



# NPA *Bulletin*



- Not all news is bad on the extinction front
- NPA's submission to the Senate inquiry into feral horses in the Australian Alps
- New location for the Goanna Project
- Once in a decade event – a flow in the Great Darling Anabranch

*conservation education protection*

**June 2023 – Volume 60 – Number 2**

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**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land  
on which we live, learn and work, and pay our respects to the  
First Nations Peoples and their Elders, past, present and emerging**

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The **NPA Bulletin** is published quarterly in print and an extended online version to provide members with news on environmental and heritage conservation, education and protection, particularly as bearing on the ACT and adjacent regions.

Its aim is to report on NPA Committee and subcommittee deliberations and decisions; NPA events; provide a forum for members and invited guests on matters of interest and concern to NPA ACT; and fulfil an educational role on conservation and outdoor recreation issues. We accept paid advertising, where appropriate.

Contributions of articles up to 1,000 words, letters, poems, drawings and photos are welcome. Longer articles will be considered. Photos should be free of embedded information. The editor retains the right of final decision on content and presentation.

Send all items to the *Bulletin* Team, email [admin@npaact.org.au](mailto:admin@npaact.org.au).

Contact the NPA office for information and rates for advertisements.

Deadline for contributions to the next issue is **1 August 2023**.

**Disclaimer:**  
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Front cover: *Shortcut through the River Red Gums, Darling River*. By Mike Bremers (see pp. 11-14)

Back cover: Top: *Jagungal from Mawsons Hut*. By Philip Gatenby (see pp. 22-24)

Bottom: *Snow Gum, Tarn Bluff*. By Jan Gatenby (see pp. 22-24)

# From the President

## Greetings everyone

By the time you're reading this I hope the weather has well and truly cooled down and your winter plans for an escape to the snow or the sun are well underway. We're looking forward to some cross-country skiing in the Victorian and NSW alps, and some snowshoeing too. We finally tried snowshoes two winters ago and found it so enjoyable that we bought some to add to our winter gear. Snowshoeing is a lot of fun when both the weather and snow are marginal, which doesn't of course always happen at the same time.

We now have two members, Maisie Walker Stelling and Sam (Samantha) Shi, sharing office-support activities. Jan Gatenby has been doing an outstanding job getting them up to speed. In the process, we've been upgrading our office systems, and Maisie, Sam and Jan are working well to provide us all with great support. We plan to interview Maisie and Sam for the next issue of the *Bulletin*, so you'll get to know them better.

We've always relied on behind the scenes support for office and systems upgrades, and are pleased to have on board Bevan Calliess, who has worked with other Canberra conservation groups, on the current upgrades. These will set us up to operate

effectively into the future. So far, everything has been working well, and we hope that will continue with your upcoming membership renewals. If there are any glitches, please be patient. I do hope you'll all renew and also consider a donation to support our many activities, including walks, education and works programs, research and advocacy.

I was fortunate to meet with ACT Environment Minister Rebecca Vassarotti twice in April. Our first meeting was a formal catch-up to discuss NPA activities and our engagement with ACT Parks. She spoke glowingly about our operations and looks forward to spending another afternoon with Don Fletcher in goanna research on Mount Ainslie next summer.

In April, I organised walks under the NPA banner for the ACT Heritage Festival, and Minister Vassarotti joined two of them – to Mulligans Flat for a walk led by Aaron Chatfield, a Ngunnawal/Kamilaroi man who has been involved in several NPA events before. The minister also joined a walk I led around the native gardens at Parliament House, and again gave encouraging feedback after both events. She also spoke well of us to others on the walks. These events are not part of our regular walks program but about raising our public profile. Comments about our participation in the ACT Heritage Festival have been favourable, and this has resulted in several new members.

As always, a huge thanks to our hard-working committee and other volunteers. Mike Bremers and the walks leaders have come up with another great outings program for the next few months, and the *Bulletin* team has produced another full and interesting issue.

Rosemary Hollow



## Brett McNamara's retirement

After more than 30 years in the Parks and Conservation Service, most recently as Manager, Namadgi National Park, Brett McNamara retired on 6 May. As a long-term champion of the environment, Brett has been an enthusiastic supporter of NPA ACT.

We will bring you a full report of Brett's conservation achievements and long association with NPA in the September issue of the *Bulletin*.

Brett and Fiona MacDonald Brand at NPA's sixtieth.  
Photo by Sabine Friedrich

## From the recent Budget

Nature got a bit of a boost in the federal Budget, with initiatives announced that are explicitly for environmental repair, including:

- setting up an independent environmental regulator, Environment Protection Australia
- strengthening the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*
- funding projects for rehabilitating catchments, including the Murray–Darling Basin and, through the National Heritage Trust, biodiversity and natural resource management
- boosting marine science and protecting and restoring the Great Barrier Reef through funding to the Australian Institute of Marine Science
- increasing investment in Commonwealth national and marine parks.

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on **Thursday 17 August 2023 at 7:30 pm** at the Weston Creek Uniting Church hall.

Please come along and hear about our activities over the past year and plans for the year ahead. There'll be a slide show, short talks from members, and a sumptuous supper.

Agenda as follows:

- Minutes of AGM 2022
- President's report
- Financial report and appointment of auditor
- Election of office-bearers and committee
- Any other business

Would you like to become involved in the committee or in a support role in the year ahead? If so, please contact Rosemary our president at [rosemary@npaact.org.au](mailto:rosemary@npaact.org.au) to discuss.

All office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM. There'll be a link to the nomination form in the August *Burning Issues*, or contact our friendly office team at [admin@npaact.org.au](mailto:admin@npaact.org.au) and they'll email you one.

# NPA people

## Tupperware 'treasure' led to passion for environment

*Hugh Coppel is a young man with lots of questions about the environment. He talks to Allan Sharp about his quest for answers.*

A small Tupperware container hidden inside a log in a Canberra nature reserve sparked a young Hugh Coppel's interest in the environment.

'I stumbled across this treasure while on a Year 7 geology field trip and that got me hooked on geocaching,' recalls Hugh, who grew up in Canberra and joined the NPA ACT Committee last year.

'Thanks to an at times extreme obsession with this activity, I found myself planning and undertaking many adventures in the ACT region, spending all day every weekend bush bashing, mountain biking and hiking in pursuit of these treasures.'

Questions about the environment started to stack up quickly and, as Hugh's interest in geocaching eventually waned, he found himself heading into Canberra's nature reserves to search for answers to these questions.

While still in the 'thralls' of geocaching, Hugh met famed ACT bushwalker John Evans and tagged along on some of his hikes to the remotest corners of Namadgi.

***'I can say, hand on my heart, that these experiences contributed immensely to my interest and love of the environment,' he said.***

Hugh also considers it fortunate that he went to a high school that valued engagement with nature, and he credits geology teacher Bob Boyce and geography teacher Boyd Gibson with further fostering his interest in the environment.

More recently he joined Greening Australia Capital Region as a bush crew member assisting with restoration works at Namarag Nature Reserve on the Molonglo River. He has also worked on grassland restoration projects at Dudley Street and Stirling Park, Yarralumla, in Jarramlee Nature Reserve on the north-western boundary of the ACT, and further afield with tree-planting activities on farms as far away as Coleambally in the Riverina.



*Hugh at work for Greening Australia. Photo by Chris Macris*

Since joining Greening Australia his environmental knowledge and awareness has come on 'leaps and bounds' thanks to the enthusiasm and expertise of his colleagues there. 'My identification skills and plant

knowledge would be nil if it weren't for project manager Nicki Taws' guidance, especially when I'd accidentally bring her samples of the same plant over and over again.'

Through Greening Australia, Hugh has been able to undertake an honours project on growing more trees from seeds in the field. 'While this takes most of my time currently, I always try to find at least one day a week to go into the field for Greening Australia. My hope is that my honours project is just the beginning of my research into restoration science,' he said.

An interest in how people engage with the environment led Hugh to joining NPA. 'Given the amount of time I spent in Namadgi in my youth, I was keen to see what others were doing there.'

His first NPA outing was on a work party with the Gudgenby Bush Regenerators, and while he hasn't been able to attend many work parties recently, they are one of his favourite NPA activities.

Another of Hugh's goals is to engage more young people in NPA activities. 'NPA's activities and community provide an awesome opportunity to share knowledge and experiences,' he said. 'Many young people have questions about the environment, and NPA members are always keen to provide answers. I especially value the citizen science projects NPA supports, as I know many of my fellow students at ANU seek out opportunities to hone their fieldwork skills. Continuing support for these projects, and developing new ones, is a great way to retain the interest of young people.'

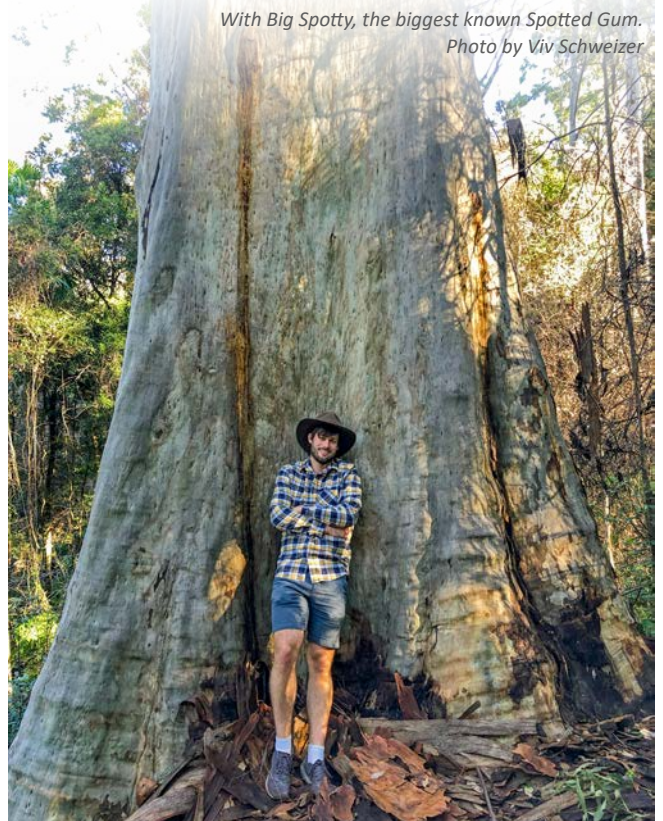
Hugh sees a growing environmental interest and commitment among younger people but thinks the way they want to engage with the environment is changing.

