance. Likewise, my NPWS contacts also approached me from time-to-time seeking assistance with various projects in the Capital Region. Perhaps the most significant, and most enjoyable for all participants, has been the work at Dananbilla Nature Reserve.

It has been an absolute privilege to be entrusted with peoples' safety as a walks leader and with the bush work that, in most cases, would not be done if it carried a price tag. Thank you all for your support.

Regards,
Martin Chalk.

NPA Bushfire Symposium, 21-22 July 2017

In mid 2016 the NPA ACT committee decided to invest a considerable amount in putting on a community symposium to discuss fire management. Since our last symposium in 2010 much has changed and we thought it timely to discuss new approaches to fire management well in advance of the next Strategic Bushfire Management Plan, due in 2019. Because committee members were busy with other big projects like the butterfly book, we decided to contract Clare Henderson at the ACT Conservation Council as conference planner to get things moving. It proved to be a very wise decision.

The symposium was designed to bring together fire managers, researchers, policymakers, senior administrators and the general public to listen to each other, to hear about the latest research and new tools. We wanted to clarify our expectations for fire management in the ACT in a changing climate and help ensure an informed ACT community is able to contribute positively to ACT government policy, goal setting and strategic directions of fire management.

Legal and consultation issues

The program began by exploring the parameters and restrictions which the legal framework imposes on fire management, with Dominic Lane, Emergency Services Authority Commissioner, and Daniel Iglesias, acting ACT Conservator, explaining their different roles and responsibilities. Professor Michael Eburn of the ANU College of Law then showed how the legislation enables 'agencies and communities [to] find ways to work together to manage both the demands of nature conservation and emergency risk management'.

A key element of successful consultations is understanding the different values each brings to the table and this was covered in our next session. Melinda Mylek outlined community attitudes to prescribed burning. Samantha Strong presented a fascinating



study of conflicting values struggling with the paradox of 'controlling the uncontrollable'. A particularly powerful insight was that myths around bushfires play a large part in our 'storylines, symbols and language'. Sandra Lauer's paper reinforced this point, outlining the dramatic changes taking place in traditional fire sheds and their impact on rural communities: 'Fire management is as much about managing differing values and expectations as it is about putting out fires.'

Managing fire risks

We then focused on what actually takes place in managing the fire risks in our national park and reserves. Tony Scherl, Senior Fire Management Officer, introduced some of his team at the Fire Management Unit of Parks and Conservation Service. He outlined the fire management planning framework for government lands, after which Adam McLachlan outlined the risk assessment and decision-support tool for prescribed burning. Ryan Lawrey explained the technology for post-burn monitoring and Craig Wainwright outlined the role of the Values Officer before, during and after any prescribed burn. The complexity and detail of planning, executing and monitoring of fuel reduction activities was mind-boggling and we have to acknowledge the dedication and skill of the fire management team.

Research on fire and its effects

Key researchers then gave us a glimpse into the complex and often controversial area of fire research. Development of extreme bushfires is not simply a matter of more fuel and more heat. Professor Sharples outlined the complex factors which can suddenly turn an ordinary fire into an extreme event with consequent risks to fire fighters. Phil Zylstra outlined his study into the modelling of fire behaviour, which proposes that 'the solution to fire risk is not fuel reduction but ecosystem management'. His work is moving beyond the longstanding McArthur model to show that flammability is not driven by fuel loads but by the species of plants present, their distribution across the landscape and the 'sheltering effect of plants' (will the plants overhead slow down the wind?).

Michael Doherty outlined his work on plant recovery after fires, demonstrating that it is often not the severity of the fires which is important, but their frequency; in fact, changes in species richness are more affected by rainfall than by fire severity.

Kelly Dixon, a research student at the Fenner School, asked the key question 'Is prescribed burning reducing fuel hazard?' Her data showed that the effects of fuel reduction last for 4-6 years but can be shorter, especially for the understorey. Fires on high hazard days are least affected by fuel hazard reduction. The hazard was highest after 12 years but zero after 96 years. This research strongly confirms the value of our long-unburnt country to the south of Namadgi National Park and worth keeping in mind.

Then we heard from the Conservation Research team in the Environment Department. Julian Seddon and Tony Corrigan outlined their research into the impact of current fire management practices on plants and fauna. Ecological thresholds are critical to sustainable fire management and we know very little about the thresholds for fauna. Alpine Ash requires a minimum of 25 years but fauna may need even longer. Different species of fauna respond differently to fire. They need suitable habitat, minimum viable population and minimum viable area. Connectivity and refugia on a landscape scale must be considered in fire management and planning.

(continued next page)



Symposium in session. Photo by Sabine Friedrich.



Indigenous wisdom

The next day began with Dean Freeman emphasising the importance of cultural burns to local Indigenous people. He explained how these honour cultural requirements, protect important sites and rejuvenate country. They are characterised by lighting up when the weather is cooler with slow-moving, low-intensity fires in broken lines of fire so small animals and insects can escape. They use natural fire sticks – grasses and sticks – rather than drip torches to allow the fire to follow a natural course. However, these burns have to fit into the broad fire management plans, the Bushfire Operational Plan and the prescription planning process.

Bhiamie Wahn Eckford-Williamson, an early recipient of an NPA ACT scholarship, explained how indigenous practices fit into wider fire management. He showed how, in spite of two centuries of dispersal and disempowerment, we can leverage off the cultural knowledge that continues to exist in Aboriginal communities. It is essential that this program be supported by clear guidelines and structural support throughout the organisation. Otherwise it could become merely an adjunct rather than a key part of fire management.

Climate change and environmental impacts

Professor Janette Lindesay, Deputy Director, Fenner School of the ANU, gave a clear and challenging outline of the growing impact of climate change; then Nicholas Daines, Parks and Conservation Service, showed us the impacts of fires on weeds and pest animals. Professor Ian Falconer outlined the impacts of fire on our water supply. These three presentations were a clear wake-up call: we cannot just focus on protecting property, our environment is at increasing risk of devastating change unless we manage to mitigate the impacts of these threats and support resilience in our natural environment.

Community perspectives

As part of our discussion on the impacts of fire on our community Kathy Eyles talked about community understanding and perspectives of bushfire management in our Bush Capital. John Starr, former rural leaseholder at Kinlyside, talked about the difficulties of managing a farm and grass fuel-loads in the rural areas surrounding our city. Steve Angus, a local landholder and member of the ACT Rural Fire Service for 30 years and the ACT Bushfire Council, explained the challenges of

running a property beside Namadgi National Park, giving us a personal perspective on what it is like to live at the wildland interface. Nick Lhuede, Group Manager at Emergency Services Authority, outlined how building standards in bushfire-prone zones in the city will be required to meet ASA standards, ensuring those homes at the city-bush interface have an additional layer of protection from bushfire. This exploration of the urban interface finished with Ian Falconer outlining the role of our Community Fire Units.

Summing up

The last session, very ably chaired by Professor Steven Dovers, put together a draft communiqué summarising what we had learnt and where we thought we should put our energy in the coming months as the new Bushfire Management Plan is developed. This was followed by a well-earned cup of tea and a huge sense of achievement. Participants were invigorated by the debates, enthused by the sharing of information and daunted by the emerging risks. But we all were convinced we can work together to ensure an effective, resilient fire management plan emerges in the next 18 months.

Christine Goonrey

[Note: some papers are on the NPA ACT website.]



Left. Christine Goonrey with Dean Freeman and Bhiamie Wahn Eckford-Williamson on the podium for the session on Indigenous fire use.

Right. Phil Ingamells, VNPA, and Phil Zylstra discuss fire matters during a break.

Photos by Sabine Friedrich.



Fire, weed, erosion control on Blue Range

Blue Range lies on the western side of the Mount Franklin Road, just before the Condor Creek bridge. It is an intimidating tangle of commercial pine forests, pine wildings and native vegetation covering steep, erodible slopes. The range sits on the northern border of Namadgi National Park and is in the Lower Cotter Catchment area and so part of Canberra's water supply.

Following the severe impact of the 2003 fires, there was much debate on whether to replant the extensive pine plantations which had been destroyed, or return the area to native vegetation. In 2007 the government released the Lower Cotter Catchment Strategic Management Plan with the mission to 'Restore the lower Cotter catchment to a natural and stable condition that supports the delivery of clean water and that also allows for a range of activities that are compatible with the protection of water resources'.

So far so good, but fire management, weeds and erosion control were complex and expensive problems to solve. Time ticked on without much activity, except for the replanting of some pines.

High potential fire risk

The ACT Bushfire Council became concerned some years later that nothing had been done and the mix of pine wildings and native vegetation was developing into a very high fire risk. In some places the pine wildings formed an almost impenetrable barrier; fire crews would find it almost impossible to control a fire. After a site visit the council advised the government that funds had to be allocated as a matter of urgency to head off the problem. In 2015 the Auditor General tabled a report in the Legislative Assembly which pointed to the increasing risk to the catchment of continuing inaction. A draft management plan and funding for fire, weed and erosion control followed the next financial year.

Tackling the problem

But what to do? That was the question. Bulldozing the area could lead to extensive erosion. Hand-cutting the pine wildings to leave the native vegetation would be prohibitively expensive but retain enough vegetation to reduce the risk of erosion. Leaving the pine wildings to mature and crowd out the native species would also be expensive to maintain and only delay the problem. Parks and Conservation Service staff put their minds to the problem and

developed a range of options. In July 2017, Christian Ward, a manager with Parks and Conservation Service, invited us to inspect what they had come up with.

We first looked at an area on East West Road, where vandalism had caused a fire several years before and the area had been replanted with native species. It was a sad, barren landscape, the small trees and shrubs struggling in the disturbed topsoil even after several years of good rainfall. Clearly, fire has to be excluded from this area for many years yet.

Impressive results

We then looked at an experimental treatment in which a special machine, based on the trittering machines used in forestry production, was being used to selectively cull the pines and leave the native vegetation standing. The results after 18 months were impressive: stands of eucalypts, acacia and leptospermum stood in a dense mat of bracken and mulched pines which had been levelled almost to ground level. Some small pine wildings were popping up but the native species were predominant. An area further on had been treated with a machine that produced finer mulch and this area was even more impressive. Many small ground species were appearing even after only 12 months and it was not hard to see that this area would produce rich, varied ground cover that would inhibit weeds when the mulch broke down.

How the new approach works

Christian explained that this system focused on preserving the native trees and bushes already on site but also encouraged a diverse native ground layer. The bracken and mulch protect emerging species from animal grazing, erosion and weed competition. It was easy to imagine the different layers of healthy woodland emerging in a relatively short time frame.

More recently treated areas showed the impact of the machine more clearly. Bracken was the first to appear after only a few weeks but the foliage of the felled pines was still green. The deep mulch was retarding weeds and erosion and there was no sign of blackberries or St John's Wort, which are early invaders. Christian is a big fan of bracken, explaining that, as it is a native coloniser, other native species can out-compete it over time as part of natural succession. Its role in stabilising soil and

excluding weeds was invaluable in the short term.

We saw the machine responsible for this amazing process in action a little later. It is a massive machine, able to handle the 40-degree slopes which are common on Blue Range. Safety is a key issue for the operators, as it works like a huge chainsaw on a very large arm. Dave, the machine's operator explained that he mulched the top layer of the pines, avoiding any native trees, then took a swipe at the middle layer then another cut down to a few centimetres above soil level. The mulch was laid down across the slope so that any heavy rainfall would soak in, not erode the soil, particularly important on the various drainage lines and on the very steep slopes. Dave said he loves his job, loves seeing the native bush left standing after he's been through an area.

Other options

We also looked at an alternative process that involved bulldozing an area and building windrows to be burned later before reseeding the area. A few native trees or shrubs were left standing at the edges of these areas and, of necessity, the topsoil had been disturbed and exposed. Reseeding and tree-planting is expected to establish native species on the bare earth. This is a top-down approach which was used in Gudgenby at Boboyan Pines with mixed success. The idea is that establishing trees will create a canopy under which ground covers would gradually establish themselves.

We saw a third option on the way out of the forest. The lower branches of the pine wildings had been stripped up to 20 metres in from the roadside to enable fire-fighter access and control of a wildfire. This approach is no longer favoured as it only delays the problem of having to treat the dense pine – native vegetation stands further in.

It was a fascinating experience and Christian was a mine of information on each of the processes and their relative merits. Both from a firefighting and an environmental perspective, the trittering machine is an innovative and highly successful solution to what had seemed an intractable problem. It offers the best chance of a fully functioning native ecosystem in a relatively short time which, once established, will be able to recover from fire quickly, prevent erosion and exclude weeds. We can't wait to go back and see what happens over the next few years.

Christine and Michael Goonrey

Two additional species for the new edition of the *Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT*



Mountain Tea-tree *Leptospermum grandifolium* and White Box *Eucalyptus albens* have both been added to the forthcoming new edition of NPA's 'tree book'. The explanations follow.

Although Mountain Tea-tree was described and named in 1802 from a population on the Hawkesbury Sandstone, the ACT collections at the Australian National Herbarium (ANH) in Canberra were initially determined to be the closely related Woolly Tea-tree *L. lanigerum*. In *The Plants of the Australian Capital Territory*, Nancy Burbidge and Max Gray (1963) omitted any direct reference to Mountain Tea-tree, but did note that there were 'about 8–9 species' of Tea-tree in the ACT. In their 1970 *Flora of the Australian Capital Territory*, they included eight species but noted that there were two higher altitude variants of Woolly Tea-tree. We now see these variants as the ninth species occurring in the ACT, Mountain Tea-tree.

In 1979, the herbarium collections of these variants were redetermined as *L.*

lanigerum sens. lat. (i.e. a wider definition of the acceptable variation within the species, as described by Burbidge and Gray) by Joy Thompson. After she had published her 1983 paper redefining the generic limits of *Leptospermum*, and her 1989 paper on the species within the genus, Thompson redetermined the larger leaved variant of Woolly Tea-tree at the ANH as Mountain Tea-tree. Andrew Lyne from the then separate herbarium at the Australian National Botanic Gardens followed suit in the same year, 1992. This is why the earlier editions of the 'tree guide' do not include this species.

Victorian botanists had also initially 'lumped' or included four Victorian species within Woolly Tea-tree (Ewart 1931). But by 1972 Jim Willis had noted that 'field investigation shows them to be abundantly distinct, with little evidence of interbreeding', and so he recognised Mountain Tea-tree as a good species in *A Handbook to Plants in Victoria*, a couple of years after the publication of the *Flora of the Australian Capital Territory*.

As the specific name (*grandifolium*) implies, Mountain Tea-tree has largish leaves. The table lists some of the more readily observable differences between it and Woolly Tea-tree.

The *Flora of Victoria* describes its habitat as 'along watercourses, in gullies and on sheltered slopes in montane forests usually above c. 750 m'. Most ACT collections are from above 850 m.

The White Box story is significantly simpler. It is a species principally of the Western Slopes and warmer Tablelands of NSW, extending north to south-eastern Queensland and south-west into north-eastern Victoria, with disjunct populations in western Victoria and the southern Flinders Ranges of South Australia.

It had not been recorded in the ACT until the late 1990s when a single adult

tree was observed by Margaret Wheatley, then manager of Huntly station, on a relatively warm, gentle north-easterly slope north of Mount Stromlo and east of the Uriarra Road. She has a very good eye for plants and had observed that it differed from the other box-barked eucalypts on Huntly.

Margaret Wheatley sought help from Simon Katz of Greening Australia and in February 2001 Peter Ormay from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service collected herbarium material that was subsequently identified as White Box by Andrew Slee from ANH. It survived the 2003 fire, and after that, Margaret Wheatley organised the planting of 20–30 White Box seedlings in an enclosure which she had had constructed around the mature individual. The younger plants were not grown from its seed.

The closest NSW population is at Taemas Bridge, further down the Murrumbidgee River, upstream from Burrinjuck Dam.

The management issue now is whether the enclosure should occasionally be opened to stock to crash-graze the dense growth of principally pasture and other introduced grasses. This is not only inhibiting the germination of eucalypt seedlings but could also be a fire risk when it cures in summer. The previous manager, Ian Hughes, was reluctant to do this, as he thought that cattle might ring-bark or otherwise damage the saplings. In the 1955 edition of *A Key to the Eucalypts* W.F. Blakely noted that 'the leaves are relished by cattle'.

Isobel Crawford



The untidy shedding bark of Mountain Tea-tree.

Field characters which separate Mountain and Woolly Tea-tree

Character	Mountain Tea-tree	Woolly Tea-tree
Bark on larger stems	Smooth, in papery layers shed in strips or flakes which remain untidily about the stems (<i>photo at right</i>)	Rough, fibrous, persistent, i.e. does not peel
Leaf dimensions	20–30 mm x 3–8 mm	3–15 mm x 1.5–4 mm
Leaf orientation	Usually suberect	Usually spreading
Fruit diameter	8–10 mm	5–10 mm

Two new NPA projects

From an outing to the Soft Landing Company's mattress recycling facility at Hume organised by Esther Gallant (see March 2107 *Bulletin*), an idea to recycle the coconut fibre in some old mattresses was hatched: rather than send it to landfill, why not make it into coir logs for erosion control?

The next steps were, first to see if the company would agree to extracting the coconut fibre and make the coir logs, and second to determine if Parks and Conservation Service would allow the constructed logs to be deployed in



*Trial coir 'logs' made to test a bright idea.
Photo by Kevin McCue.*

Canberra Nature Park and Namadgi National Park.

Both agreements were obtained, so we then applied for a small grant from the Molonglo Catchment Group through the Friends of Aranda Bushland to test the concept, and were awarded \$429!

Another project, 'Monitoring of Rosenberg's Goanna (*Varanus rosenbergi*) in Namadgi National Park', has been joined by NPA to investigate the numbers, home ranges, habits and distribution of this goanna in Namadgi. The species is on the NSW threatened species list but little is known of its numbers and distribution in the ACT.

Isobel Crawford and Kevin McCue are the NPA ACT participants, but they would like to hear from other NPA members willing to track the goannas (see below) and help with analysis (photo interpretation etc.) and computer support. Other participants in the project are Dr Don Fletcher (ANU), Dr Brian Green and Enzo Guarino (UC), and ACT Parks and Conservation.

Monitoring will start in spring 2017 and finish by winter 2018. Two GPS tracking packs will be attached to captured Rosenberg's Goannas using standard ethical methods and the animals released and tracked in their home range with a VHF radio receiver and high-gain Yagi antennae. Home ranges can be assessed from onboard GPS loggers after remote download of movement data. Several time-lapse cameras will be deployed in the area to provide additional information on the identity and movement of individual animals. Location data and photographs will be stored in a database.

NPA ACT has purchased two VHF radios for this project; the tracking VHF receiver will be provided by one of the other partners. The partner organisations will also provide time and vehicles.

We hope that this pilot study will lead to a larger project to determine the status of Rosenberg's Goanna in the ACT.

Watch this space.

Kevin McCue

Bettongs bounce back beyond a fence ...

As Europeans first ventured onto the Limestone Plains they encountered a vast array of endemic wildlife, from long-legged Bush Stone-curlews to beautiful bouncing bettongs. What an amazing sight these petite bettongs must have been, bounding effortlessly across the open grassy woodlands.

With time an introduced predator would have a momentous impact, the carnivorous feral fox wreaking havoc. Eastern Bettongs became extinct on the mainland. In the 1920s, fox-free Tasmania was an island refuge for this resilient little marsupial.

Today bettongs are bouncing back thanks to a highly successful breeding program emerging from Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. As you meander through Mulligan's Flat Sanctuary on a warm summer evening the direct benefits from this rewarding program can be seen: a wonderful species has returned to a place in its original native range.

In collaboration with partners from the ANU, Woodlands Wetlands Trust and Threatened Species Recovery Hub the next remarkable chapter of this pioneering recovery program is underway. With populations well-established in the Bush Capital, an innovative feasibility trial exploring the possibilities for bettongs to bounce beyond a fence is underway. Over many

seasons, an extensive fox and wild-dog control program has been implemented within the Lower Cotter Catchment, remote-sensing cameras yielding pictures of a landscape drastically reduced of would-be predators. With reduced densities of feral pests set against rigorous ethical approvals, an exciting phase of bettongs slowly being reintroduced into this modified environment has occurred. Advances in the tactical design of integrated vertebrate pest control programs have created a real sense of reserved optimism.

As ecological engineers, the recovering landscape of the Lower Cotter Catchment is an ideal environment for bettongs to work their magic, returning nutrients, improving soil condition, nurturing our catchment. With a small cohort group fitted with individual radio tracking collars, regular welfare health checks have seen these remarkable little pioneers step where once their ancestors roamed free.

To date the signs are encouraging, speaking as they do of the scientific professionalism in the design and implementation of a

cutting-edge species recovery program. While the loss of any individual is undesirable, the survival rate exceeds comparable programs, suggesting that the only source of knowledge is experience, insights and lessons learnt informing the next phase.

Reflecting on the philosophy underpinning this remarkable project gives you hope for the future. A future in which threatened species may one day roam in a managed landscape beyond a fence, an environment in which the pressure from exotic predators has been curtailed. What a truly wonderful day that would be.

Brett McNamara

Regional Manager with ACT Parks and Conservation Service



*Bettong being released into Lower Cotter.
Photo supplied by Brett McNamara.*

Butterfly larva looping the loop

Last summer, inspired by the NPA's *Field Guide to the Butterflies of the ACT*, I began a determined effort to photograph all the butterfly life cycle stages. My subjects were Orchard and Dainty Swallowtails on and around my espaliered lemon tree. The various stages were relatively easy to identify – even the very mobile adults.

The transitions were the challenge.



Egg-laying and hatching were captured early on, as were the various larval moults. And I was able to follow single individuals from hatch to pupation.

It was not until after what should have been the end of the butterfly season that I captured one of the very puzzling transformations. After the first frost on 11 May I discovered a tiny (ca 2 cm long) Orchard Swallowtail larva on the lemon tree. Since it seemed unlikely to survive to pupation and thus through the winter, I brought it inside to a 0.5 by 0.5 m box with a flyscreen top and containing some lemon branches. There it grew to nearly 5 cm and displayed clear signs of impending pupation – changing from eating and resting to actively ‘pacing’ the cage.

I watched and waited for a day, and then learned how the larva managed to spin a loop that surrounds its body and hangs it from the pupation substrate – in this case the lemon branch. First it makes a pad with silk from spinnerets under its mouth and turns to attach the tail there. Then it makes a loop large enough for the body and struggles though (see photos). Unfortunately, I was out walking 2 days later when it shed the larval skin and changed into a pupa which can overwinter (last photo).

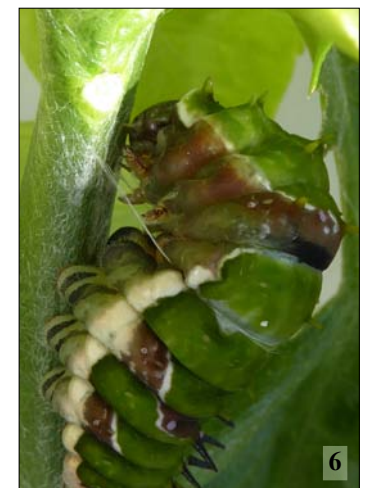
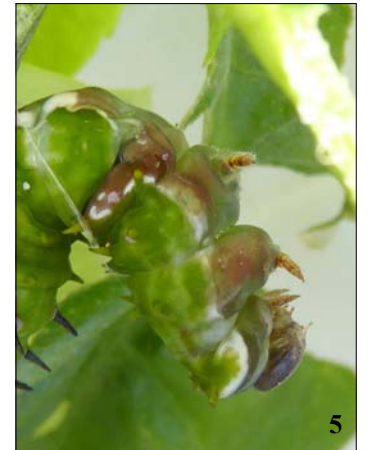
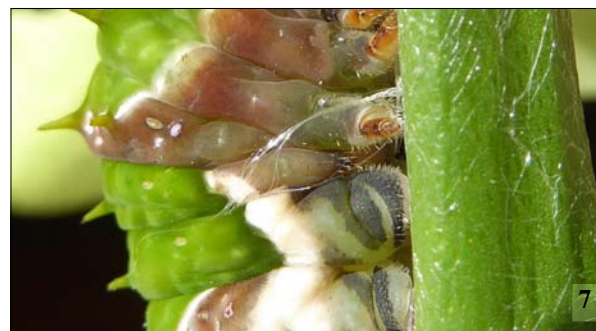
Challenges remain for next year: documenting how the larval skin is shed and the emergence of the adult from the pupa. However, the biggest question, in my mind, was how the larva got suspended from that loop.

Esther Gallant

Photos by Esther Gallant, clockwise from top left



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Silk loop made attached to twig. | 6. Almost done – rest. |
| 2. Feet go through. | 7. Damn – feet are caught. |
| 3. Stretch the loop. | 8. All sorted. |
| 4. Push head through. | 9. Two days later. |
| 5. Work the loop back. | 10. Two hours later. |



Art week at Gudgenby Cottage

In May a small group of people took the opportunity to enjoy from a couple of days to the whole week at the cottage. Art week is open to all NPA members and is always a special opportunity to take time out to enjoy the surrounding nature and wildlife. Weaving, watercolour painting and poetry were the main pursuits, with Maria Boreham providing some painting lessons in pen-and-ink and watercolour over the last weekend.

This year the week began with the GBRG work party on the Saturday where we spent time chipping *Verbascum* and other weeds until afternoon teatime. All 16 members who attended the work party crammed into the cottage sitting room feeling satisfied with the work that had been done that day. Ranger Ben came in to provide an

update on activities within the park and also to enjoy some home-baked cakes.

On Sunday it rained, preventing John from doing any of his barbed wire sculptures, so Isobel and John went exploring, checking out the profuse array of invasive plants behind the homestead. More work parties required there!

During the week, it was very quiet, with only Fiona and Hazel in residence, Adrienne coming in later towards the weekend. The only visitors during the week were Sarah and Jocelyn who came over from the homestead for morning tea. We enjoyed catching up with them again. Most mornings we would sit on the veranda and enjoy the sunshine and views but by Friday the rain came in again. We could hear the rain pounding on the roof and washing onto the

veranda so it was no surprise when Ben later told us we had 65 mm.

Bruce and Maria arrived on Friday ready to get everyone interested in her style of artwork and we happily painted gum leaves, beetles and sketches of the homestead. Adrienne enhanced with pen-and-ink her holiday sketch book, which she had taken to the Galapagos Islands to record her memories.

So another very enjoyable Art Week ended with those who attended feeling happy that they had made the effort to come out. It does take planning to provide food for the week and the cottage can get a little cold if you are not near the fire! But the advantages definitely outweigh any minor discomforts, as the cottage will always be a special place in the bush.