'Awareness of the twin biodiversity and climate crises has evoked a desire for meaningful action,' he said. 'This tends to play out on the global scale, where the impact of an action can feel small and cause young people to despair. NPA can help alleviate this by showing young people the beauty of their local area and how their efforts translate to on-ground benefits.'

Having recently submitted his honours thesis, Hugh hopes his research might lead to improved success of revegetation efforts. 'This project has awakened a passion for botany in me, and now I can't help but wonder about all the plants I pass by each day,' he said.

'I could not imagine having a job anywhere but in the environmental sector!'

*With Big Spotty, the biggest known Spotted Gum. Photo by Viv Schweizer*



# Some light at the end of the tunnel

Rarely do we hear good news on the fate of our threatened animal species, but a recent study by a team of Australian researchers offers some hope. The hope stems from the fact that their study found 26 animals currently on the national threatened list have recovered sufficiently to no longer be considered threatened.

Over half of the 26 animals are, perhaps surprisingly, mammals (14 species), eight are birds, two are frogs and there is one fish and one reptile (see table below).

The key reason given for recovery of most of the species was coordinated action to remove feral predator threats (applies mainly to the mammals), but other factors are natural adaptation to disease (e.g. frog species), reduction in habitat loss (some bird species) and removal of hunting (e.g. Humpback Whale).

The researchers also confirmed that three additional species (one mammal and two frogs), which the federal government removed from the list during the study period (2000–2022), had legitimately recovered. It remains to be seen if any other species will be removed from the national list or indeed from any state/territory lists they may also be on.

While the findings are certainly good news, there are some important caveats. In the study, 'recovered' specifically means that the researchers found these species no longer met the criteria for being listed as threatened under the federal *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. This can mean, for example, that a viable population of a species has been established in a specific, small 'haven' where predators have been reduced or removed, such as on an island. Typically, these species will not have recovered to anywhere near their historically natural population size or range. State and territory threatened species listings frequently differ from the national one, as they should. The Southern Bell Frog (*Littoria raniformis*), for example, which is regarded as extinct in the ACT (it was last recorded in 1980), is considered by researchers to no longer meet the criteria for a national threatened species due to the presence of viable populations outside the ACT, partly a result of improvements made to wetlands.

The researchers also highlight that:

- there remain over 440 animal species on the national threatened list
- over the study period more species have been added to the list than the 29 recovered ones
- ongoing funding is essential to ensure the recovered species remain viable
- broad-scale habitat loss, climate change, inappropriate fire regimes and natural systems modification continue to affect Australian biodiversity across vast areas.

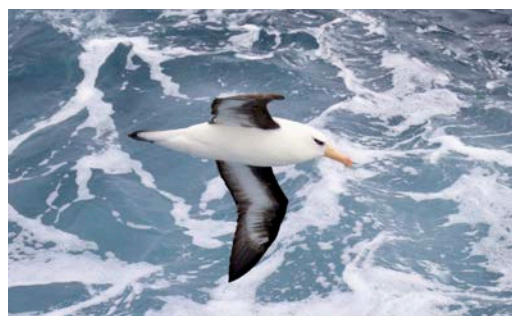
The 29 cases of recovery do at least provide guidance for the management of other threatened species, and some optimism for those involved in threatened species management.

Craig Watson

## Animals considered to have recovered:

Mammals (15)	Burrowing Bettong (Barrow and Boodie islands subspecies), Burrowing Bettong (Shark Bay subspecies), Chuditch/Western Quoll, Golden Bandicoot (Barrow Island population), Rufous Hare-wallaby ( <i>berneri</i> subspecies), Rufous Hare-wallaby ( <i>dorreae</i> subspecies), Mala (Central Australian population), Banded Hare-wallaby, Greater Stick-nest Rat, Greater Bilby, Humpback Whale, Bridled Nail-tailed Wallaby, Western Barred Bandicoot, Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby
Birds (8)	Bulloo Grey Grasswren, Great Knot, Southern Cassowary, Greater Sand Plover, Gouldian Finch, Blue Petrel, Black-browed Albatross, Sooty Albatross
Frogs (4)	Australian Lace-lid, Waterfall Frog, Southern Bell Frog, Common Mistfrog
Reptiles (1)	Flinders Ranges Worm-lizard
Fish (1)	Murray Cod

**Source:** 'Lights at the end of the tunnel: The incidence and characteristics of recovery for Australian threatened animals.' Published in *Biological Conservation*, March 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.109946>



Black-browed Albatross. Photo by Kevin McCue



Greater Sand Plover. Photo by Philip Gatenby



Southern Bell Frog. Photo by John Wombey



Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby. Photo by Philip Gatenby

# From the Environment Subcommittee

It is great to be able to write that we have had a win. In late April 2023, the new NSW Labor Government confirmed that it would honour its election pledge and not raise the wall of Warragamba Dam. The previous government proposed to raise the wall of the dam by 14 metres as a measure to mitigate flooding in Sydney's outer suburbs. The proposal would have seen an estimated 65 kilometres of wilderness rivers and 5,700 hectares of national parks being inundated. This included areas covered by the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area listing as well as areas of significant Indigenous heritage.

The fight against the raising of the dam wall lasted more than 8 years and was led by a coalition of environmental groups including the Colong Foundation, the Nature Conservation Council and NPA NSW.

As pointed out in the NPA ACT's 2021 submission against the project, there was no solid evidence that the raising of the wall would significantly reduce flooding in Western Sydney. NPA ACT applauds the NSW Government decision, as the more than \$1 billion being saved in construction costs will go a long way in providing effective flood mitigation measures.

On issues closer to home, NPA ACT has commented on:

- the ACT Territory Plan and district strategies
- the action plan for the ACT's bogs and fens
- whether huts should be rebuilt in Namadgi
- feral horses in the Australian Alps (see below).



A key matter for many of our members is the management of Namadgi National Park, and the ACT Government has sought community views on its published *Review of the Namadgi National Park Plan of Management 2010*. Unfortunately, submissions will have closed by the time of the publication of the June *Bulletin* but NPA ACT will have made a submission on this important review.

A copy of all NPA ACT's submissions can be found on its website at <https://www.npaact.org.au/index.php/pages/our-submissions>

Rod Griffiths

Gurrangorambla Creek, northern Kosciuszko National Park.  
All photos by Jan and Philip Gatenby, unless indicated otherwise



## Feral horse update

The NPA ACT has been lobbying for the protection of Australia's alpine ecosystems from the damage caused by feral horses (examples pictured) for more than two decades. In that time, feral horse numbers have risen from a few hundred across all of the Australian Alps to nearly 19,000 just in Kosciuszko National Park. While some progress has been made in Victoria, science as a basis for the management of feral horses was thrown out the door in New South Wales. The passing of the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* was a low point in the management of feral horses in that state and flew in the face of its own science, which had recognised feral horses as a key cause of habitat loss.

The only shining light during these times was the ACT, where long-term zero tolerance of feral horses was reflected in action plans such as the *Namadgi National Park Feral Horse Management Plan 2020* and a policy of speedy action to remove feral horses from the ACT's alpine regions.

Now, however, the overall political environment has changed. Conservative governments have lost power in both NSW and federally. It is indeed refreshing to hear the federal government make positive statements on the environment and to declare the Australian Alps a 'priority place' for threatened species action. Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek has herself commented on the environmental damage caused by horses in the Australian Alps.

Feral horses in the Australian Alps are also the topic of a Senate inquiry initiated by David Pocock, the independent senator for the ACT. The inquiry poses a number of questions to the community on the effects of horses in the Australian Alps; means of controlling their numbers; the political environment in which feral horse management in the Australian Alps has

operated; and the extent to which the federal government should be involved in the management process.

The NPA ACT has made a submission to the Senate inquiry calling for urgent federal action to remove feral horses from the Australian Alps national parks. The submission stresses:

- the Commonwealth's responsibility under its international environmental treaties to protect the Australian Alps from horses and other hard-hoofed feral animals
- the sad history of feral horse management in NSW
- that best practice requires that land managers have unrestricted access to all available methods for the management of pest animals
- that feral animal control methods used must be based on their overall effectiveness and with due regard for animal welfare
- that methods to repair and restore alpine habitats will not be fully effective unless there is a significant reduction in the numbers of feral horses and other hard-hoofed feral animals.

It seems, thankfully, that positive action to reduce feral horse numbers in Australia's alpine regions may be just around the corner. Let's hope it's not too late.

A full version of the NPA ACT's submission can be found on the NPA ACT's website at [www.npaact.org.au/index.php/pages/our-submissions](http://www.npaact.org.au/index.php/pages/our-submissions).

Rod Griffiths

Tributary of Tantangara Creek. Photo by Mike Bremers



Seventeen Flat

Murray River at Cowombat Flat



Near Moscow Saddle, Cobberas Wilderness



## A reprieve for Bluetts Block

The woodlands and rocky knolls of Bluetts Block – Piney Ridge support more than 100 species of plants, many bird species and rare marsupial populations of Dunnart and Antechinus. The ongoing campaign to protect Bluetts from urban development (see *NPA Bulletin*, June 2022) recently received good news with the developer, Capital Estate Developments, submitting revised plans for the area.

According to Peta Bulling, Biodiversity Campaigner for the Conservation Council ACT Region, 'The revised plans are a huge win in the fight to protect Bluetts Block – Piney Ridge. The development footprint has been more than halved and the direct impact on remnant trees has been eliminated.'

This is a step in the right direction but by no means the end of the story. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/3KKpsXT> or visit the [Bluetts Block Facebook](#) page.