Hazel Rath

Frosty morning at Gudgenby

The white jet streams
Define the direction of Canberra airport.
The flights south-west
Do not disturb the grazing kangaroos
Moving across the frost covered grass.

A huge earless brown 'roo
Called 'Earless Joe' is amongst them.
The melting water droplets on the wire fence
Shine in the sunlight as the earth warms
And the kangaroos lie down to bask in the warmth
As do we humans sitting on the cottage veranda.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

Enchanted

all night
I track the moon
pale and lonely
in the hushed forest
of Namadgi

this grey day
sitting on a granite slab
watching
clouds drift, trees wave
listening to silence

climbing down
the pinnacle
cautiously
feeling for footholds
friction and balance

astride the summit ridge
staring out into greyness
mist creeps
up the rock face towards me
gerry in the clouds again

breathing in
that enchanted valley
far below
breathing out all symptoms
and procedures

Gerry Jacobson

Snorkelling Mimosa

Snorkelling with my \$6 goggles in a frothing wild aquarium between the outer and inner reefs near Bithry Inlet, Wapengo, in Mimosa Rocks National Park, I suddenly turned with a touch of primal fear to make sure a certain finned shadow was not stalking me. To my delight and surprise, I was being followed by dozens of small, striped and jaunty coloured fish picking up morsels dislodged by my giant, seaweed-strafting body. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, came a large school of Whiting, glinting brightly, and appearing translucent as though X-rayed by invisible hands. Within touching distance, they circled as I rotated, circled as I rotated, circled as I rotated ...

I felt like Jodi Mitchell's 'Captive on the carousel of time' in her haunting and catchy song *The Circle Game*:

We can't return, we can only look
behind
from where we came
and go round and round and round
in the circle game.

Finally, with icicle fingers and toes, it dawned on me I was a warm-blooded mammal who could no

longer return to the sea from which my ancestors came. Under the all seeing eyes of a Sea Eagle and some non-plussed kangaroos I flung my arms into the air, released some deep joy, gave my salt-stiffened towel a bear hug and built a fire to get warm.

It was reassuring that here at least the sea was bountiful and the fish not afraid.

Klaus Hueneke

NPA outings program

September – December 2017



Bushwalk Grading Guide

Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A Road, fire-trail or track | E Rock scrambling |
| B Open forest | F Exploratory |
| C Light scrub | |
| D Patches of thick scrub, regrowth | |

Day walks Carry lunch and snacks, drinks, protective clothing, a first aid kit and any required medication.

Pack walks Two or more days. Carry all food and camping requirements. CONTACT LEADER EARLY.

Car camps Facilities often limited. Vehicles taken to site can be used for camping. CONTACT LEADER EARLY.

Work parties Carry items as for day walks plus work gloves and any tools required. Work party details and location sometimes change, check NPA website, www.npaact.org.au, for any last minute changes.

Other activities include ski trips, canoe trips, nature rambles and environment or field guide studies.

Wednesday walks (WW). Medium or somewhat harder walks arranged on a joint NPA, BBC (*Brindabella Bushwalking Club*) and CBC (*Canberra Bushwalking Club*) basis for fit and experienced club walkers. Notification and details are only emailed to members registered for WW. Only NPA-hosted WW are shown in this program. For WW email registration, contact the *Outings Convener*.

Transport The NPA suggests a passenger contribution to transport costs of **40 cents per kilometre** for the distance driven divided by the number of occupants of the car including the driver, rounded to the nearest dollar. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader. Drive and walk distances shown in the program are approximate for return journeys.

*NPA ACT members undertaking walks or other activities in this program are advised they should have **PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE** or, at least, **AMBULANCE COVER** in case of an accident requiring evacuation by ambulance or helicopter.*

Points to note

Please help keep our outings program alive by volunteering to lead outings. New leaders are welcome. The *Outings Convener* is happy to suggest locations suitable for a walk if you do not have something in mind. Feel free to send in suggestions for outings with a suggested date to the *Outings Convener* by email to outings@npaact.org.au

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

In voluntarily participating in these activities conducted by the NPA ACT, participants should be aware that they could be exposed to risks that could lead to injury, illness or death or to loss of or damage to property. These risks could include but are not limited to slippery and/or uneven surfaces, rocks being dislodged, falling at edges of cliffs or drops or elsewhere, risks associated with crossing creeks, hypothermia, heat exhaustion and the risks associated with any of the Special Hazards listed on the *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form* provided by the leader at the activity.

To minimise these risks participants should endeavour to ensure that the activity is within their capabilities and that they are carrying food, water, equipment, clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity. Participants should advise the leader if they are taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect their participation in the activity. Participants should make every effort to remain with the rest of the party during the activity and accept the instructions of the leader. By signing the *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Form* participants agree that they understand these requirements and have considered the risks before choosing to sign the form and waiver any claim for damages arising from the activity that they might have against the association, the leader or any other participants in tort or contract.

Children under 18 years of age are welcome to come on NPA ACT activities provided they are accompanied by a parent, guardian or close relative. Parents or Guardians will be required to sign a specific *Risk Waiver for a Child* form.

Leaders to note. Please send copies of completed *Attendance Record and Risk Waiver Forms* to Brian Slee, contact 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au
NPA has a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) available to leaders. The PLB, can be obtained from Steven Forst, contact 0428 195 236 or steven.forst@iinet.net.au

The trig at the top of Mount Gudgenby. Photo by Philip Gatenby.



NPA outings program September – December 2017 (page 2 of 4)

TBA **Mid-week work parties** **DANANBILLA NATURE RESERVE**

Leader Martin Chalk,
Contact 0411 161 056

Two work parties in the planning stages are likely to occur during the period of this program. Details are not available at time of publication. If you are interested, keep an eye on NPA's online events or contact Martin, Volunteer Work Party Coordinator.

3 September **Sunday Walk** **DEVILS GAP AND GIBRALTAR ROCKS**

Map Tidbinbilla 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Margaret Power

Contact 0418 645 303 or

power000@tpg.com.au

Start from Flints picnic area in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve. Walk up to Devils Gap and follow a fire trail and the foot track up to Gibraltar Rocks. After a break descend to Dalsetta then off-track back to Flints. Meet at Park & Ride car park, Kirkpatrick Street (Weston) near the ADF College (turn into Kirkpatrick Street from Cotter Road). Depart at 8.30 am.

Drive 60 km, \$24 per car + reserve entry fee.

9 September **Saturday Work Party** **GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP**

Leader Michael Goonrey

Contact 6231 8395 or 0419 494 142 or

mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9.15 am. Car pool to Gudgenby Valley. Barbed wire fence removal between Old Boboyan Road and Hospital Creek. Tools provided.

16 September **Saturday Walk** **MAURICE LUTON FIRE TRAIL**

Map Yaouk 1:25,000

Grading 3 A

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@iinet.net.au

A walk in the upper Naas Valley to the ACT border crossing on the Maurice Luton Fire Trail. A pleasant spot for lunch in a high forest grove behind Sentry Box Mountain. Meet at Kambah Village Shops for an 8.30 am departure.

Drive 150 km, \$60 per car.

17 September **Sunday Walk** **LITTLE TWYNAM (SNOWSHOE)**

Map Perisher Valley 1:25,000

Grading 2 B (on snow)

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 (h) or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 6.15 am and drive to Guthega. Walk via Illawong and follow Twynam Creek on its north and west sides to Little Twynam. Return on opposite side of

Twynam Creek. Magnificent views. Some hard climbs. Afternoon tea at Jindabyne.

Participants hiring snowshoes should have them prior to departure. Book with leader by Saturday morning for weather check, departure point and car arrangements (chains may be required). Alternative destination: Mount Twynam (if conditions excellent).

Drive 420 km, \$168 per car + park entry fee.

23 September **Saturday Work Party** **BENDORA ARBORETUM**

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 6292 3502

We last visited this site in April 2015. This work party will involve removing wilding pines from around Bendora Arboretum and eucs and other natives from within. Please bring gloves and a bush saw. Meet at Coolman Court (behind McDonald's) at 8.00 am.

Drive 92 km, \$38 per car.

24 September **Sunday Walk** **MOUNTS MAJOR AND MINOR**

Joint NPA / BBC walk

Map Bombay 1:25000

Grading 2 A/B/C

Leader Barrie R

Contact 0437 023 140

A lovely walk with a variety of terrain and vegetation, and great views. Begin in forest on the Jinglemoney Fire Trail, Tallaganda NP; ascend Mount Major, followed by several ups and downs. A walk of about 12 km and 600 m climb. Mostly off track with rough, steep ground, rock scrambling and some patches of thick scrub.

Scrub gloves and gaiters recommended, possibly eye protection. Bring plenty of water. Walkers will need to be fit with off-track and scrambling experience. Higher clearance vehicles would be appreciated. Bring tea/coffee/snacks for after the walk. Meet at Spotlight car park, Bungendore Road (Kings Highway), Queanbeyan at 8.20 am for prompt departure at 8.30 am.

Drive about 100 km, \$40 per car.

27 September **Wednesday Walk** **Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity**

Leader Mike S

Contact 0412 179 907

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

30 September – 2 October **Pack Walk** **BEN BOYD NATIONAL PARK**

Maps Kiah and Eden 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/C

Leader Rupert Barnett

Contact 6242 5241 or

rupert.b@iinet.net.au

The 30-km Light to Light Track connects

historic Boyds Tower to Green Cape Light. To do so it winds through heathland, forests and gully behind the red headlands, wave-washed platforms and beaches of this attractive coast. Camp at remote spots as we walk it over 3 days, or do shorter walks from the drive-in access points. Either way sleep with the sounds of the surf nearby. More details available; please book some days ahead. **Maximum 8.**

Drive 675 km, \$270 per car + park entry fee (\$8).

1 October **Sunday Walk** **RENDEZVOUS AND MIDDLE CREEKS**

Map Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000

Grading 3 A/C

Leader Mike S

Contact 0412 179 907

A walk from the car park at Rendezvous Creek to visit historic sites including old hut sites and the remains of Rowleys Hut, stockyards, an airstrip, a grave, a significant rock shelter and the cascades on Middle Creek, where we'll have lunch. Walk is mostly off track in grasslands but with a bit of light scrub. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8 am.

Drive 100 km, \$40 per car.

7–15 October **Saturday to Sunday** **ART WEEK AT GUDGENBY**

Leader Adrienne

Contact 0412 179 907

adrienne@grapevine.com.au

See notice on page 21.

7–27 October **Day and pack walking** **ACT BORDER WALK**

Leader Rod Griffiths

Contact 0410 875 731 or

rod.blackdog@gmail.com

The aim is to walk the 300 km ACT–NSW border through a series of consecutive day walks and two pack walks. If interested in participating in the walk, part of the walk or providing support to the walkers please contact the leader.

For more information and the full schedule see the blog site at

<https://walktheborderact.wordpress.com/>

8 October **Sunday Walk/Drive** **GLENBURN PRECINCT KOWEN FOREST**

Map The Glenburn Precinct brochure from www.npaact.org.au under Friends of Glenburn

Grading 1 A

Leader Col McAlister

Contact 6288 4171 or

cvmac@grapevine.com.au

A visit to several historic sites to see recent developments including three newly constructed walking/cycling heritage trails. Walk part of the Glenburn heritage trail. Meet at Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 9.00 am for car pooling.

Drive 60 km, \$24 per car.

NPA outings program September – December 2017 2017 (page 3 of 4)

8 October Sunday Walk KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK (SNOWSHOE)

Leader Brian Slee
Contact 6281 0719 or
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Destination will depend on snow depth and conditions. Contact leader by Friday evening for weather check, departure point and time, and car arrangements (chains may be required).

Drive 420 km, \$168 per car + park entry fee + possible chairlift fee.

9–13 October 'Car camp' YATHONG NATURE RESERVE

Maps Mount Allen 1:100,000 and
Coombie 1:100,000

Grading 2 B/C/E/F

Leader John Brickhill
Contact 0427 668 112 or
johnbrickhill@gmail.com

Yathong is about 500 km to the north-west of Canberra, in central NSW. Accommodation in shearers quarters. Cost about \$15 per person per night. This reserve of 115,604 ha has semi-arid woodlands, mallee and rocky hills. We will visit a few other reserves while travelling between Canberra and Yathong. **Numbers limited.**

Note: This trip is fully booked.

14 October Saturday Work Party GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Leader Michael Goonrey
Contact 6231 8395 or 0419 494 142 or
mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9.15 am. Car pool to Gudgenby Valley. Weeding and spraying around Frank and Jacks Hut. Plantings at the track rehabilitation site will also be checked. Tools provided.

14 October Saturday Walk 46th BLACK MOUNTAIN SPRING WILDFLOWER RAMBLE

Friends of Black Mountain

Contact Libby Viccars 02 6296 1936 or
friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com
Meet at 9.30 am, Belconnen Way entry to Black Mountain Reserve, just before Caswell Drive turnoff – watch for balloons.

A social ramble for wildflower lovers in the tradition established by Nancy Burbidge.

BYO morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and wear stout shoes. Will finish at 12 noon or a little later. **Booking Essential** to ensure we have enough guides.

20 October Friday Spotighting Walk MULLIGANS FLAT Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Map Hall 1:25,000

Grading 1 A

Leader Isobel Crawford

Contact 6257 1860 (h) or
orru@iinet.net.au

This 'twilight tour' will be led by a Woodlands and Wetlands Trust ecologist.

The cost is \$30 per person, payable in advance. Contact the leader for more information and/or to make a booking. (See notice page 23).

21–29 October Car camp WEDDIN MOUNTAIN AND NANGAR NPS Joint NPA / BBC activity

Leader Mike S

Contact 0412 179 907

Nine days of car camping and day walking in these two central NSW national parks near Forbes (3 full days in each NP plus 3 days for travelling to, from and between). October will be wildflower time out west but we may be towards the end of the best showing. For details of day-to-day activities or to express interest contact the leader early. **Numbers limited.**

25 October Wednesday Walk Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or
steven.forst@iinet.net.au

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

28 October Saturday Work Party BRASHAWS TO WESTERMANS

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 0411 161 056

A work party to remove broom in the area between Brayshaws and Westermans huts. The location of the broom plants is known to NNP rangers and the duty ranger will assist the group to locate them. All tools and equipment will be provided, just bring an appetite to sweep the area and a GPS. Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre at 8.30 am.

Drive 90 km, \$36 per car.

29 October Sunday Walk MOUNT GINGERA FROM CORIN DAM

Map Corin Dam 1:25,000

Grading A/B

Leader Margaret

Contact 0448 924 357 or
power000@tpg.com.au

Starting from Corin Dam, ascend steeply to Stockyard Spur, climbing about 600 m over about 2 km distance. Continue on to Mount Gingera via Pryors Hut. After lunch on Gingera return by the same route, finishing with a steep descent. This walk (approximately 19 km return) involves a full morning ascent of more than 900 m from Corin Dam to Mount Gingera. Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.00 am.

Drive 43 km, \$17 per car.

5 November Sunday Walk BUGTOWN CREEK

Maps Denison and Tantangara
1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B/C/F

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 or
brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Depart 7.00 am from Kambah Village Shops. Drive through Adaminaby and 6 km west turn right onto Bugtown Road and park 8 km north. Follow Bugtown Creek north to Nungar Plain and tiny Brayshaws Hut for lunch. Return via Circuits Fire Trail. 14 km. Afternoon tea Adaminaby. Contact leader by Saturday morning. Bugtown Road is 4WD and alternative destination is possible if conditions unsuitable.

Drive 230 km, \$92 per car.

4–6 November Pack Walk RENDEZVOUS CREEK VALLEY

Map Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Esther

Contact 0429 356 212 or
galla001@umn.edu

On Saturday stroll up the valley to camp for 2 nights on a knoll above the creek. There will be time to just relax and enjoy the bush and/or to express your creative skills with camera or brush/pencil. On Sunday walk further up the valley to the Cascades for lunch. Return to cars on Monday. Contact leader by Monday 30 October for time and transport arrangements.

Drive 95 km, \$38 per car.

6–11 November Pack Walk BUDAWANGS CIRCUIT

Maps Corang and Endrick 1:25,000

Grading 3 A/D/E

Leader Philip Gatenby

Contact 0401 415 446 or
jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

Six days in the Budawangs starting from the Wog Wog entrance to Morton National Park. Go to Hollands Gorge, climb Folly Point and head to The Vines and south to Styles Creek. Return to Wog Wog via Mount Tarn and Corang Lagoon. Mostly on track, some of which is overgrown. Off-track sections may involve patches of thick scrub. Steep climb out of Hollands Gorge. Limit of 8. Contact leader, preferably by email, by Friday 3 November.

Drive 250 km, \$100 per car.

7 November Tuesday Work Party GLENBURN PRECINCT KOWEN FOREST

Leader Col McAlister

Contact 6288 4171 or
cvmac@grapevine.com.au

Work in the Glenburn Precinct to be

NPA outings program September – December 2017 (page 4 of 4)

negotiated with the Parks Service. Meet at the Canberra Railway Station, Kingston at 9.00 am or the locked gate a bit before 9.30 am. Drive 60 km, \$24 per car.

11 November Saturday Work Party GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Leader Michael Goonrey

Contact 0419 494 142 or

mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9.15 am. Car pool to Gudgenby Valley. Weeding and spraying above Bogong Creek in the Croajingalong area. Tools provided.

12 November Sunday Walk

MOLONGLO VALLEY

Map Canberra 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Esther

Contact 0429 356 212 or

galla001@umn.edu

A walk from the end of Stockdill Drive to Kama Nature Reserve. Great views across the Molonglo Valley. Lunch along the Molonglo River. Meet at 9 am at Kama Nature Reserve car park on north side of William Hovell Drive. A short car shuffle will be required.

18 November Saturday Walk

DEMANDERING HUT

Map Colinton 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@iinet.net.au

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. A walk along the Naas Valley from the Mount Clear Campground, mainly following the fire trail. There are several creek crossings to cool our feet along the way before we reach the picturesque Demanding Hut for lunch. A wander back along the Naas to the cars in the afternoon.

Drive 160 km, \$64 per car.

18–20 November Pack Walk

MOUNT KELLY

Maps Rendezvous Creek and Yaouk 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B/C/D

Leader Dave Kelly

Contact 6253 1859 or

janddkelly@gmail.com

A 3 day pack walk to Mount Kelly and back in south-west Namadgi. Unfortunately, some scrub is likely to be encountered on the way as the tracks in the wilderness area are disappearing. However, the views in all directions from Mount Kelly are well worth the effort. Contact leader by Wednesday 15 November for more details and transport arrangements.

Drive 120 km, \$48 per car.

22 November Wednesday Walk

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Barrie R

Contact 0437 023 140

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

25 November Saturday Work Party

MAX AND BERTS HUT

Leader Martin Chalk

Contact 0411 161 056

This work party will be our fourth to Max and Berts Hut in a remote location on the Booth Range above the Naas River about 10 km south of Caloola Farm. Access to a point below the hut will be by vehicle and the last 1 km (horizontal) and 200 m (vertical) will be on foot. The site is delightful and deserves our attention by removing the scattered briars. Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.00 am.

Drive 88 km, \$36 per car.

29 November Wednesday Walk

Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity

Leader Philip Gatenby

Contact 0401 415 446 or

jandp.gatenby@optusnet.com.au

Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact the leader.

2 December Saturday Walk

SETTLERS TRACK AND THE BORDER

Maps Yaouk and Shannons Flat 1:25,000

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Steven Forst

Contact 0428 195 236 or

steven.forst@iinet.net.au

Meet at Kambah Village Shops at 8.30 am. A walk from Brayshaws Hut along the Settlers Track then crossing Grassy Creek to follow the border fire trail back to Westermans Homestead before returning to the cars. The walk is mainly on track in forest shade.

Drive 160 km, \$64 per car.

3 December Sunday Walk

MOUNT MAJURA AND MOUNT AINSLIE

Map Canberra street directory

Grading 2 A/B

Leader Margaret

Contact 0448 924 357 or

power000@tpg.com.au

This walk has variations to the usual path. After a short car shuffle, a steep off-track ascent to the summit of Mount Majura. After morning tea, ascend Mount Ainslie from the east, with lunch along the way, then descend on the main track to the War Memorial and our waiting car(s). Climbs of approximately 450 m. Optional afternoon tea at Wilbur's in Hackett. Meet at 9.00 am at the parking area beside 39 Mackenzie Street, Hackett

(near the end of Grayson Street). NB: The walk will not proceed if the forecast temperature is for 30 degrees or above.

9 December Saturday Work Party and Christmas Party

GUDGENBY BUSH REGENERATION GROUP

Leader Michael Goonrey

Contact 6231 8395 or 0419 494 142 or

mjgoonrey@grapevine.com.au

Meet at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Tharwa at 9.15 am. Car pool to Gudgenby Valley. Weeding and spraying around Gudgenby Cottage. Tools provided. Stay for Christmas lunch at the Cottage. Bring a plate to share. Some drinks provided.

10 December Sunday NPA CHRISTMAS PARTY

Leader President / Vice-President

Details in the next *Bulletin* or November's *Burning Issues* newsletter. Bring your own lunch. Snacks, dessert and some drinks provided.

17 December Sunday Morning Walk MOUNT STROMLO

Map Stromlo Forest Park Trail Map

Grading 1 A

Leader Brian Slee

Contact 6281 0719 or

brianslee@iprimus.com.au

Meet at 8.30 am at carpark outside Southern Cross Cafe on Mt Stromlo. A 2–3 hour walk on a combination of roads, fire trails and equestrian trails (avoiding mountain bike tracks), up and down and around mountain. Historic area, excellent views. Walk will be shortened if weather is hot. Brunch/lunch at cafe at conclusion.

23 December Saturday Walk

SWAMPY PLAIN RIVER HEADWATERS

Maps Perisher Valley and Youngal

1:25,000

Grading 2 A/C

Leader Mike Bremers

Contact 0428 923 408 or

mcbremers@gmail.com

Depart 7.00 am. Drive to Thredbo, take the chairlift and follow the Kosciuszko walk to Cootapatamba Lookout. Head off-track past Cootapatamba Hut and follow the watershed between Swampy Plain River and Leatherbarrel Creek to spot height 1977. Return to the chairlift via North Ramshead. Total distance of about 12–15 km and involves some climbs through low scrub. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Contact leader by Thursday evening for weather check and departure point.

Drive 420 km, \$168 per car + park entry fee.

Remembering Graeme Barrow

I felt I knew Graeme some years before I actually met him. Around the early 1990s I started to develop an interest in exploring the hills and bush in and around Canberra. As I ventured forth Graeme's book *25 Family Bushwalks in and around Canberra* was my constant companion.

I well remember the day early on when Col McAlister and I were out in the Brindabellas walking our way to Mount Gingera. We stopped at Pryors Hut and had a look in the Visitors Book. There was the name Graeme Barrow. And the date was today! Cripes, the Great Man was out here with us, somewhere. But, strangely we didn't come across him on that occasion. So we couldn't get his autograph.

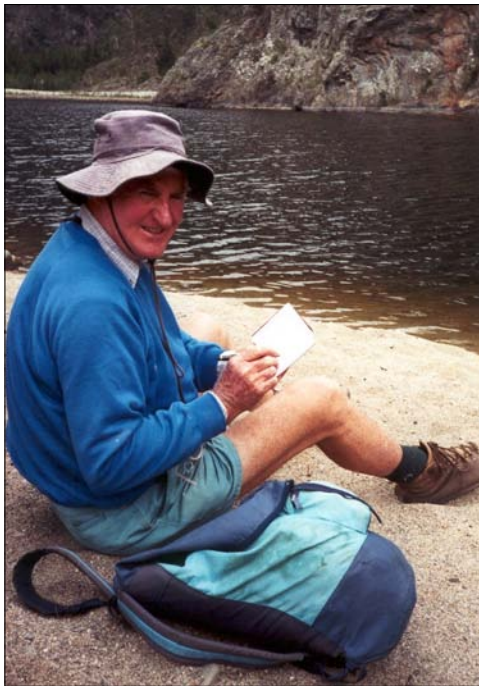
As my walking horizon expanded Col suggested I join the National Parks Association, of which he was a member. So I did, and I started going out with NPA on some wonderful walks to some wonderful places in excellent company.

Graeme was also a member of NPA, but I'm not sure that he ever actually went on any of our organised walks. Instead, he sought out experienced volunteers to go with him on his walks. He wanted to do it his way, and his way always involved another book. So that's how Col and I, and several other NPA walkers, got drawn in.

In the late 1990s Graeme took us to some great places, and we had some great times together. Some of the highlights included Tidbinbilla Mountain, the Pimple, Booths Hill, McKeahnie Trig, Cotter Rocks, Sentry Box, Mount Clear, and – best of all – Mount Gudgenby.

At the end of it all the inevitable book, published in the millennial year 2000, was *Namadgi and Tidbinbilla Classics: Tough Bushwalks in Canberra's High Country*, or *Classics* for short.

Classics is still my favourite, although it's now long out of print. As far as I know Graeme never contemplated a second edition. Which is possibly just as well because the 2003 fires burnt virtually the whole of



*On the Shoalhaven River at Long Point .
Graeme takes a break and updates his walking
notes for the fourth edition of his
Family Bushwalks tome, 2002.
Photo by Max Lawrence.*

Namadgi and Tidbinbilla, and the subsequent regrowth means that the walks are now quite a different proposition to those described in the book. Besides, by then we were all starting to run out of puff, and the idea of doing it all again was pretty daunting.

I remember going into Jurciewicz's Outdoor shop one day and spotting one of the last remaining *Classics* books on the shelf, so I promptly bought it. During the transaction I got into conversation with the fit looking young blokes behind the counter, and learned that Graeme's book was their 'bible', and they had in fact done most of the walks themselves. Lovely.

Following *Classics*, Graeme's energy to research and publish new books remained undiminished, although now the walks books tended to be a bit less energetic. The 'tough' label only ever appeared once, and that was on *Classics*. The south coast got coverage, and there were multiple editions of his Namadgi,

Tidbinbilla, and Hills and Rivers books. There was even a fourth edition of his original *Family Bushwalks* gem.

Being a very independent soul, Graeme did most of the walks for all of these new books by himself, but from time to time we were honoured with an invitation to come along – which we warmly welcomed.

I believe the walks book he will most be remembered for is *Walking Canberra: 101 ways to see Australia's national capital on foot*. This 160-page book was published only 3 years ago to celebrate Canberra's centenary, and is still in print. Beautifully illustrated, the design work was done by Mariana Rollgejer who is well known to NPA members for her great work on many NPA publications, including our new Butterfly masterpiece.