Philip Gatenby



A granite knoll, Bluetts Block–Piney Ridge. Photo by John Evans

# Goanna Project update

## Naas Survey 2021–22

As the forecast for the 2022–23 goanna season suggested there would be even more flooding in the Naas Valley, and even worse damage to the fire trail, we decided to shift the project temporarily to Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie nature reserves ('Ainslie–Majura'). This proved fortunate because the Naas Valley was closed to vehicles. However, there were still GPS packs on goannas. In a series of trips to the Naas Valley in mid summer (one involving extensive walking), two detached GPS packs were found, three goannas were caught and their GPS packs removed, and the elusive goanna M7 was found dead. Nine cameras were retrieved from goanna nests.

## New fauna record and increased pests

The cameras revealed no pictures of goannas but did demonstrate post-fire increases in four pest species: Fallow Deer, Feral Cats, Foxes, and Sambar Deer. Also, for the first time, Long-nosed Bandicoots (*Perameles nasuta*) were recorded in the Naas Valley.



From Naas Valley camera traps – Long-nosed Bandicoot, Feral Cat and Fallow Deer  
Below: Two of the many foxes captured by camera traps, Ainslie–Majura



## Ainslie–Majura camera survey 2022–23

Our main task at Ainslie–Majura was to trial a camera trapping method to estimate population size.

Ainslie–Majura is a convenient study site. We could, for example, readily arrange a 30 minute after-work visit for ACT Environment Minister Rebecca Vassarotti so she could familiarise herself with how our environment grant funds were



Environment Minister Rebecca Vassarotti (right) and staffer Adrianna with NPA members Ewen Lawler and Esther Gallant (with hat).

All photos by Don Fletcher apart from camera trap photos

being spent. Such visits are always invaluable opportunities to discuss a range of issues of mutual interest.

Thirty-five camera traps were run for 10 weeks. Typically, cameras were in a steel security box with python lock and 'anti-vandal' labels giving survey information and the warning that 'Another camera is watching'. Security cameras were placed nearby, well out of reach.

Every Sunday 18 to 24 volunteers replaced the bait (a portion of chicken frame which had been rotted in humid conditions to maximise its odour) and the memory cards and batteries in the cameras. This was a much larger survey than those in 2020–21 and 2021–22. Previous surveys had indicated that greater effort was needed.

## Camera survey results

During the survey, 1.8 million photos were recorded. Many people volunteered to inspect them but this activity was paused after 0.4 million had been inspected because we expect that in coming months we will be able to use computer programs to facilitate the process. These programs leave the species identification to the operator, but the majority of images in them do not have to be perused. In a few years, we will probably be using artificial intelligence programs to identify the species photographed.

The photos inspected so far have recorded more than 100,000 images of Australian Ravens, tens of thousands of foxes, and numerous photos of Shingleback Lizards, macropods (4 species) and rabbits. The foxes photographed were at first mostly naive



Above: One of the cameras at Ainslie–Majura  
Below: Elevated security camera







Mark and Lyn maintaining a camera trap



Volunteers assembling for the weekly camera maintenance visit

subadults, in groups of up to four, but their number rapidly declined, leaving competent, wary adults by the end of February. Photos of non-target species provide an index of abundance which will be valuable if fox control is attempted in future.

Five previously known goannas were detected this season. Three – Ramsey, Rex and Rum – were found in the photos inspected so far. All of them were known either from previous surveys or from photos taken by members of the public, as were two other goannas – Rambo and Robyn – seen this season by volunteers and members of the public.

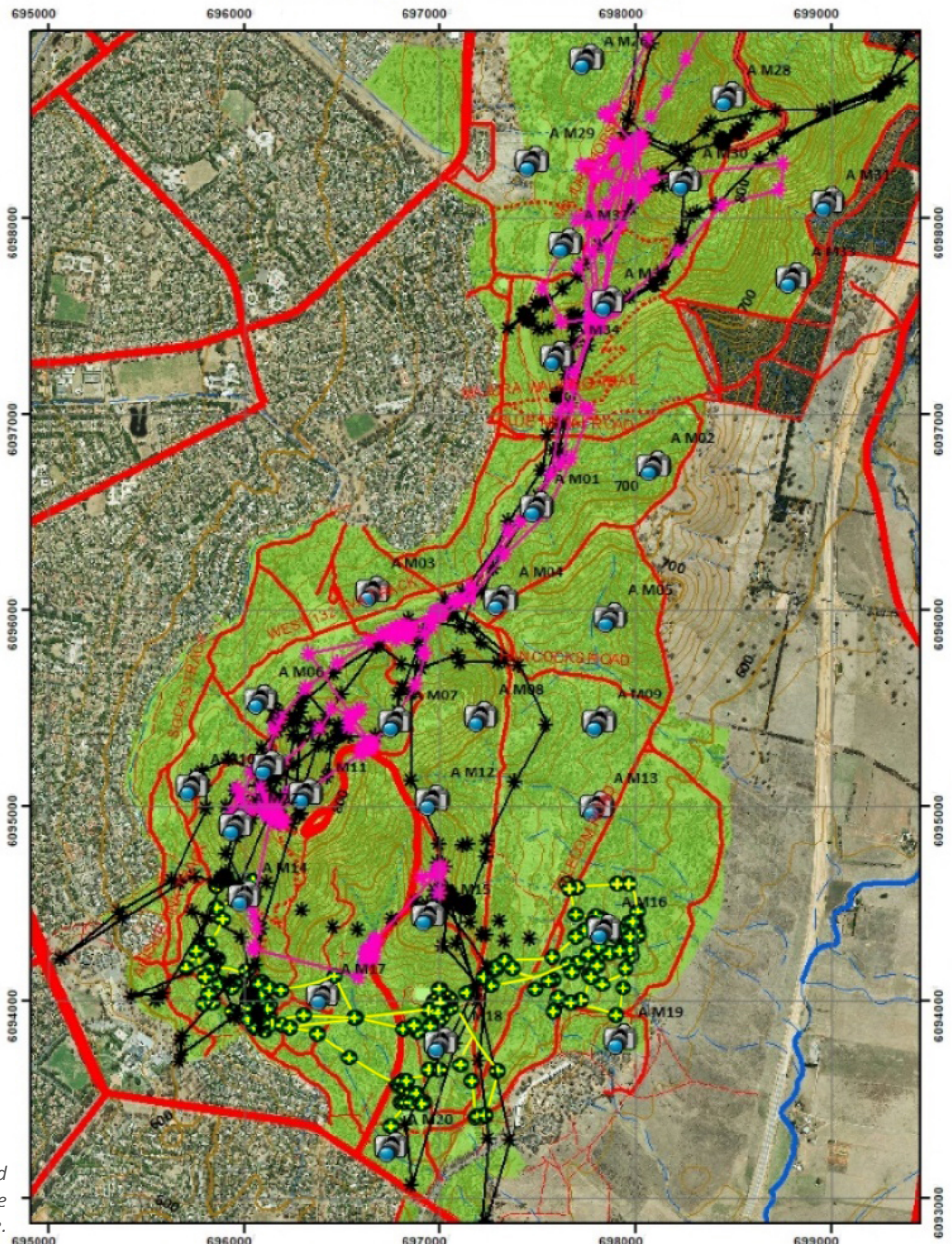
Only two other individuals have ever been recorded: Roxy last sighted in 2018 and Rosie last sighted in 2016. It seems most likely that the Ainslie-Majura goanna population is a lot smaller than expected. Unless some previously unknown goannas turn up in the 1.4 million photos yet to be inspected, the evidence will suggest that only 5–10 Rosenberg’s Goannas remain in Ainslie-Majura.

While walking to cameras, two parties of volunteers observed goannas which were subsequently captured and fitted with GPS packs. Goanna Rex also wore a GPS pack, having been captured previously from his winter burrow. The sighting by volunteer Meg S led to our first photos of goannas mating and was our only record this year of Goanna Robyn (previously Robin), and how we now know her gender. Four goannas have been recorded at this burrow, also a new record.

**GPS Packs**

The fitting of GPS packs allows the movement of goannas to be tracked. Three goannas were tracked (see map). Only two of the three goannas fitted with packs were recorded on cameras and each at only one camera site. Many trapping methods in ecology catch few of the animals that pass nearby. However, it is also possible that capture success was lower in La Niña conditions due to the abundance of alternative food.

Our paper on attaching GPS packs to lizards has been published in *Herpetological Conservation and Biology* at [https://www.herpconbio.org/Volume\\_18/Issue\\_1/Fletcher\\_etal\\_2023.pdf](https://www.herpconbio.org/Volume_18/Issue_1/Fletcher_etal_2023.pdf). This journal is open access (which means anyone can get the full paper) yet it does not demand a payment from the authors, which is a rare combination. By choosing this USA journal, we saved enough money for four more Reconyx cameras or a new GPS pack!



Movements of goannas Rex (black), Rambo (pink) and Rum (yellow) in relation to camera locations (blue dots). Green shading indicates nature reserve.

## Goanna traffic sense?

GPS data show that the tracked goannas cross Mount Ainslie Drive and Mount Majura Road repeatedly. As mature adults, they have probably been doing so for years. Have they learned where there are culverts beneath the road; do they cross the road when no cars can be heard approaching; or are they just lucky? There is potential to improve the conservation prospects of Rosenberg's Goanna if this behaviour could be evaluated and these questions answered.

## Involvement

This year, three half-day training sessions for up to 15 volunteers were held at the Namadgi Visitor Centre. They covered the use of mapping apps on smart phones, camera trapping and radio tracking.

## Engagement

A supportive community will be needed for the introduction of additional goanna conservation measures such as fox baiting and limiting where dogs may be walked but, at this stage, few people are even aware that goannas are present in the ACT. Conservation of ACT goannas depends on the Canberra public rejecting the myth that goannas are unattractive and dangerous reptiles, and coming to an appreciation of their presence, ecological roles, intelligence, vulnerabilities and beauty.

Rotten chicken bait



It is often easy to turn around the common misconceptions because there is research evidence that goannas are individually distinct and that they are exceptionally intelligent predators with long memories: communication therefore matters. The most persuasive form of communication appears to be face-to-face contact. Three freeze-dried goannas have become a precious aid in this effort and were a great conversation starter near a pedestrian entrance to the reserve to illustrate differences between the local species. We made good use of them during the camera maintenance sessions.