And then on top of all this walking Graeme churned out a whole series of history books on subjects as diverse as a shipwreck on the south coast; the story of a nineteenth century church architect; heritage homesteads; the comings and goings of Lake George; the Prime Minister's Lodge; his local cricket team; Bungendore; and many others.

Graeme died in early May, just short of his 81st birthday, and only weeks before the announcement that he had been awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List. His posthumous award was for services to local history and the community of the Australian Capital Territory.

Graeme will be missed by his NPA friends, the bushwalking fraternity, the Historical Society, his cricket and bowls mates, his bridge friends, and all who had any personal contact with him. He was a Canberra institution who will be missed, not only by his family and many friends, but by many many people who knew him only through his published works.

Max Lawrence

Ederic (Ed) Charles James Sutherland Slater, 1923–2017

Ed Slater, a creative wildlife photographer and film-maker with CSIRO, died peacefully at National Capital Private Hospital in May. He was a very early member of NPA ACT and amongst other things designed the association's logo with the kangaroo and emu footprints symbolising the two

animals in the Australian Coat of Arms – placed either side of a shield spelling out ACT.

He illustrated many books with his photographs, including children's books written by former NPA President, the late Eleanor Stodart, books on snails and grass.

Isobel Crawford is preparing a more detailed obituary that will be published in the December *Bulletin*.

Ed.

Book reviews

Clancy's Hat

The Story of Tim's lone journey from Canberra to Kosciuszko and a special Hat

by Phillip A Moses

Echo Books, West Geelong.

2017 246 pp.

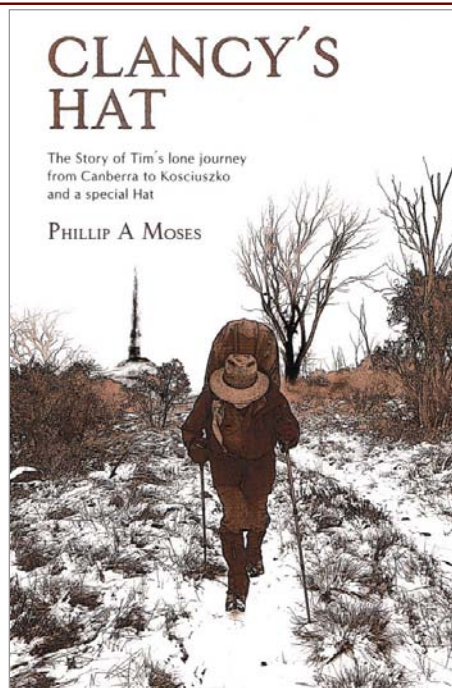
RRP \$29.95

My interest in the author did not arise from his previous writings (this is his fourth novel, one of which, *The Last Man Standing*, gained notoriety for its exposé of ADFA military training). No, I heard in 2016 that he had addressed Canberra Cross Country Ski Club on the subject of snowshoeing. It struck me as quixotic as my experience was that CCCSC members had no interest in the subject. So when he turned up to address them again in June this year, I was truly curious.

He was there to promote this book. Like *The Last Man Standing*, which drew heavily on personal experience (he has been a military officer), *Clancy's Hat* developed around the kernel of the author's 20 years of snowshoeing. It was an interest he acquired almost by accident when living in Sydney but which had come to deeply affect him. His extraordinary physical fitness allowed him to achieve significant feats of endurance in the mountains. He now lives in Canberra.

The story is about its hero, Tim, who walks from Tuggeranong to Eagles Nest (above Thredbo) and back via national parks. He is a curator at the National Museum of Australia who has prepared an exhibition on *The Snowy Region in Australian Culture and Myth* which is about to open. However, as a detached historian, he is dissatisfied with his level of understanding of the subject and feels an urge to get physically closer to it. He is drawn on by the discovery of a special hat (more about that later).

It is a nice idea. You can walk out your door in many parts of Canberra and having hardly crossed a road, soon be in Canberra Nature Park before linking up with Namadgi and Kosciuszko national parks and find yourself on the way to adventure. It is an image with particular appeal in the Bush Capital. But Tim's walk (with rudimentary training and in new boots!) is studded with feats of strength and endurance at odds with the character. Superman disguised as Clark Kent. The author concedes this in the Afterword (p. 245). Tim is stated to have poor navigation skills yet does



impossibly well. Any adult reader aware of the distances involved and the difficult nature of the terrain must scale a credibility mountain before they can relax and take in the story. Young readers may be more tolerant of Tim's superhero abilities.

Related in the first person, Tim's movements and activities, particularly early on, are methodical and disciplined as if he trained in the Army. Much of the narrative is simple observation of self and surrounds, and reflections upon them. Arianne, the partner he left behind, is often in his thoughts. Incidents which typically might be experienced in the region, including wildlife encounters, add to the flow.

Significant, possibly new material, on Aboriginal history enhances the story. There are strong environmental and heritage protection messages. NPA ACT gets a mention (p. 31) as does the Kosciuszko Huts Association (pp. 19–20). Water conservation is examined on pp. 124–125. The issue of brumbies is viewed from all angles with a fence-sitting conclusion which will satisfy no one. Pig hunting, however, is exposed for what it is. Tim camps in six plus High Country huts, describing their history and heritage value. Canberra itself is shown in a favourable light. But the story is ultimately about Tim discovering himself rather than the region.

The central symbol is Clancy and his hat. Clancy as in *Clancy of The Overflow* and a countryman's hat found in the Museum's collection that more than likely never belonged to Clancy and which is on the verge of being discarded.

Although unsuitable for the conditions, the hat is worn by Tim as a talisman throughout his journey and Clancy makes ghostly appearances as Tim's guardian angel. It is not a convincing device. Nor is the hat well illustrated on the book's cover, having a reptilian look about it.

Clancy is known as a Western Plains drover. In Paterson's *The Man from Snowy River* he is depicted playing a leading role in rounding up the colt from Old Regret but is outshone by the Man. As stated in this book, it is almost certain that Clancy never participated in brumby running. Clancy is also used as a representative of rural versus city life, a matter that Tim is exploring, much the way that Paterson did.

Tim seldom encounters actual people on his journey. The few that are depicted ring true (skiers at Eagles Nest, campers at Whites River) and the author has lost an opportunity to enrich his story by creating other encounters. To complement European history, represented by Clancy's ghost, a spectral Aboriginal park ranger named James also makes appearances – more could have been made of him.

Kosciuszko Huts Association's *Newsletter* (No. 175, Winter 2017, pp. 25–26) contains an interesting Q and A provided by Moses re this book. On the question of his repeated misspelling of Paterson (Carruthers is also misspelled), he offered the explanation that he was subverting reader certainties re names and meanings in the region. I note he also uses Ngunawal as opposed to Ngunnawal, thus buying into a local Aboriginal disagreement. Another infelicity lies in the 'strap' to the book title: conditions prevent Tim from climbing Mount Kosciuszko on the outward journey and he deliberately chooses not to on the return.

At the book's launch (National Library, 5 July), Moses expressed the hope that it will come to be accepted, like another of his books, *Prayer Road*, as a means of educating young people. It is an easy read and younger readers could slip straight into the journey. Using imagination, one of them may liberate a film script from the text.

Brian Slee

Book reviews (continued)

Back Country *trek through the Deua and Wadbilliga*

(2nd edition)

by John Blay

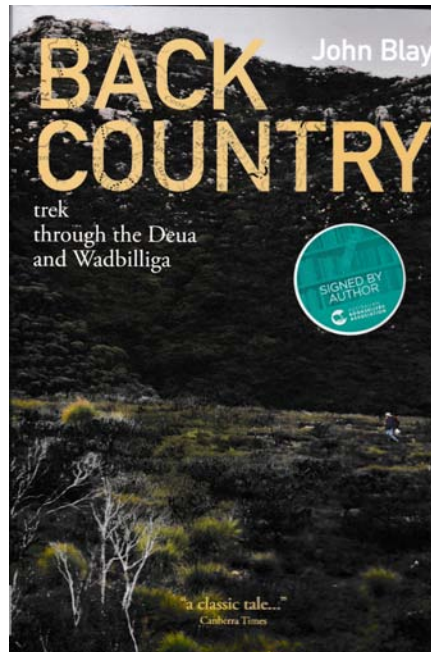
Canopy Press, Eden NSW, 2016

271 pp, [ISBN 9780995418608]

John Blay is in love with the bushland of the ranges and coastal plain of the south coast of NSW. His descriptions are so vivid, that if you have walked, climbed, camped in that area, you can see it again and hear the sounds of the creeks and bird songs. He used the knowledge of the Aboriginal custodians – the Elders, whom he spoke with when preparing this great walk.

He explains on page 1:

My back country was to be found all around those forbidding mountains you see as you look inland from the far south coast of New South Wales. It's crazy country for the most part, full of sudden shifts and faults and gorges and valleys too rugged for roads and forestry operations and it had been tantalising me for years.



In 1981 John Blay set off accompanied by a mule to carry supplies, clothing and camping gear. He named the mule Zachary B de Mule, a real 'character' that wandered off from time to time but did become an

important friend and companion. Now and then Blay would come across clearings where people lived and farmed. A photographer friend, John Ford, visited him during the trek using the logging roads; and a woman friend walked with him for the last part of the trek.

Finally he arrived in the town of Bemboka where he was greeted by the local school children on their bikes.

Zac stepped forward in response. As others joined the procession we more and more resembled a victory parade. Halting at an old hitching post, outside the pub, a circle of eager faces closed round to witness the unsaddling. So it was that the trek ended and something else began.

Back Country is an excellent read and if you are physically able, may inspire you to walk this interesting, lovely country too.

Fiona MacDonald Brand

60th Anniversary of NPA NSW

NPA ACT congratulates our fellow national parks organisation in NSW: 2017 marks NPA NSW's 60th anniversary, six decades at the forefront of conservation in NSW and standing up for nature.

NPA NSW has a proud history of successful advocacy for the formation of national parks on both land and sea, and for private land conservancy agreements to establish connectivity across the landscape. It is celebrating community participation and citizen science projects by organising events and activities throughout 2017. These include a photo competition and exhibition, 60 best bushwalks, and a picnic and volunteer awards day.

The picnic will be held on Sunday 5 November at Haynes Flat, Lane Cove National Park, Sydney. Members will enjoy an informal lunch with old and new NPA friends, take in the bush and join one of the many bushwalks being planned to coincide with the picnic.

NPA Volunteer Award recipients will be announced at the picnic at 2 pm.

Other activities may include:

- orienteering
- birdwatching
- photography
- citizen science activity
- games.

With the help of branches and walks leaders, NPA NSW has identified its 60 best walks. These will be part of the



regular activities program this year. Visit [bushwalking program website](#) to find out more about the 60 best walks.

Ms Alix Goodwin has assumed the CEO role at NPA NSW with the departure of Kevin Evans. We wish her well and look forward to working closely with her on our many common issues.

Kevin McCue

Notice of postponement: Spring Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage

We have been asked to forego our 7–15 October booking at the Gudgenby Cottage to allow a wildlife film unit to stay longer than initially requested. They are attempting to get some footage they have tried for before; but not successfully.

Apologies for the short notice, but we hope it is just a postponement. We will try to make an alternative booking for another time. Anyone interested, please contact Adrienne Nicholson 6281 6381 or ahnicholson@hotmail.com



Bushwalks

Three coastal walks

It was once government policy that a strip right along NSW coasts would be publicly accessible to walkers. I don't know how this policy is playing out in the cities but on the Far South Coast it is possible to walk significant distances with the ocean on one hand and bushland on the other. My three favourite walks start at Burrawang Coastal Club, just north of Broulee.

Burrawang Coastal Club is the only members' cooperative holiday resort on the coast. It was formed on the same basis as member-only ski lodges and built in the 1970s. It has 18 separate cabins with fully equipped kitchens, bathrooms and loft sleeping areas. It is set in 40 hectares of untouched bushland running down to the ocean, and features stands of Spotted Gum, endangered Bangalay Sand Forest, wild orchids and huge old banksias. An early morning walk through the bush offers myriad bird calls and a glimpse of shy wallabies, monitor lizards and even, now and then, an echidna.

My favourite walk, starting from whichever cabin we have been assigned that week, is the Champagne Walk. We have discovered that it is possible to walk to the edge of Long Nose Point carrying a glass of sparkling white to watch the sun set over the mountains to the west. The view across the ocean as far as Narooma is spectacular and if we

are really lucky there may be a dolphin surfing the break below the point. On the way back we try to spot the orchids up in the old trees in the gathering dusk. Short but sweet.

In winter my second favourite walk again starts at the cabins, follows the track through Spotted Gum and banksia bush down to Barlings Beach and then follows the rocky headland around to Franks Beach. The first stop is to inspect the pristine rock pools, full of scuttling crabs and sea life. You can't help but notice how many different species there are compared with the relatively empty rock pools beside more popular beaches. The walk then follows Long Nose Point around the rock platform with fascinating patterns etched in rocks which have fallen from the eroding cliffs above.

Franks Beach is a pristine curve of sand and surf. It is on the edge of Batemans Marine Park so spear fishing and abalone harvesting are not permitted but some intrepid souls enjoy snorkeling here in the summer. The path then turns inland, across the dunes and into the stillness of a very old stand of casuarinas. We then head up a steep hill with the Bangalay Sand Forest on our right. Huge old trees follow a hidden gully down towards the sea, and at our feet in spring we can find tiny gnat orchids so it's worth walking slowly and

taking in the beauty of the landscape. At the top of the hill we come back to the cabins and a nice glass of mulled wine after all that fresh air.

The third walk is a much longer one, starting at the front of the cabins and heading north. The round trip is about a 4-hour walk if we take our time, and the cliff tops can be a bit scary in high winds so it is best undertaken in cool calm weather. It takes us across the back of Franks Beach and up onto the next cliff face. We follow a narrow cliff walk at the back of houses perched along the southern ridge of Guerilla Bay village and peer down into the many little inlets and rocky outcrops below us. The track emerges into the nature reserve at Guerilla Point and we walk through coastal heath to the lighthouse. Sea Eagles soar up the cliffs here and again the view along the coast is spectacular. If we turn west we will come to the abandoned WW2 entrenchments from which the area gets its name. Our choice is then to retrace our steps or brave the busy highway back to Burrawang. We always chose to retrace our steps.

There are many other walks in this area which take us through pristine bush with the ocean beside us; but not many which require us to just put on a hat and step out our front door.

Christine Goonrey

McMahons Hut site: peace and tranquility in the valley

Date: Sunday 4 June 2017

Participants: Margaret (leader), Peter, Mike B

Weather: Sunshine and blue skies.

The plan had been for a walk to both Booroomba Rocks and McMahon's Hut site, but this would have involved a car shuffle. With only three participants, two cars seemed excessive, so an alternative walk, without a car shuffle, was needed. The alternative we decided on didn't include Booroomba Rocks, but did include the McMahon's Hut site.

We parked on Apollo Road and set off along, and up, the Mount Tennent Fire Trail to the point where it meets the track coming up from the Namadgi Visitor Centre, about 1 km below the Mount Tennent summit. Here Mike led us to a rocky outcrop with wonderful views looking back towards Canberra.

After morning tea we set off again along the track, tut-tutting at the amount of damage done by wild pigs, some right beside the track. We

continued and then joined the Australian Alps Walking Track to descend to Bushfolds Flats. This is a lovely stretch of the track through beautiful bushland. The only negative aspect was the noise of air force jets roaring back and forth above us, ruining any chance of hearing birds or insects. Fortunately, by the time we reached the valley, the jets had gone and the scene was one of peace and tranquility. We had lunch at the hut site, which is a very nice bush setting, and had a look around the ruins/rubble. We wondered whether a well-formed kangaroo track that we found might lead to water. If there is a source of water nearby, the site of the hut ruins would be a good spot for camping for a couple of nights.

After lunch we continued along the Australian Alps Walking Track towards Booroomba Rocks but after a while we left that track to join an unnamed track that passes Reads Hut (aka Bushfolds Flats Hut). In the bush we found a large

cage-type trap, presumably for pigs. A blue camera was attached to a nearby tree to photograph whatever went into the trap. The cage/trap was about two metres high, which is perhaps so that someone can enter it to deal with whatever has been trapped – not a job I'd fancy. We had a quick look at Bushfolds Hut, noting signs of the efforts of an industrious wombat that had clearly been trying to claim the outer section of the hut as its home. We then continued along the track but soon stopped to enjoy quite a show that a lovely Flame Robin put on for us (*see inset cover photo*). We resumed walking and re-joined the Mount Tennent Fire Trail, completing our loop and heading back to the car.

The walk, which was about 16 km and entailed a 750 m ascent, took about 5 hours.

Margaret Power

Devils Peak

Devils Peak is a little-known, seldom-visited high point of the Brindabella Range. It is located on the NSW side of the border, in the Brindabella National Park, 5 km to the north-east of the much better known and regularly visited Mount Coree. The peak is visible from Canberra, but not easily recognisable. From Hindmarsh Drive the top of Devils Peak can be seen, peeking above the summit ridge of Mount Blundell, with the bulk of which it can easily be confused.

Sadly, the origins of the name 'Devils Peak' are not known to the author. Some years ago, while visiting Coree Falls, the author admired the peak, while inadvertently standing on an ant nest. The period of admiration was therefore abruptly terminated by the devilish attention of the ants upon the author, who nonetheless resolved to go to the peak in coming years. Subsequently, the author conducted Internet research on the very few reports of visits to the peak, which has no track to the summit, and decided that the best route would be to drive on the Two Sticks Road to a point nearest the peak, and then scrub-bash from there.

On 11 June, the author led a small combined NPA ACT/CBC walking party intent upon visiting Devils Peak. The drive along the unsealed Two Sticks Road was not too bad, though there were ample potholes, mud and corrugations. A four-wheel or all-wheel drive is definitely preferable and we regularly passed other 4WD drivers enjoying the challenging terrain. In our vehicle, we skirted the western side of

Mount Coree, before turning to the east, and then through a forest of magnificent Mountain Gums on the northern flanks of Devils Peak, seemingly unburnt by the terrible fires of 2003. This forest alone is worth a visit. We parked under some powerlines that intersected with the road, and then began the actual bushwalk.

Leaving the cars, we climbed steeply upwards under the powerlines, towards a small hill to the west of Devils Peak. While the vegetation had been cleared, we did need to clamber over great berms of earth which had been built to stop 4WD vehicles. Once at the top of the small hill, we headed bravely into the donga. Our bearing was due east, across a saddle to the higher Devils Peak, only two 'crowlometres' distant, and periodically visible between the vegetation. The scrub was a merry hell of eucalypt, wattle, various pea species, and dogbush, intermixed with fallen timber and rocks. Accordingly, progress was slow and we took care to stay together. If we even drifted a few metres apart, we would lose sight of each other and would quickly regather. We struggled, stumbled, scrambled and pushed our way to the saddle, and then up Devils Peak on the eastern side. After



*Walking in Mountain Gum forest, north of Devils Peak.
Photo by David Dedenczuk.*

2 hours, our GPS unit advised that we had reached the scrub-choked summit. Our gloomy destination afforded no view apart from glimpses of Mount Blundell to the east and, in the west, an ominously declining Sun. We decided not to head on to the great cliff at the eastern end of the summit, but to hurry back to the car and not risk being 'benighted' on Devils Peak. We duly retraced our steps to the saddle. There we tried to 'shorten' the return journey by heading straight back to the road rather than re-climbing the small hill, but a rapid worsening of the scrub soon put paid to that plan. In the dying light of the day we re-emerged into the clearing beneath the powerlines, which were a welcome sight after four hours in the diabolical scrub of Devils Peak.

David Dedenczuk

Photos from the Environment Day Dinner on 3 June 2017

Photos by Sabine Friedrich.

Left. Kathy Saw, Fiona MacDonald Brand, Janet Thompson and Bethan David.

Right. The Goonrey family and friend.



Hospital Hill and Mount Boboyan



Hospital Creek Hut. Photo by Philip Gatenby.

Date: Wednesday 26 April 2017

Participants: Philip Gatenby (leader), Chris F, Jan G, Judy G, Miriam J, Leon P, Ricky S.

Weather: Occasional showers, cold.

Soon after the end of the bitumen the Boboyan Road passes to the east of a long hill. This is Hospital Hill. Geologically, the surface of the hill is a mixture of granite and shale. On the side of the hill where the gradient is sufficiently steep, shale scree slopes have formed.

Seven of us travelled to the Yankee Hat car park in Gudgenby Valley. The poplars and other introduced trees at Top Naas, polished by overnight rain, displayed their autumnal splendour. Beyond Fitzs Hill an eagle pounced on a small, unfortunate furry creature. Beside the road climbing out of Glendale a male and female lyrebird strutted. As usual along the Boboyan Road, Red-necked Wallabies and Eastern Grey Kangaroos were everywhere.

From the car park we followed the Boboyan Fire Trail to its highest point, passing Forestry Hut and the regenerating former pine plantation beside Hospital Creek. So far the weather had held. Leaving the fire trail and after a short descent, we crossed Hospital Creek below a small picturesque rapid. The creek was flowing well. Thankfully, the forest, a mixture of Snow Gum, Candlebark and Peppermint, was initially quite open, but it thickened considerably as we climbed through patches of Cassinia, and negotiated moss-encrusted granite boulders. Fresh lyrebird mounds were evident and we heard numerous calls. It was now raining.

As we approached the top of the ridge to the north of Hospital Hill a scree slope gave temporary relief from the thick wet scrub. On the ridge, under the

watchful eye of a Yellow Robin, we regrouped. There was more thick, wet scrub on the way south to the unprepossessing summit of Hospital Hill. In good weather the summit affords spectacular views. Not so that day. The pine wilding I'd noticed west of the summit when here 6 years ago was now a bit bigger. South of the summit as the scrub thinned we made good progress along the ridge to the top of Mount Boboyan. A quick visit to the trig. Thoughts of lunch on the large rock platform below the trig were abandoned due to the weather. Lunch was half a kilometre back the way we'd come.

After a short break for lunch we set a course for Hospital Creek Hut, 250 m below the ridge and about 2 km to the WNW. More wet scrub to get through. Every time I pushed aside a Silver Wattle a bucket of cold water emptied onto my head. Soon after skirting an outcrop of huge boulders some of the party saw the hut in the valley below. I recalled from an earlier visit to the hut a large pine wilding nearby. It's still there.

Hospital Creek Hut is in a swampy clearing on the creek that bears its name. A clean, neat and tidy hut. The inside seemed to have been recently repainted. It now has a water tank. It was built in 1966 by Frank, Jack and Les Oldfield and is also called Franks Hut or Franks Wartime Hut (KHA 2016). The hut is about a kilometre from the Old Boboyan Road from where it was another 4 km to the cars.

Philip Gatenby

Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA)
2016, Hospital Creek Hut, <https://khuts.org/index.php/the-huts/act-huts/33-hospital-creek-hut>

Mount Gudgenby

Date: Saturday 13 May 2017

Participants: Philip Gatenby (leader), Mike Bremers, Jan Gatenby, Jan Moore

Weather: Fine and cool.

Mount Gudgenby is one of the ACT's iconic peaks. A climb that is a classic day walk. Weather permitting, the view from the top extends for 360 degrees, encompassing the main peaks of the nearby Scabby Range and Brindabellas, the more distant Table Top Mountain and Mount Jagungal, Mount Clear, the Tinderries, Mount Lowden and Mount Palerang on the Great Dividing Range and, to the north, Mount Tennent and Blue Gum Hill.

The party set out from the Yankee Hat car park; both temperature and pace were brisk. We crossed the regenerating former pine plantation and, keeping to the south of Bogong Creek, located the start of the footpad that leads to the Gudgenby Saddle, a couple of km to the north-west. There's been a footpad to the saddle for a number of years. It was obscured by the 2003 fires but is now

mostly easy to find, helped in places by rock cairns and tape.

With dry weather, the rock slabs on the south-west face of Mount Gudgenby were negotiated without too much difficulty. Once above the main slabs and after a scramble under and over a cluster of large boulders we were at the top, marked with an impressive rock cairn capped by a trig. The view was as promised. A cold wind though meant the party lingered only long enough for a quick look and group photos before seeking shelter for lunch.

About 200 m to the north of the summit is a large granite tor. Its top is almost the same height as the summit. From a distance, when combined with the summit it gives Mount Gudgenby its distinctive twin tops appearance. Clefts in these rocks are the haunts of Bogong Moth. With summer long gone the floors were now littered with carcasses. We explored a narrow passage with a number of twists and turns that seemed

(continued next page)

Barrer Hill, Bold Hill and Arboretum



Coombs Pond. Photo by Brian Slee.

Date: Sunday 18 June 2017

Participants: Brian Slee (leader), Peter Anderson-Smith, Jill Divorty, Marlene Eggert, Andrew Kettle, Deborah Milner, Paula Morelli, Margaret Power, Mike Smith, Janet Thompson, Timothy Walsh

Weather: Blue sky; cool; occasional breeze.

Before they burned in 2001 and 2003, Green Hills pines occupied most of the area between Cotter Road and Glenloch. Only remnants of the forest survive: the National Arboretum has been established in the north and suburban Coombs in the south. The Molonglo flows through the middle, in

a loop from Scrivener Dam to Coppins Crossing.

The hilly middle section, between arboretum and river, was the focus of this walk which was extended across the Molonglo into Coombs to view work to convert the river corridor to urban parks and recreation areas. Barrer Hill (595 m) was named in 2014 to honour Dr Peter Barrer (1942–97), ecologist and active NPA member for his work on the Molonglo corridor. Misery Hill had been its unofficial name. Its neighbour, Bold Hill, is the same height.

Our gathering point at Barrenjoey Drive had been a place of immediate interest as it is adjacent to the National

Rock Garden. We departed there at 9.40 am and, after ducking under Tuggeranong Parkway, wended our way south through arboretum plantations (NZ Lancewoods are struggling on). An undulating road then led us through pines to a stark view of Barrer Hill, pincushioned with plantings designed to stop erosion and restore native vegetation. Morning tea was on the summit, dumped logs for seats. Startling to see Denman Prospect spreading along the ridge below Mount Stromlo.

From Barrer we descended to Southwells Crossing (yes, bridge still there) before traversing Annabelle View (a road) to newly created Coombs Pond. Give it time. We returned to the north bank of the Molonglo via Clos Crossing (yes, still there too) and climbed to lunch at noon in the lee of a wattle grove on Bold Hill with remarkable views over the arboretum and lake. ‘Bold’ perhaps for the magpie which was confident beyond the norm that our duty was to feed it. Arboretum trained?