Freeze-dried goannas were a great conversation starter near a pedestrian entrance and illustrate differences between the local species



To reach an even wider audience, several other activities were undertaken, including social media posts, and the *Goanna News* emails. Ten articles about the NPA Goanna Project have been published in the *NPA Bulletin*. People more interested in the project can receive the Goanna News series of emails by emailing [don.fletcher@emailme.com.au](mailto:don.fletcher@emailme.com.au).

*Don Fletcher, John Brickhill and Isobel Crawford*

Left: Goanna Ramsey taking the bait

Goannas Rambo and Robyn mating above the four-goanna burrow





## Following the flow on the Great Darling Anabranh

It was a hot afternoon of day 4 of our Great Darling Anabranh kayak journey in February 2023. Bill McGrath and I had each found a Black Box tree under which to shelter for the next few hours till we could retreat to our tents in the cooler evening. The trees provided dappled shade which was inadequate so we each strung up a tarp. Regular dunking in the river kept us cool but the water we had paddled on that morning had a distinct swampy smell and some traces of blue-green algae, with dead carp scattered here and there. Our drinking water, filtered from the river, was lukewarm and had an earthy taste bordering on unpleasant. Fingers were crossed that it was not harmful to our health. Worst of all was the thought that the next day was going to be 5 degrees hotter with temperatures in the low 40s. How did it come to this?

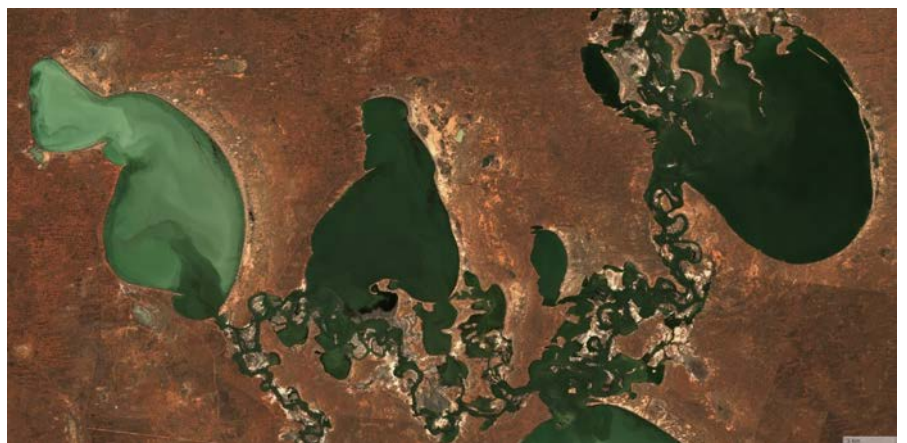
Despite the gloomy picture painted above, we had a very interesting morning in which we paddled into the Anabranh from the Darling River via the Anabranh Offtake, first through Black Box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*) woodland and then an expansive treeless floodplain. The Great Darling Anabranh is the ancestral path of the Darling River. It flows for about 450 km from where it leaves the Darling 120 km downstream of Menindee, to the Murray River about 30 km downstream of Wentworth.

The Darling needs to have a moderate to high flow before water enters the Anabranh. Before the construction of the Menindee Lakes Scheme in the 1960s, flows from the Darling River into the Anabranh occurred on average in 2 of every 3 years. Now, floodwaters are captured in the Menindee Lakes, which means that high flows in the Darling downstream are less common and the situation is further exacerbated by increased irrigation in recent decades further upstream along the tributaries of the Darling. Early European modification of the Anabranh included the excavation of a channel from the Darling to the Anabranh to increase the occurrence of

inflows to the Anabranh. This increase has in part compensated for a reduction caused by the implementation of the Menindee Lakes Scheme.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, natural inflows of any significant extent into the Anabranh now happen only about once a decade. We had timed our journey well, when we entered the Anabranh we were just behind the flood peak which may have been the highest in almost 50 years.



Satellite images of Anabranh lakes Popiltah, Popio and Mindona, Feb 2022 (top) and 2023 (bottom).  
From Sentinelhub Playground, <https://apps.sentinel-hub.com/sentinel-playground/>



There are very few records of people paddling the Darling Anabranh. Tony Pritchard travelled it in 1977<sup>2</sup> and Alan Hywood paddled it in 2012 and 2022. Paddling the Anabranh did not come into our consciousness until Alan Davison, whom Craig and I met on the Murray last September,<sup>3</sup> paddled it three times in 2022, once as an exploratory return trip and another as part of his 3,500+ km Darling source to sea journey. He posted detailed information on the Internet and, with sustained high flows in the Darling peaking in early 2023, Bill and I decided to take the rare opportunity to paddle the Anabranh all the way from the Darling to the Murray.

We started our journey from Menindee on 6 February in kayaks loaded with 20 days of food. The first 3 days down the Darling River to the Anabranck Offtake were very interesting for both of us. We each had paddled the Darling in low water, in 2017 and 2020,<sup>3</sup> respectively. The full river and flooded plains were in stark contrast to the highly incised channel with precipitous banks that we had previously experienced. The high water enabled us to take shortcuts by paddling through the River Red Gums on the floodplains, such that we paddled only 100 km of the 120 km meandering river channel.



Mike at a shady Darling River camp

We entered the Anabranck early on day 4. Water was spread throughout the Black Box woodland but the narrow Anabranck channel was quite distinctive and, if in any doubt, we just applied the mantra of 'follow the flow'. This was quite easy by looking at the ripples around the tree trunks but as we proceeded the woodland gave way to a large expanse of water that was slow so we generally paddled in the westerly direction that the river flowed. In 1977 Pritchard experienced a 'forest of thick lignum' with no obvious current.<sup>2</sup> Lignum is a native, woody, multi-stemmed perennial shrub up to 3 m high that is an important habitat in both flood and dry conditions. Perhaps the lignum has disappeared after the lengthy dry spells in recent decades. Slow moving, relatively shallow water is ideal for blue-green algae which we spotted in isolated locations. The dead carp that we saw had most likely died from the water's low dissolved oxygen content, which had plummeted in early February.



Bill at the Anabranck Offtake

Around lunchtime, and 26 km into the Anabranck, we selected a campsite that, in hindsight, was not good for a hot day, but after a good night's sleep we were refreshed and ready to continue. Four kilometres further on we reached the confluence of the Anabranck and Redbank Creek which enters from the north. Redbank Creek is a major tributary of the Anabranck. Water flows into Redbank Creek from both Tandou Creek, which receives flows from the Darling in major flood conditions such as we were experiencing, and Cawndilla Channel which receives controlled releases from Lake Cawndilla (part of the Menindee Lakes Scheme). The confluence was not obvious; we were confronted with a large expanse of water flowing through the woodland but we kept 'following the flow' which changed from a generally westerly to a south-westerly direction. A Wycot gauge downstream recorded a massive 30,000 ML/day compared with the flow entering the Anabranck from the Darling of 3,500 ML/day.

Unlike the Darling, the Anabranck has only patches of shady River Red Gums along its banks, presumably at the deep waterholes, so we again had to settle for a campsite among the dappled shade of the Black Box. Nevertheless, it was better than the previous camp. Water quality seemed better and we were more confident now that the water wouldn't make us sick. I also found that putting a wet sock around my water bottles cooled the water enough to make it mildly refreshing.

By sunset it had cooled enough for me to take a short walk in the sandy area behind our campsite. Among the sand I found patches of old, small animal bones as well as some stone artefacts suggesting that this may have been an Aboriginal camp many years ago.



Possible stone artefact

On days 6–8 we passed the Anabranck lakes and caught up with the flood peak. The lakes of the Anabranck cover 47,000 hectares, which is similar to the size of the nearby Menindee Lakes. Both are listed in the *Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*. The lakes are deflation basins (basins formed by wind erosion) that feature high sandy lunettes on the northern section and show evidence of Aboriginal occupation.<sup>1</sup> They are dry most of the time and fill only during high natural flows. There are about eight large lakes with a diameter of 5–10 km and a number of smaller lakes. Most are connected to the Anabranck by a feeder channel which we did not paddle down as we would have to return against the current. We bypassed the

first few lakes by paddling across the floodplains adjacent to their edges, in some places just scraping over submerged farm fences. Near Lake Mindona we started to see large colonies of pelicans. Nialia Lake was directly connected to the Anabranch and we were pleased to get a glimpse over the large expanse of water to the opposite shore, about 5 km away. Nialia Lake is quite shallow and will drain back into the Anabranch when the floodwaters recede, no doubt helping to sustain the flow. Some of the other lakes can hold water for extended periods, up to 5 years in the case of Popiltah Lake.<sup>4</sup> Nearie Lake, encompassed within a nature reserve, is one of the deepest lakes in the Darling Anabranch system (2–3 metres compared with 1–2 metres for most other lakes) and holds water for between 3 and 4 years after flooding, thereby becoming an important refuge for waterbirds as floodwaters dry up.<sup>5</sup>

While pelicans were common, especially near the lakes, Rainbow Bee-eaters were prolific throughout the entire journey. Surprisingly, cockatoos and parrots were generally absent but we were delighted to see a Pink Cockatoo and some budgies on the northern Anabranch.



Pelicans, a common sighting

At the end of day 6, Peter of Popiltah Station zoomed past our campsite on his jet ski, visiting neighbours and looking for stranded goats. He invited us to visit when we passed the homestead 25 km downstream. Although not home when we arrived the next day, his son Sam said to help ourselves to the rainwater tank. (To be concluded in the next issue).