It turned into a gorgeous afternoon as we followed Boundary Road on the western edge of the arboretum before stopping at the Stone Pines to collect pine nuts. Actually, return in 10 years. Up to Dairy Farmers Hill (678 m) and down to the Village Centre for munchies. Afterwards we visited the Wollemi Pines, Giant Sequoias and Ginkgos before arriving back at the cars at 2.50 pm. About 15 km.

Things are happening in Molonglo – come back, Graeme Barrow, and guide us through its intricacies. Prospects for future walks in the area, taking in the parks, ponds, ridges and hills, are alluring. And kids of Coombs, onya bikes, a wonderland of Australian bush is minutes away.

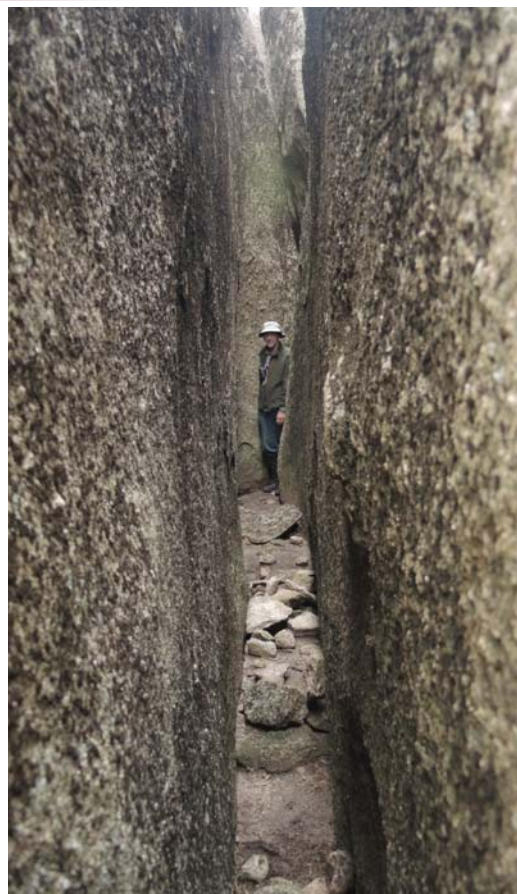
Brian Slee

Mount Gudgenby (continued)

to almost pass through the centre of the tor.

Our descent, on the eastern side of Mount Gudgenby involved a combination of rock slabs, which soon petered out, and patches of thick scrub. Then it was mostly scrub and the occasional scramble. We kept to the left of the main but indistinct ridge. Bogong Creek flowed in on our left and when again in the valley floor we crossed it. Near a large boulder the party joined a management trail which soon recrossed to the south side of the creek and rejoined our outward track, about 2 km from the car park.

Philip Gatenby



*Passage through the rocks.
Photo by Philip Gatenby.*

Etheridge Ridge and Seamans Hut



Date: Sunday 16 July 2017.

Participants: Brian Slee (leader), Peter Anderson-Smith, Mike Bremers, Margaret Power, Terrylea Reynolds, Max Smith.

Weather: Sun all day albeit through high, thin cloud in afternoon; cold breeze abating.

Drought in the Snowy Mountains is not usually associated with good snow cover but it happened at the start of the 2017 season. Light falls had accumulated during consistently frigid nights, and rain had not washed it away. Although the Spencers Creek gauge was registering less than 60 cm, it proved to be plenty for this snowshoe walk.

Etheridge Ridge is east of Mount Kosciuszko and lives in its shadow. NPA snowshoers have visited it only twice, most recently in 2006. And this was the first time the full length of the ridge was walked, from Cootapatamba Lookout to Seamans Hut. You would wonder why we had not done it before; it is spectacular.

We set out from Calwell at 6.15 am (−6°C) on the last day of school

holidays, expecting hold ups, but traffic was not a big problem. The downhill slopes at Thredbo, in fact, seemed quiet. We arrived there at 8.45 am and after taking Kosciuszko Express chairlift (now \$37, concession \$28), were in snow before 10 am.

No back country skiers were sighted and, remarkably, the Kosciuszko cornice had not been breached. Even its slopes looked trackless and pristine. However, we followed a conga line of snowshoers (commercial tour?) as they headed north-west – the first time we had seen snowshoers in large numbers in the area.

We were beginning to encounter the frozen, wind-swept snow encrustations that were to become a feature of the day and had a cosy break among them, out of the breeze, at 11 am. Past the Lookout, where everyone hurries on to the Big K, we turned and climbed onto friendless Etheridge. The ridge's nobbly peak (2,180 m) is at the southern end and was difficult to climb. Terrylea and Peter managed it from the west.

Increasingly bizarre icy surfaces, under brilliant light, dominated the

A glorious day. Photo by Mike Bremers.

nearby scene. At a distance all the highest mountains could be seen, from Kosciuszko to Townsend, Carruthers and Twynam. Lines of dark hills extended to the horizon. We followed the ridge for a kilometre on lovely snow before descending for lunch at 12.35 outside ice-studded Seamans Hut – gingerbread cottage.

The return journey was due south, east of the ridge, still on good snow. Occasional ice patches crunched and crackled, a few cratered out. Notable were the clear ice tubes which had formed from snow frozen around grass stems. A drone buzzed past. Back in Thredbo at 3.30 pm. 12 km. We were stoked!

At *Sundance* in Jindabyne for afternoon tea we had a preview of Angela and Mike's new book, *Murray-Darling Journeys*, to be published later this year. Back at Calwell at 6.45. Etheridge could be okay for beginners and will surely be on future programs.

Brian Slee

Notice: Mulligans Flat spring spotlighting walk

A joint outing has been booked exclusively for members of the three major organisations in Canberra with bushwalking programs: the National Parks Association of the ACT, the Canberra Bushwalking Club and the Brindabella Bushwalking Club. This 'twilight tour' of the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary is on the evening of Friday 20 October 2017. It will be led by an ACT Parks and Conservation Service ecologist with a good knowledge of the threatened animal species that have been re-introduced to this woodland conservation gem on the northern boundary of the ACT. These species include Eastern Bettong, Eastern Quoll, Bush Stone-curlew, and New Holland Mouse.

There is an informative video, *A Short History of Mulligans*, on the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust website at mulligansflat.org.au for those seeking to learn more about the reserve and its species.

The cost is \$30 per person, payable in advance. This covers the cost of employing the ranger and gives us access to the woodland sanctuary, which is not otherwise accessible at night.

Please email Isobel Crawford on orru@iinet.net.au or phone 6257 1860 for further information and/or to make a firm booking. We need

20 participants for this to go ahead. To my mind, it's worth it just to hear the beautifully eerie call of the Bush Stone-curlews, at present being regularly reported on the *Canberra Birds* chatline.



PARKWATCH

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

We can't see the trees for the wood

On the morning of March 21 I got a call from a journalist in response to a media release NPA had put out for International Day of Forests. She wanted me to discuss forests – after she had spoken to Planet Ark, who were celebrating World Wood Day!

This was the first time anyone at NPA had heard of World Wood Day. It got me thinking. Is it an accident that it falls on the same day as International Day of Forests? Hard to know, but the fact that it does highlights a problem with our relationship with forests; we view them almost exclusively as sources of wood. But they're much more than that. If we want forests to continue to help human society flourish, as they have done throughout our existence, our leaders need to recognise this.

Let's start with water. Many of the largest cities on Earth, including Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, depend on forested catchments for clean, reliable water. In the majestic Mountain Ash forests of the Victorian Central Highlands we know that logging results in a temporary spike in water yields as all the trees are removed. But yield quickly falls as dense regrowth establishes, and it takes over 200 years to reach pre-logging levels. Old-growth stands yield about twice as much water as young regrowth on an annual basis. Staggeringly, lost water via logging in the Goulburn–Broken catchment has been valued at \$16 million per year.

We are also starting to understand that forests generate rain. Clearing of forests and woodlands has driven reductions in rainfall in south-western Western Australia and south-eastern Australia. This should be a source of extreme concern to farmers in an arid continent.

Then we've got carbon. We know that on average, logged forests store 50 per cent less carbon than undisturbed forests. In southern NSW and the Mountain Ash forests, there are no circumstances under which logged forests can achieve comparable carbon stores to protecting forests. In contrast, logging Mountain Ash forests reduces carbon stores by 143 tonnes per hectare. At the average Direct Action carbon price of \$10.69 per tonne, lost carbon is therefore worth \$1,529 per hectare – about 60 times the timber value.

We therefore have a responsibility too to look after the extraordinary natural beauty that Australians have inherited. Species like gliders, koalas, quolls, phascogales and Powerful Owls are all forest species that are found only in Australia, and all are threatened by logging and clearing. This nature is economically valuable. It's the one reason people visit Australia, and protected areas are cornerstones of regional communities.

But because we can't see the trees for the wood, the backdrop to all of this is that we're clearing and degrading our forests faster than any other developed country and are the only developed nation with a deforestation front. This in a country where forests cover only a small fraction of the land mass. Because of the impacts that logging and clearing are having on the values of forests – and on the benefits that forests provide to humans – NPA is calling on state and federal governments to make the protection and restoration of forests a national priority. This would both protect nature and secure key human needs like water supplies.

*Nature NSW, Vol, 61,
No. 2 (Winter 2017)*

Feral deer remain 'protected'

The NSW *Biosecurity Act* which commenced in July this year is a missed opportunity as the government has caved in to the hunting lobby. Under the new law feral deer remain classified as 'protected game'. This ignores the growing impacts of feral deer on farm productivity and the natural environment. Last year the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) recommended deer be declared a pest species and to scrap their protection as a game animal for hunters. New distribution maps released in June show feral deer have expanded their range by 60 per cent in just 6 years and now occur over almost half of eastern NSW.

Andrew Cox, CEO of the Invasive Species Council said: 'Deer are causing havoc for farming communities and wrecking our bushland and will become a major traffic hazard, and yet the Berejiklian Government has given priority to the hunting lobby by continuing to protect deer as a hunting resource rather than declaring them a pest species'.

The deer's game status for the exclusive benefit of hunters, with restrictions in place like night-time shooting bans and seasonal closures

during the breeding season, will continue to hamper control efforts. One of the biggest issues identified during the state-wide NRC review was the growing impact of feral deer on primary producers and the environment. Only in nine of the worst affected local government areas will landholders be allowed to use contractors, volunteers and neighbours to shoot feral deer on their properties at night and with spotlights. A hunting licence and membership with a hunting club will be required by these shooters. This policy increases the power and influence of the shooter lobby to make pro-gun laws.

New regional pest committees will be created to prepare regional pest plans in 2018, and a state-wide deer plan has been promised by the end of 2017. Wild dogs in contrast will now be baited at double the rate, and lip service paid to the ecological function of dingos in wilderness. Essentially the only good dingo in NSW will still be a dead one.

Colong Bulletin, No. 267 (July 2017)

Alps feral horse control at risk

In its June 2017 response to the current Natural Resources Council (NRC) review of pest management in the lead-up to enabling the *Biosecurity Act, 2015*, the NSW Government has 'recognised the heritage value of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park'.

Horses do not have 'cultural value' by being located in the park, and the damage they cause to wilderness, wildflowers, waterways and wildlife in the Alps can be extreme. When the government released the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Management Plan for comment it ruled out aerial shooting as one of the control techniques to be utilised. Current ineffective trapping has seen feral horse numbers grow to 6,000. ... numbers will balloon beyond 10,000 in less than a decade unless the horses in the park are culled.

No effective feral horse control can be expected if ground shooting is ruled out as suggested by Nationals Leader and local member for Monaro, the Hon. John Barilaro, a critic of the horse management plan, appears to speak for the government on the matter, and according to the *Telegraph* is drafting legislation to recognise the wild horses' cultural significance.

Under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* the National Parks and Wildlife Service is currently required to control feral horses as

(continued on page 28)

PARKWATCH (continued)

designated feral pests. The proposed new bill will replace control with protection, similar to feral deer, a designated game species protected for hunters. Hopefully, sanity will prevail and one day soon park rangers will be allowed to control all feral animals by scientific, best practice methods as recommended by the conservative government agency, the Natural Resources Council.

Colong Bulletin, No. 267 (July 2017)

4nature takes Centennial Coal to Supreme Court

In May, the 4nature environment group was at the NSW Supreme Court challenging the Land and Environment Court's decision to allow Springvale Mine to continue discharging polluted mine water into Sydney's drinking water supply. Three Appeal Court judges will now review the lower court decision.

Under their existing approval, Centennial Coal is permitted to release up to 30 million litres a day of mine water containing salts, metals and other materials into the Cocks River. In 2006, Centennial Coal transferred its mine water pollution from the headwaters of the Wolgan River to the Cocks River and thus Sydney's drinking water supply. The initiative was awarded a Water Recycling and Conservation Leadership Award, but the transfer became such an environmental mess that it prompted the Blue Mountains Conservation Society to initiate an earlier court action.

Last year as a result of continued pressure, Centennial Coal proposed to build a treatment plant for up to 42 ML/day of mine water for reuse in the Mt Piper Power Plant. An effective water treatment plant should have been part of the 2006 mine water transfer scheme for which the company received a green gong. The decade-long delay means that Centennial has perhaps saved tens of millions by avoiding the water treatment needed to protect Sydney's drinking water supplies.