Mike Bremers

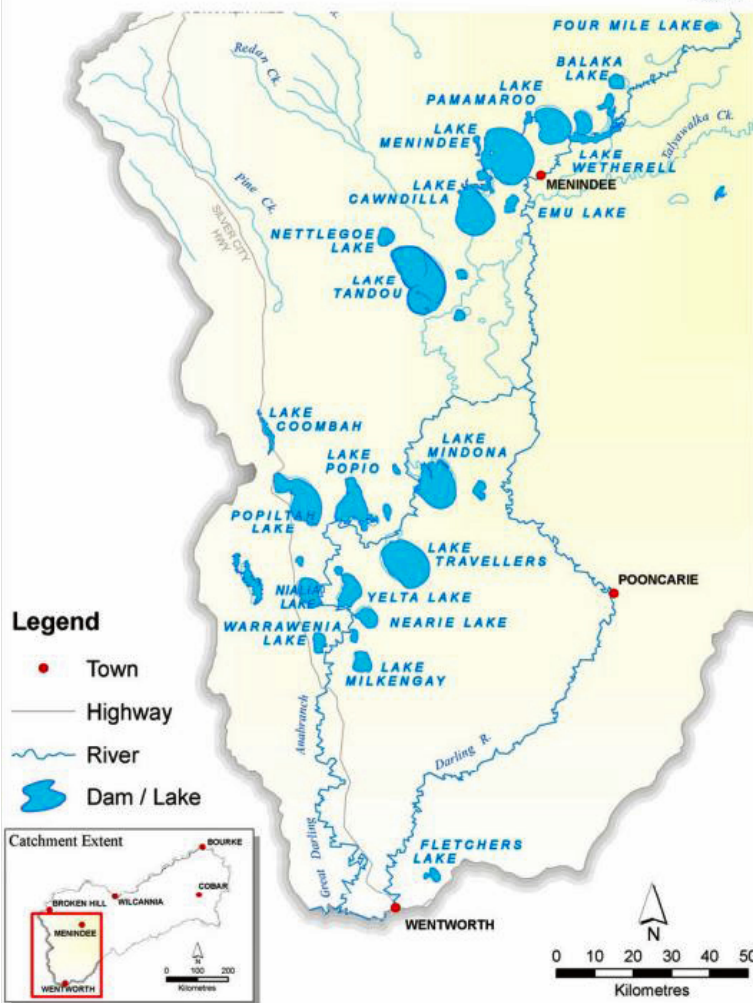
**References:**

1. Darling Anabranch Management Plan – Stock and Domestic Pipeline and Reinstatement of Environmental Flows, Report No. DC08035, NSW Water Solutions, prepared for the Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2008
2. Drifting Down the Darling, Pritchard, Tony, 2015
3. NPA Bulletin, March 2023, December 2020, March 2021
4. Assessment of environmental water requirements for the proposed Basin Plan: Lower Darling River System, MDBA Publication No: 29/12, 2012
5. Nearie Lake Nature Reserve Plan of Management, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2008

Map:

Lower Darling catchment. See [www.researchgate.net/publication/280884345\\_Water\\_resources\\_and\\_management\\_overview\\_Lower\\_Darling\\_River\\_catchment](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/280884345_Water_resources_and_management_overview_Lower_Darling_River_catchment)

**Lower Darling Catchment**



The Darling in flood



Edge of Nialia Lake

# Macquarie Island Marine Park to triple in size – well not quite

Macquarie Island (administratively a Tasmanian island) is the exposed crest of the 1,600-km long undersea Macquarie Ridge and is the only land on the planet consisting solely of basaltic oceanic crust. It lies around 1,500 km south-east of Tasmania, and teems with birds and animals, some of them unique to the island. This island and its surrounding seas have globally significant conservation values.

The federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek announced on 23 February 2023 that Macquarie Island Marine Park would be tripled in size to protect the entire Exclusive Economic Zone around the island. An area more than twice the size of Victoria would be protected. This proposal, which dates back to 2004, would bring Australia's marine parks to an area equivalent to 48.2 per cent of Australian oceanic waters.



*Nature Reserve and World Heritage Area - All photos by Kevin McCue*

Fishers are limited to a maximum of three vessels. In this fishery, there are currently 20,000 quota statutory fishing rights for Patagonian Toothfish.

This subantarctic environment (including Macquarie Island and its surrounds) is crucial for breeding and feeding for millions of seabirds and thousands of marine mammals, yet in a major sop to the fishing industry, fishing would still be tolerated. This is not my idea of a marine reserve.

Macquarie Island and its surrounding seas to a distance of 22 km (12 nm, see red boundary line on map) are currently protected in a World Heritage Area.

The area around Macquarie Island is not well represented by the current marine park



*Above: The Nuggets, Macquarie Island  
Below: Giant Southern Petrel (White Morph)*



*Above: Royal Penguin and chick  
Below: Blue-eyed Shag*



But the proposed new marine park would also allow the continued fishing of the Patagonian Toothfish, as part of the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery. Fishers need to hold statutory fishing rights allocated by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) to fish in the Macquarie Island Fishery. Statutory fishing rights allow fishers to catch the fish species that are part of a quota system and these rights are transferable between fishers.



*Right: Salvin's Albatross  
Far right: Young male Elephant Seal*



(the lower right hand quadrant of the green circle). In particular, the entire area to the west and most of the northern and southern parts of the Macquarie Ridge are not protected, but will be included in the proposed expansion.

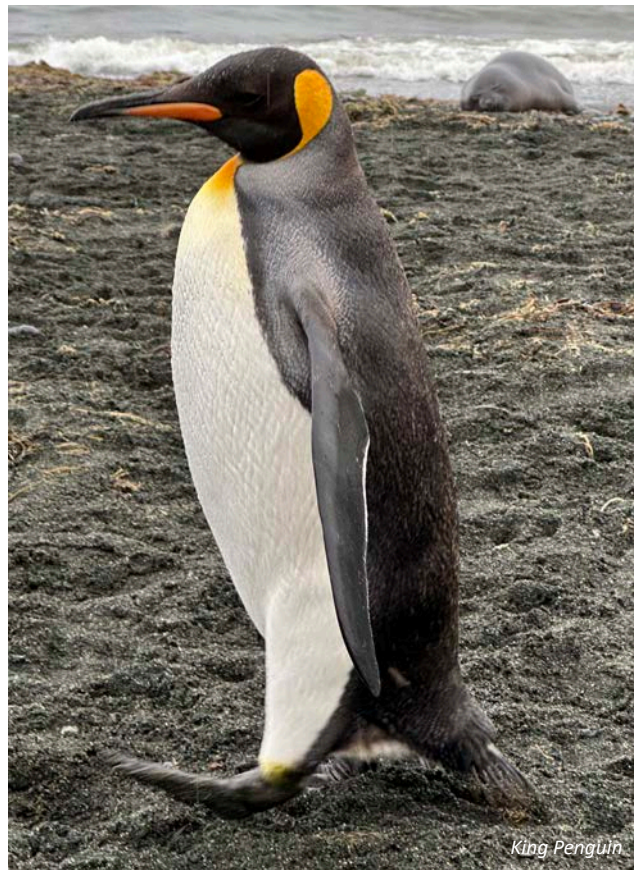
The fishery targets the deepwater Patagonian Toothfish using bottom longlines, mostly in the central zone of the Macquarie Ridge and this fishing activity would continue under the new plans, without significant changes to current practices or catches. Rubbish and litter washing up on the island's beaches are predominantly due to fishing and marine debris. The effects of climate change are an additional and increasing threat to biodiversity on and around the island.

It is acknowledged that if new fisheries targeting midwater species were allowed to develop, or new industries such as seabed mining were permitted, these could directly affect the seabirds, marine mammals and other species that live in these areas.

It seems obvious that the current and any future fishery ought to be disallowed throughout the entire Marine National Park. What is the financial benefit to Australia of allowing this fishery to continue? (I am awaiting a response from the AFMA to this question.)

A period of public consultation on the proposal commenced in March, with submissions due by 26 May 2023.

Kevin McCue

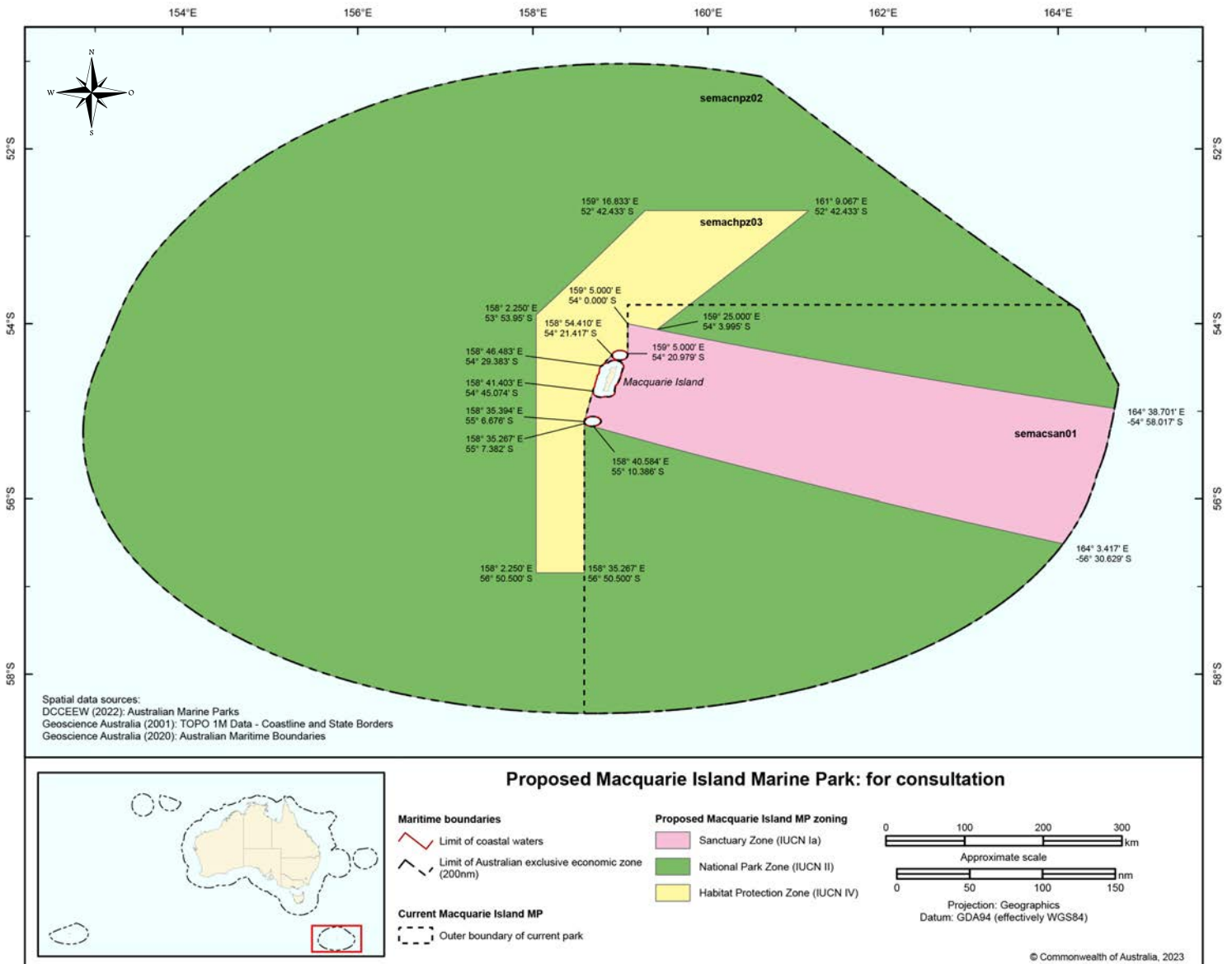


King Penguin

Map:

Current marine park and proposed extension surrounding Macquarie Island (pale pink blob).