Lithgow Environment Group spokesperson Chris Jonkers said: 'The Land and Environment Court's ruling basically concluded that pumping that much waste water [up to 30 ML/day] into the Cocks River has a "neutral or beneficial effect". That water is acutely and chronically toxic to all aquatic life so it defies common sense to say this will have no effect. The approval is not in line with community expectations'.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society President Madi MacLean said: 'For years community monitoring has recorded high levels of salts and other contaminants in the Cocks River

downstream of Springvale and other underground coal mines. The government can no longer ignore this serious problem'. Tireless efforts by 4nature, the Lithgow Environment Group and Blue Mountains Conservation Society may eventually see the Cocks River cleaned up. The Appeal Court judgement on the case is expected to be handed down sometime in the next three months.

Colong Bulletin, No. 267 (July 2017)

Victoria's western forests threatened under new logging plans

Threatened species including the iconic Red-tailed Black Cockatoo and some of the most vulnerable and fragmented forests left in Victoria will be at risk under new plans to re-open logging in the west of the state. An analysis of VicForests' new logging plans for western Victoria shows logging will target areas known to contain high numbers of threatened species and large areas of endangered, vulnerable or depleted native vegetation types.

'More than 30 threatened native animals and plants have been found in or closely adjacent to a third of all proposed logging areas', Victorian National Parks Association executive director Matt Ruchel said today. 'The high level of threatened species found in these areas is indicative of their ecological importance as prime habitat and should rule out any future logging operations.'

VicForests' new Timber Utilisation Plan 2017 is the first to be published since the state-owned logging agency controversially took over management of logging in western Victoria on the eve of the 2014 state election. Much of the timber to be harvested is for low-value uses including commercial firewood, poles, posts and some sawlogs. 'The new logging plans are completely at odds with the sensible and sustainable management of our western forests and woodlands, and a recipe for ecological disaster', Mr Ruchel said.

Stretching west from the Hume Hwy to the South Australian border and north to Gunbower on the Murray River, the proposed logging plan covers a huge part of the most cleared and fragmented parts of Victoria, and more than six forest management areas.

'Logging has been scheduled for around 60 state forests, including the Otways Forest Park, the Wombat Forest, Mt Cole near Ballarat, the Wellsford Forest near Bendigo and even woodlands just west of the Grampians', Mr Ruchel said, adding:

It is a profoundly flawed approach to, on one hand, provide millions of dollars for revegetation and recovery works with thousands of volunteer hours in our most cleared landscapes, while on the other opening up the last remaining native forest remnants on public land to logging. In just one example, more than 10 areas in the southwest scheduled for logging under VicForests' plans have records either within or adjacent of the nationally endangered south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoo. Victoria's red-tailed black cockatoo has been subject to a huge recovery effort and is one of 20 priority species listed under the Australian Government's Threatened Species Strategy and yet under these plans its habitat could be logged.

The Victorian National Parks Association is calling on the Andrews Government to ensure that no logging commences in western Victoria, that the proposed logging plan is comprehensively reviewed, and that the government consults with the community before it proceeds; if it proceeds at all.

www.vnpa.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE: 14 June 2017

Horses hurting hoodies

It has been a poor breeding season for threatened Hooded Plovers in the Belfast Coastal Reserve. Local community monitoring of one beach alone revealed that of 11 hatched chicks, only one survived. Disturbance by commercial horse training and unleashed dogs is almost certain to have been a contributing factor. Horse training was so intense that dog owners moved to other beaches where plovers came under pressure.

Parkwatch VNPA,
No. 269 (June 2017)

Swift action helps mitigate widespread impact on parks

Many Queensland national parks were heavily impacted in late March and early April as Cyclone Debbie cut a path of destruction centred on the Whitsunday and Mackay regions, before tracking south and creating widespread flooding. The extent of the disaster had led to a mammoth clean-up involving Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers in collaboration with others.

A total of 223 parks and forests across Qld were affected by Cyclone Debbie. Destructive winds and very heavy rain battered numerous parks off Qld central coast – including Whitsunday Islands, Lindeman Islands and Repulse Islands – as well as Conway and

(concluded on page 29)

PARKWATCH *(continued)*

Eungella on the mainland, causing defoliation, erosion and flooding. Tracks and roads blocked by fallen trees and land slips forced closures en masse. Whitsunday Islands' renowned Whitehaven Beach, more exposed than nearby Hamilton Island which recorded wind gusts of 263 km/hour, was unrecognisable after facing the full force of the Category 4 tropical cyclone and suffering its worst erosion since Cyclone Ada in 1970. Meanwhile in the Mackay region, the Bureau of Meteorology reported that some areas had more than 1 m of rain within a 2-day period – more than half the average annual rainfall.

As rains ceased and floodwaters receded, rangers faced a massive task in addressing land slips and clearing fallen trees. The cyclone had hit only 2 weeks before the Easter long weekend, one of the most popular times for national park visitation in Qld. Yet by Easter, 190 parks and forests had reopened, with 20 partly opened and only 13 closed.

The assistance of rangers from unaffected parts of the state and collaboration with other agencies, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority which brought in two crewed vessels to assist with the recovery efforts around the island parks, was supported by volunteers from groups such as Bushwalking Queensland and Federation of Mountain Rescue undertaking GPS mapping of fallen vegetation.

Although about 95 per cent of Qld's parks and forests had reopened by the time of publication, full recovery remains a long way off. As fragmented forest systems are less resilient to cyclones given their high ratio of edge to area, and forests stripped of vegetation are susceptible to weed infestation, expansion of the protected area estate can only increase resilience. With the intensity of cyclones, floods and drought expected to increase due to climate change, it is essential.

*Protected Qld NPA,
Issue 15 (June–July 2017)*

Will we stop nature's decline?

'Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037' is the first formal state-wide, long-term biodiversity plan in two decades. There was a process undertaken by the Brumby Government for a land and biodiversity white paper that flagged a biodiversity strategy, but it did not pass the draft stage before a change of government. While some of our natural areas are doing well, others face threats from pest plant and animal invasions, land clearing and destructive

development. Increasingly, the impacts of climate change are adding to these pressures and require new management strategies. Overall, our natural assets and biodiversity are in decline.

There are some significant new goals and directions flagged in the new plan. Of particular note is the emphasis both on nature and people. These two key goals are interlinked.

GOAL: Victorians value nature. Victorians understand that their personal wellbeing and the economic wellbeing of the state are dependent on the health of the natural environment.

GOAL: Victoria's natural environment is healthy. Victoria has functioning plant and animal populations, improved habitats and resilient ecosystems, even under climate change.

The strategy includes 20 priorities with 74 associated initiatives around these two goals. Importantly the strategy includes a range of targets, and reinforces the role of government in leadership in delivering the plan. Delivery will, however, be hamstrung without significant new funding. The new strategy calls for a 'sustained period of investment' and, critically, guides the effective application of resources, linking knowledge and expertise to strategic actions. The plan also invites new, and potentially critically important, evidence-based management actions to manage climate impacts on our natural areas. These tools can really help guide action, but as we have seen with native vegetation rules – an inflexible black box can also generate perverse and even nonsensical outcomes. If these tools are to take such a central role in the decision-making about threatened species, they need to be subject to serious rigour, independent peer review and transparency.

The direction is set. We just need the secure funding, the education programs, and the involvement of us all – government agencies, corporations, and the broader community – to make it work.

*Parkwatch VNPA,
No. 269 (June 2017)*

Slow to Celebrate Parks' Golden Anniversary

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The NPWS was created in 1967 from the integration of the Fauna Protection Panel and the Reserves Branch of the Lands Department and today functions as part of the Office of Environment and

Heritage (OEH). It could be thought that the responsible Minister and state government would be there, front and centre, in a year-long campaign to acknowledge the tremendous, long-term, sustained work of NPWS staff, their staff, our staff. The NSW Government's management formula is reflected in the reduction of state regions, and thus directors from thirteen to eight, with tourism and business management seeming to have a new priority.

Perhaps this state government is still lying low after their 'Shooters in National Parks' fiasco, or perhaps their greater plan is to downgrade the NPWS further. The current executive of OEH has refused a proposal to update a 2006, 40th Anniversary document, still in draft form, that was made available through Freedom of Information, to mark the 50th Anniversary. The document is 'NSW NPWS Commemorative History 1967–2007'. It was withheld, effectively suppressed, by the then Department of Environment and Climate Change executive when the authors refused to make requested changes.

Australia's first national park, known today as the Royal National Park, was formally proclaimed on 26 April 1879. The NPWS operates under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and is responsible for management of National Parks, Wilderness, Historic Sites, State Conservation Areas, Regional Parks, Karst Conservation Reserves, Nature Reserves and Aboriginal Areas. Today, the NPWS manages 203 national park properties, but with a total of over 886 Parks and Reserves, Nature Reserves and 7 million hectares across a huge range of environments, including 2 million hectares under wilderness management in 51 areas.

*Colong Bulletin,
No. 267 (July 2017)*

Compiled by Hazel Rath



NPA notices

National Parks Association Calendar

	September	October	November	December
Public holidays	Mon 25	Mon 2	—	Mon 25 Tues 26
General meetings	Thurs 21	Thurs 19	Thurs 16	—
Committee meetings	Tues 5	Tues 3	Tues 7	Tues 5
Gudgeny Bush Regeneration ¹	Sat 9	Sat 14	Sat 11	Sat 9 ²
NPA Christmas Party				Sun 10
Glenburn work party	—	—	Tues 7	—

Further details: 1. GBRG. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre 9.15 am.
2. GBRG Christmas Party at Gudgenby Cottage follows a morning work party.

New members of the association

The NPA ACT welcomes Christopher and Barbara Aubrey, Susan Collier, Brian and Margaret Watson, Mark Jenkins as new members. We look forward to seeing you at NPA activities.

Call for volunteers

At NPA general meetings volunteer members set up the hall and the supper. We need more volunteers for 2017 as the roster is by no means full. Please contact Quentin Moran if you can help. qmoran@webone.com.au

Thank you

This *Bulletin* was prepared by:
Editors, Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz
Copyeditor, Ed Highley
Presentation, Adrienne Nicholson.



NPA Christmas Party

Sunday 10 December

Venue to be advised in December
Bulletin

Check *Burning Issues* or contact a Committee member.

NPA's

Field Guide to the Native trees of the ACT

will be available before Christmas!



Contributions for the NPA Bulletin

Contributions of articles, letters, poems, drawings and photographs are always welcome. If possible keep contributions to no more than 1,000 words. 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, email admin@npaact.org.au, or to the NPA ACT postal address (see page 31).

Deadline for the December 2017 issue:
31 October 2017.

Red spot

Subscriptions for 2017–18 are now overdue.

If there is a red spot on your *Bulletin* address sheet and in your *Bulletin* or you have received a reminder notice and not yet paid, the association's records show your current membership subscription has not been received.

Please take the time to make amendments to the renewal form if the information NPA holds confidentially in its database needs correcting. Please send the whole form back with your payment details. Thank you!

Sonja Lenz, Secretary

Cover photographs

Front cover

Main photo. *Walking in Mountain Gum forest north of Devils Peak (article page 23).* Photo by David Dedenczuk.

Insets. Left. *NPA ACT's new Life Member, Martin Chalk (citation page 19).* Photo by Max Lawrence.

Centre. *Christine Goonrey at the Bushfire symposium (article page 8).* Photo by Sabine Friedrich.

Right. *Flame Robin entertaining bushwalkers (article page 22).* Photo by Mike Bremers.

Back cover

Top. *Snowshoeing Etheridge Ridge, Kosciuszko National Park (article page 26).* Photo by Mike Bremers.

Bottom. *Seamans Hut and snow-encrusted rocks, Kosciuszko National Park (article page 26).* Photo by Mike Bremers.

General Meetings

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



Thursday 21 September

Vertebrate pests in the ACT

Oliver (Ollie) Orgill

Vertebrate Pest Control Officer
ACT Parks and Conservation Service.

Ollie will talk about the usual suspects: pigs, rabbits, foxes, horses and deer. He will outline government policy and describe control measures and anticipated risks of new pests.

[Is there a role here for citizen science, particularly when NPA purchases some cameras for monitoring animals such as the Rosenberg's Lizard (see October talk). We expect to detect all sorts of animals roaming Namadgi National Park, ones we want and ones we don't. **Ed.**]

Thursday 19 October

The plight of Rosenberg's Lizard in the ACT

Dr Don Fletcher

Now retired but busier than ever, Don will outline a citizen-science project involving NPA ACT, the Australian National University, the University of Canberra and the Parks and Conservation Service to establish the state of the Rosenberg's Lizard population in the ACT, where little is known about it. The lizard is designated a threatened species across the border in NSW.

Thursday 16 November

Adventures in Venezuela

Adrienne Nicholson

NPA member.

Adrienne spoke at the May meeting about the Galapagos Islands, a mere detour on the way to Venezuela. The Tepuis of Venezuela are also islands (in the sky rather than the sea) where evolution has resulted in unique flora and fauna. Highlights of the Grand Sabana in the south-east of Venezuela included the prehistoric 'flat topped' Mount Roraima, an unbelievable Jasper Waterfall, grand rivers and magnificent Angel Falls (with its uninterrupted 900 m fall, the tallest in the world).

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.

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Membership subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

The subscription rate is \$22, which includes a **digital copy only** of our *Bulletin*.

If you want to receive a printed copy of the *Bulletin*, the subscription rates are:

Household membership	\$44	Single members	\$38.50
Corporate membership	\$33	Full-time student/Pensioner	\$22

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

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