See [https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/files/south-east/Updates/Proclamation\\_proposal\\_Mac\\_Island\\_MP\\_zoning\\_coordinates.pdf](https://parksaustralia.gov.au/marine/files/south-east/Updates/Proclamation_proposal_Mac_Island_MP_zoning_coordinates.pdf)



# The campaign to restore Lake Pedder



The original Lake Pedder was a place apart: a massive 10 square kilometre glacial lake in South-West Tasmania that, in summer, had an iridescent 3-kilometre long quartzite beach curtained by jagged, towering wilderness ridges. Tragically, the lake was flooded 50 years ago this year by the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission behemoth despite it being made a national park in 1955 (see *NPA Bulletin*, June 2022).

For a long time, it was considered something of a historic tragedy but, in recent years, a concerted campaign to restore it has gotten underway. Highlights of the new push have included a re-enactment of a 1972 Tiger Moth flight from Hobart to Canberra (that was meant to publicise the lake's plight but mysteriously disappeared); several actions and functions around the inundated lake to mark the half-century of its submersion; and, in March this year, a protest outside the national parliament here in Canberra

that included a fly-past by an aeroplane towing a 'Restore Lake Pedder' banner.

A central message of the Restore Pedder campaign is that we are 2 years into the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Australia should inspire the rest of the world by pulling the plug on Lake Pedder and returning it to its former glory. They argue that since the lake contributes only 4 per cent of Tasmania's electricity production, the cost could easily be met. However, Hydro Tasmania counters that, because the lake helps feed the state's largest hydro-electric power station, it plays a pivotal role in producing emission-free power needed for the state's Basslink cable system that supplies Victoria and, if it ever proceeds, the Marinus Link cable that will also supply the state. So far, this argument has been supported by the Albanese government but strong public pressure could yet change their minds as it did 40 years ago this year when the nearby Franklin River was also threatened by hydro development.

For more information about the Restore Pedder campaign visit:

<https://lakepedder.org>

Part of the Canberra rally. Photo by Greg Buckman



Greg Buckman  
ACT NPA  
member,  
environmentalist  
and bushwalker



## Rockwarbler

How many of you know that the Rockwarbler (*Origma solitaria*) is the one bird endemic to only New South Wales? While not found in the ACT or immediately adjoining areas, you don't have to go too far to be in the habitat of this elusive little bird. Its entire range is restricted to the Hawkesbury sandstone and some nearby limestone areas. So next time you're in the Budawangs, Ettrema, parts of the Shoalhaven, Kanagra Boyd or the Blue Mountains look out for it.

*Origma* derives from the Greek for a hollow or a cave (*Orygma*), which is usually where they build a hanging nest. So another name for Rockwarblers is Cave Bird. *Solitaria*, as the name implies, means solitary, which is how the bird seems.<sup>1</sup> Most sightings are of only one bird but Rockwarblers form monogamous relationships so there's likely to be another bird not too far away.

A lot of the bird's habitat was burnt in the 2019 bushfires thus raising concerns for its survival, but research undertaken by Birdlife Australia found that Rockwarblers were living in burnt areas and had also moved into remote areas of the Greater Blue Mountains where previously they had not been recorded, auguring well for its future. Unfortunately, the overall detection rate of



Rockwarblers at sites where they were known to occur before the fires was low. To get a better idea of the post-fire distribution of Rockwarblers, Birdlife Australia is now organising surveys of targeted sites in south-eastern Australia.<sup>2</sup>

Philip Gatenby

### References:

1. *What Bird is That?*, Cayley, N.W., 1984
2. See <https://birdlife.org.au/news/rocking-up-for-rockwarblers>



# NPA outings program

## Bushwalk grading guide *June – September 2023*



### 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](http://www.npaact.org.au), for any last minute changes.

### Other activities

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

### Short notice walks

To volunteer to lead a short notice walk, or to have your name added to the short notice walks alert list, email [outings@npaact.org.au](mailto:outings@npaact.org.au)

### Wednesday walks (WW)

Walks arranged on a joint NPA, BBC (*Brindabella Bushwalking Club*) and CBC (*Canberra Bushwalking Club*) basis for 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*, [outings@npaact.org.au](mailto:outings@npaact.org.au).

### Transport

The NPA suggests a passenger contribution to transport costs of **45 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](mailto: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 waive 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 who will be required to sign a specific Risk Waiver for a Child form.

### Check-in/Emergency contact:

Leaders can borrow the NPA's Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) from Brian Slee, 6281 0719, [brianslee@iprimus.com.au](mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au).

In the event that an outing party returns late, the first point of contact for concerned family members is NPA's Check-in/Emergency Contact Officer, not the police or National Parks service.

To check the status of an overdue walk, contact Mike Bremers, 0428 923 408, [outings@npaact.org.au](mailto:outings@npaact.org.au) or Brian Slee (contact as above).

Leaders should check in by contacting the Check-in Officer (text or email will suffice) at completion of outing. Leaders should also email their signed ATTENDANCE RECORD AND RISK WAIVER FORM to Brian as above.

### COVID-19 arrangements:

(See also on our website <https://www.npaact.org.au/index.php/bushwalking/npa-act-covid19-safe-outings-procedures>.)

The following information sets out the current arrangements for outings in the NPA ACT walks program under restrictions on community activities introduced by the ACT Government aimed at reducing the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Walk descriptions will not always contain a meeting place or time, with this information being made available by contacting the leader.

Walkers wishing to participate in a walk need to read these arrangements and the risk waiver on the Attendance and Risk Waiver form available at [https://www.npaact.org.au/res/File/2017/Attendance%20Form\(2017\).pdf](https://www.npaact.org.au/res/File/2017/Attendance%20Form(2017).pdf), then contact the leader to register, providing their name and a contact phone number.







Walkers are advised that they should not register with the leader (or attend the walk) if they have or have had flu-like symptoms such as a fever with a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath in the previous 2 weeks. For further information see the ACT Government COVID-19 website (<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>). Walkers are reminded that social distancing requirements will be in force on the walk and they are expected to practise good hygiene.

Participation in the walk will be considered acceptance of these arrangements and the risk waiver.





## NPA outings program June – September 2023 (page 2 of 4)

<p><b>4 June</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Queanbeyan River</b> Walk starts at historic suspension bridge in old part of Queanbeyan. Follow river upstream to Ellerton Drive bridge, cross river and walk downstream passing Queen Elizabeth Park (toilet facilities), old Queanbeyan cemetery and cross into Oaks Estate. Return via Queanbeyan Railway Station. Optional coffee break at historic Millhouse Cafe. Distance: 13.7 km, ascent: 250 m. Book with leader by 2 June for start time and meeting arrangements.</p>	<p>Map: Queanbeyan 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Leader: Marlene Contact: <a href="mailto:marleneeggert@bigpond.com">marleneeggert@bigpond.com</a> or 0458 584 433</p>
<p><b>10 June</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Mount Tennent</b> This is a 14 km walk, with total ascent of 800 m. From Namadgi Visitor Centre up the foot track to the summit and return. All on tracks but with a strenuous climb. Meet at Kambah Village shops 8.30 am. Book with the leader by 5 pm 9 June.</p>	<p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Drive: 40 km, \$18 per car Leader: Trevor Lewis Contact: 6288 1495 or 0435 714 430 or <a href="mailto:tglyndwrlewis@gmail.com">tglyndwrlewis@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>10 June</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Removal of damaged and redundant enclosure at site to be determined in the Gudgenby Valley. Car pooling available for the journey there and tools will be provided. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>12 June</b> Monday holiday walk</p> 	<p><b>Googong Foreshores</b> We start from the lower Foreshores car park and follow the footpad to Shannons Inlet, then go off-track for next 3 km, through open bushland with some hills. Return via the Western Foreshores Walk. You'll be home for lunch. Book with leader, via email, by 10 June for start time and meeting arrangements.</p>	<p>Map: Hoskinstown 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B/C Leader: Marlene Contact: <a href="mailto:marleneeggert@bigpond.com">marleneeggert@bigpond.com</a></p>
<p><b>17 June</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Apollo Rock</b> From the Apollo Road, near the former Honeysuckle Creek tracking station site, climb steeply south-east to Apollo Rock where there's a short scramble to the top for spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. Then walk south-west along the ridge over a couple of knolls to a saddle from where we return to the road. Mostly off-track, with scrub and boulders to negotiate. About 10 km and a climb of 500 m. Limit of 8. Contact leader by Thursday 15 June, preferably by email, for start time and transport arrangements.</p>	<p>Map: Corin Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/D/E Drive: 72 km, \$32 per car Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>24 June</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Fence removal – Orroral Valley</b> Meet 8:30 am at Kambah Village shops. This is the first work party to remove stock fences in Orroral Valley. Exact location of fence will be determined closer to event. All tools will be provided, just bring gloves. Book with the leader by 22 June.</p>	<p>Drive: 70 km, \$32 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>25 June</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Snowy Plain</b> Depart 7:30 am. Drive via Cooma to Nimmo Hill and follow track to CSIRO Hut. Walk south, cross Gungarlin River bridge and visit Daveys Hut. Follow tracks north and complete circuit. Wading may be required. Afternoon tea in Cooma. Snow could affect route taken. Contact leader by 23 June for weather check and departure point. Numbers limited.</p>	<p>Map: Nimmo Plain 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/F Drive: 330 km, \$132 per car Leaders: Terrylea Reynolds &amp; Brian Slee Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>2 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Kambah Pool/Red Rocks Gorge Circuit</b> A pleasant walk of around 11 km, leaving from the Kambah Pool car park and following the gently undulating Centenary Trail to the Red Rocks Gorge lookout, then continuing on to the historic stone wall built for the original Tuggeranong property. From there we leave the Centenary Trail and follow a fire trail up to the Bicentenary Trail and back to the cars. Approx 250 m climb. Depart from Kambah Pool at 9 am (map of meeting location to be provided once registered). To register for the walk contact the leader, preferably by email, by Saturday 1 July. Bring water, morning tea and a light lunch.</p>	<p>Map: Tuggeranong 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Leader: Rod Griffiths Contact: 0410 875 731 or <a href="mailto:rod.blackdog@gmail.com">rod.blackdog@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>8 July</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Removal of damaged and redundant enclosure at site to be determined in the Gudgenby Valley. Car pooling available for the journey there and tools will be provided. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>9 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Googong Dam to Cuumbeun NR</b> Start at the Downstream Picnic Area. Climb on Bradleys Creek Walk to the Googong Reserve border which we follow until we approach Hickory Hill. Follow a fire trail across Deep Creek to the Queanbeyan River Trail. Return to the dam via Cuumbeun NR, off-track. An undulating walk of medium difficulty, 14 km, 600 m total ascent. Self-drive to meeting point: Downstream Picnic Area, Googong Dam. Register with leader by 7 July, via email, for start time and meeting arrangements.</p>	<p>Map: Hoskinstown 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/C Leader: Marlene Contact: <a href="mailto:marleneeggert@bigpond.com">marleneeggert@bigpond.com</a></p>

## NPA outings program June – September 2023 (page 3 of 4)

<p><b>16 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Tidbinbilla Peak</b> Walk up the fire trail to Camelback Ridge, footpad to Johns Peak and Tidbinbilla Peak and return SE off-track down a ridge that takes us back to the fire trail. A total of 14 km with an 800 m climb. Suitable for fit walkers. For weather check and departure point, contact leader by 5 pm Saturday. Limit of 8.</p>	<p>Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/D Drive: 50 km, \$22 per car Leader: Mike Bremers Contact: 0428 923 408 or <a href="mailto:mcbremers@gmail.com">mcbremers@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>22 July</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Fence removal – Glendale area</b> This will be the third work party at the Glendale fence site. The fences in question are located in the vicinity of the Brandy Flat Fire Trail towards Reedy Creek. All tools will be provided, just bring gloves. Book with the leader by Thursday 20 July. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 82 km, \$37 per car Leader: Michaela Popham Contact: 0413 537 333</p>
<p><b>23 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Around Gilberts Gap</b> From the Redgrounds Track we walk north to the western edge of the unnamed outcrop west of Gilberts Gap (now called Galbraiths Yard Gap). Cross this outcrop to the gap, then climb up and over the western edge of Sassafras Mountain and from here return to the Redgrounds Track. Great views. Mostly off track, two river crossings, some rock scrambling, thick scrub and mild exposure. Total climb of about 600 m. Limit of 8. Contact leader by Thursday 20 July, preferably by email, for start time and transport arrangements.</p>	<p>Maps: Endrick, Nerriga 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/D/E Drive: 230 km, \$100 per car Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>26 July</b> Wednesday walks</p>	<p><b>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity</b> <i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>	<p><b>Medium/hard</b> Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0414 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a> <b>Easy/medium</b> Leader: Steven Forst Contact: 0428 195 236 or <a href="mailto:steven.forst@inet.net.au">steven.forst@inet.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>30 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Kosciuszko National Park (snowshoeing for beginners)</b> Destination will depend on snow depth and conditions. Participants should be in possession of snowshoes and poles prior to departure. Contact leader by 28 July for weather check, departure point and time, and transport arrangements (chains may be required). Numbers limited.</p>	<p>Drive: 420 km, \$189 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>6 August</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Farrer Hill, Mount Wanniasa and Isaacs Ridge</b> Meet at the turning circle in Shepherdson Place, Isaacs (first turn right off Julia Flynn Ave from south entrance from Yamba Drive) to start walk at 9 am. Go through underpass to Farrer Ridge NR then up and over Farrer Hill. From there we go over Mount Wanniasa and north along Isaacs Ridge. Follow management tracks back to the vehicles. Good views. Walk is mostly on vehicle tracks and some open grassland. Distance about 13–14 km, steep and gravelly climbs totalling about 500 m.</p>	<p>Maps: Tuggeranong and Canberra 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B Leader: Mike Smith Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p><b>12 August</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Removal of damaged and redundant enclosure at site to be determined in the Gudgenby Valley. Car pooling available for the journey there and tools will be provided. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>13 August</b> Sunday morning walk</p> 	<p><b>Brown Trig</b> Meet 9 am at Uriarra Road, 4.5 km up from Opperman Ave (parking area south side of road, opposite Spring Valley turnoff) [UBD map 56, location F9]. Follow Coopers fire trail south around Mount Stromlo to Brown Hill for fine views west (snow on peaks?). Return on Stoney Creek fire trail. Brunch at Denman Prospect. Easy 9 km, moderate climbs.</p>	<p>Maps: Canberra, Cotter Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B Leader: Brian Slee Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>19 August</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Guthrie Ridge (snowshoe)</b> Depart 6:15 am. Drive to Guthega car park. Follow track to Illawong and continue south over new bridge at Spencer Creek. Climb Guthrie Ridge part way before returning to Guthega. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Date may be changed depending on weather and snow conditions. For weather check and departure point, contact leader by Thursday 5 pm. Chains may be required. Participants hiring snowshoes should be in possession of them prior to departure.</p>	<p>Map: Perisher Valley 1:25,000 Grading: 2B Drive: 400 km, \$180 per car + park entry fee. Leader: Mike Bremers Contact: 0428 923 408 or <a href="mailto:mcbremers@gmail.com">mcbremers@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>26 August</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Fence removal – Gudgenby Valley</b> This work party will continue removal of the fences south of Rendezvous Creek. All tools will be provided. Book with the leader by Thursday 24 August. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 94 km, \$42 per car Leader: Martin Chalk Contact: 0411 161 056</p>

## NPA outings program June – September 2023 (page 4 of 4)

<p><b>27 August</b> Sunday afternoon guided tour</p> 	<p><b>Landscape stories of Tuggeranong Homestead</b> Discover the vital role that the wetlands and waterholes of the Tuggeranong Creek played in the long and rich history of the property before colonial settlement. Learn of recent work to bring new life and biodiversity back to this watercourse. The event includes a photo exhibition about the landscape of the property, an illustrated talk by local historian Jenny Horsfield, a delicious Devonshire tea followed by a short guided tour. Cost: \$20 per adult. Bookings essential, book by Friday 25 August.</p>	<p>Leader: Jenny Horsfield Contact: Mike at <a href="mailto:mike@npaact.org.au">mike@npaact.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>2 September</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Kowen Escarpment and Molonglo Gorge</b> A walk on trails or forest roads through the dry woodlands of Kowen Escarpment, working our way through pine forest to the Blue Tiles picnic area. After lunch take the Molonglo Gorge Track back to the car park and on to the cars. All up 17 km with 450 m of climb. Meet at the Spotlight car park for an 8 am departure. To register for the walk contact the leader, preferably by email, by Friday 1 September.</p>	<p>Maps: Bungendore 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Leader: Rod Griffiths Contact: 0410 875 731 or <a href="mailto:rod.blackdog@gmail.com">rod.blackdog@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>3 September</b> Sunday morning walk</p> 	<p><b>Exploring Parliament House surrounds</b> Remnant vegetation, historic remains and roses: exploring the surrounds of Parliament House. 3-4 hours, 8 km. Optional lunch at conclusion. Meet at 9 am on left hand side of front forecourt of Parliament House. Contact leader, preferably by email, to register for walk and optional lunch by Friday 1 September.</p>	<p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow Contact: 0413 977 708 or <a href="mailto:rosemary@npaact.org.au">rosemary@npaact.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>9 September</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds at site to be determined in the Gudgenby Valley. Car pooling available for the journey there and tools will be provided. Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>10 September</b> Sunday morning walk</p>	<p><b>Australian National University sculptures</b> A leisurely Sunday morning stroll through ANU grounds to view sculptures and landscapes, on a different route to the February walk. An easy 3 hours with optional lunch at conclusion. Meet at 9 am outside the Street Theatre in Childers Street. Contact leader, preferably by email, to register for walk and optional lunch by Friday 8 September.</p>	<p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow Contact: 0413 977 708 or <a href="mailto:rosemary@npaact.org.au">rosemary@npaact.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>17 September</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Gigerline Nature Reserve</b> Meet 9 am at Calwell Club car park (Cnr Johnson Dr and Were St). From Angle Crossing Road enter the Gigerline Nature Reserve and follow Guises Creek, towards the Murrumbidgee River for lunch. To return we head up a steep ridgeline, back along the side of the prominent hill and then to the cars. Mostly undulating, steep at times, with some walking on fire trails but mostly off track through open woodland. 8 km with 330 m ascent.</p>	<p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B/C Drive: 40 km, \$18 per car Leader: Phillip Starr Contact: 0419 281 096 or <a href="mailto:phillipstarr1945@gmail.com">phillipstarr1945@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>23 September</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Moores Hill weed control</b> Moores Hill is located close to the Cotter Campground and is the site of a range of woody weeds. We visit this site regularly as there is plenty of re-growth. Bring gloves, all other tools will be provided. Book with the leader by Thursday 21 September. Meet at Dillon Close, Weston at 8:15 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 32 km, \$14 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>27 September</b> Wednesday walks</p>	<p><b>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity</b> <i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>	<p><b>Medium/hard</b> Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0414 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a> <b>Easy/medium</b> Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p><b>30 September</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Rogers Rocks and old growth forest</b> A meandering route entirely within mature, unburnt Tallaganda forest plus two granite outcrops with some tree-filtered views. The first half of the walk is off-track through semi-open forest and the second half on informal foot pad. The pace will be moderate with breaks for photography and botanising. 8 km in around 5 hours, main climbs are 70 m, 200 m (on track) and 70 m. Depart Queanbeyan. The last 15 minutes of the drive require AWD/4WD – please book by email and, if you are willing to be a driver from Queanbeyan onwards, please advise your car type and number of passengers when you book.</p>	<p>Map: Bombay 1:25,000 Drive: 75 km, \$34 per car Grading: 1C Leader: Linda Groom Contact: 0474 507 259 or <a href="mailto:lbroom@gmail.com">lbroom@gmail.com</a></p>



Waterhole Hut. Photo by Philip Gatenby

## Work party reports

# NPA work party summary – February to April 2023

Month	Activity	Agency	Participants
February	<i>Madia satvia</i> & serrated tussock control in the northern Naas Valley. <i>M. satvia</i> was present along the fire trail from the park entrance. Hundreds of plants were pulled from between here and just short of second ford of the Naas River (approximately 2 km). Dozens of serrated tussock were sprayed. All control activities were recorded on Field Maps. One NPA member sustained a broken arm in fall in the vehicle wash bay at the visitor centre at 8 am. Two other members assisted in the recovery of his vehicle and his transport to hospital.	PCS	4 on task and 3 on medivac duty
February short notice work party	Tharwa River Red Gum enclosure weeding.	PCS	5
March	Rendezvous Creek fence and briar removal. Cancelled due to rain	PCS	-
April	Murrumbidgee River Corridor fence removal. Approximately 200m of fence mesh and all barbed wire removed on southern side of Tuggeranong Creek, opposite the stand-pipe. <b>More to do.</b>	PCS	2
April	Stockyard Arboretum reconnaissance. Given the increasingly difficult access to this site and two contractor visits in the 6 years since the NPA's last work party, an assessment of juniper and other exotics was made to determine the viability of a future work party. The team found numerous junipers and the occasional silver birch. These findings were sufficient to continue with the work party as planned in May.	PCS	4

Martin Chalk

## Dananbilla Nature Reserve

**Date:** 1–3 May 2023

Although separated by 2 years, this work party was similar to the last at Dananbilla (*NPA Bulletin*, June 2021) in that the prime purpose was to assist NSW park rangers Andrew Moore and Susie Jackson in planting a variety of tube stock eucalypts (Blakely's Red Gum, White Box and Yellow Box) in an area where past plantings had a low success rate. In this case, 600 trees were planted over 2 days close to former Barrelli station (now simply 280 Elliotts Road) in a south and south-westerly direction.

The remaining time was spent clearing redundant star pickets and stakes and establishing two large exclosures (one purpose of which will be to maintain seed supplies for grasses otherwise heavily grazed by kangaroos). It was great to link up with past plantings thriving in the area leading down to Crowther Gap.

In a separate exercise, two volunteers assisted in identifying species present in transects established at the northern end of Windermere block.

Again, as in 2021, the work party was preceded by substantial rain, boding well for the plantings. Although chilly and threatening, the weather remained mostly dry for the work party, except for a brief torrential downpour affecting the transect group.



Jan, Susie and Margaret with saplings.  
Photo by Brian Slee

The 10 volunteers were comfortably accommodated for two



Just planted.  
Photo by Jan Gatenby

nights at Clover Leigh golf course and enjoyed the facilities, including the clubhouse wood fire. Andrew led the group for a walk through the adjacent conservation area



Exclosure building. Photo by Philip Gatenby

on the last morning. Oddly, although having stayed at Clover Leigh during nine previous work parties (25 days altogether), a golfer has yet to be seen on the 9-hole course!

The volunteers initially gathered at 9 am on 1 May for coffee at Superb Bakery, Boorowa and, confusingly, on the return trip, six participants had coffee at the more recently established Superb Café, Boorowa. It is understood that the latter is to be renamed Roadside Café.

Thanks to Martin Chalk for preparatory input and to John Brickhill, Isobel Crawford, Jan Gatenby, Philip Gatenby, Steve Hare, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Margaret Mahoney and Mike Smith for your efforts over three days.

Much appreciated. Welcome to hard working Steve; please join us again. Thanks also to the incredible Andrew and Susie for your sustained dedication.

This was NPA's 20<sup>th</sup> work party at Dananbilla, over a 10-year period.

Brian Slee  
(Leader, substituting for Martin Chalk)



Removing a tree guard.  
Photo by Kevin McCue



Main Range from Jagungal. Photo by Jan Gatenby

## Bushwalk reports

### *Jagungal from Munyang*

**Date:** 10–14 January 2023

**Participants:** Dave Kelly (leader), Jan Gatenby, Philip Gatenby

**Weather:** Warm, with the threat of storms

**Stats:** 65 km and 1,800 m climb over 5 days

I've done this trip several times. It's my favourite Kosciuszko walk because it's a good sample of the alpine country, not very scrubby, and is mainly off-track, mostly away from people, vehicles and horses. A 5-day itinerary allows plenty of time to look around and relax.

From Guthega Power Station, we walked up the Disappointment Spur Track, an aqueduct track on the true left bank of the Munyang River, then onto Schlink Hilton to camp. Despite the removal of the bridge near the power station, it's usually possible to cross the river, since most of its water is diverted by the aqueduct. Disappointment Spur Hut, a few kilometres along the track and a good

spot for lunch, has been painted and renovated. A worker who stopped briefly at Schlink Hilton said there were still a lot of fallen trees to be removed along the road.

On day 2 we left Schlink Pass and climbed onto Kerries Ridge. Flowers were abundant and the stunted Snow Gums are gradually recovering from the 2003 fires. We followed the ridge to Mawsons Hut, then across Valentines Creek to a camp between Tarn Bluff and Bluff Tarn (roughly on the hill marked 1,848 m on the map), which is on a high plateau with some very old unburnt Snow Gums. The country here is generally open alpine, with patches of Snow Gums on hill tops. There are some pig diggings, and apparently two of the old Snow Gums have been killed by beetles. Alpine Orites (*Orites lancifolia*) was in flower everywhere, and there was an unusual white spiky lichen near the camp, Whiteworm Lichen (*Thamnolia vermicularis*), which seems to appear in rocky burnt areas. Snow Daisies and Euphrasia were also in flower in many places.

With day packs, the following morning we crossed the Geehi River, then followed a series of clear, gently sloping valleys running NNW, about half a kilometre west of the upper Geehi, to the base of Jagungal. Two park staff were here, using a computer-controlled drone to search for Hawkweed. Earlier we'd seen a helicopter that appeared to land a few kilometres in front of us, so it wasn't a complete surprise to stumble across their temporary setup under a gazebo. The helicopter was expected back in a few hours. The final climb to the summit was steep but mostly grassy,

Sundew with butterfly. Photo by Jan Gatenby

Alpine Orites (*Orites lancifolia*). Photo by Dave Kelly

Whiteworm Lichen (*Thamnolia vermicularis*). Photo by Jan Gatenby





Beetle-killed Snow Gum. Photo by Dave Kelly



Snow Gums near Tin Hut. Photo by Philip Gatenby

with patches of *Ranunculus* and *Euphrasia*. From the summit, we could see north to Mount Gudgenby and, to the south, all the Main Range spread out before us, with snow patches left from last winter's late falls.

We retraced our steps to the Tarn Bluff camp, packed up (disturbing a Little Raven chick in a nest in an old Snow Gum), and backtracked to Mawsons Hut to camp the night on the limited nearby flat area. A snake seemed unimpressed by our choice of tent sites. A new wood stove was waiting in the hut (and also, as we discovered next day, at Tin Hut) for installation, replacing the fireplace. Colourful, shapely and dark clouds appeared on this and the next evening, a hint of storms to come at the end the trip.



Disappointment Spur Hut. Photo by Jan Gatenby

From Mawsons Hut on day 4, we walked up through the alpine bog and fen country near Valentines Creek, where we saw two feral horses (or it could have been the same horse twice) and scattered horse droppings. Previously on this trip we have seen only pigs – on one occasion. The warm weather brought out droves of March



Tin Hut. Photo by Jan Gatenby



Clouds near Mawsons Hut. Photo by Dave Kelly



March Fly. Photo by Philip Gatenby



March Flies Photo by Jan Gatenby



Kerries Ridge. Photo by Philip Gatenby



Little Raven near Gungartan. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Flies. Bites weren't a problem as we were well covered but we could have done without their constant loud buzzing. We camped early at Tin Hut, with plenty of time to study the colourful trunks of Snow Gums, and chat to a party of Scouts who arrived from Schlink Pass. Light rain fell around dinner time.

On the final day, we walked up to Gungartan Trig (the high point of the walk, about a metre higher than Jagungal), via the heads of Finns River and Valentines Creek. The alpine bog at the head of the creek is fringed with Sundews (*Drosera arcturi*), which had trapped numerous Cabbage White Butterflies. From here, we followed the Great Divide down to Schlink Pass, sending clouds of squawking Little Ravens up from the rocks as we passed them. Their numbers may indicate recovery of the Bogong Moth population following three wet years. We turned south from the ridge below a forested hill near the pass, along the aqueduct track around the western (or true right) side of Munyang Valley to the power station's penstock, and by road back to Guthega Power Station, as storm clouds gathered. The weather had been ideal until then, with sunshine and almost no rain.



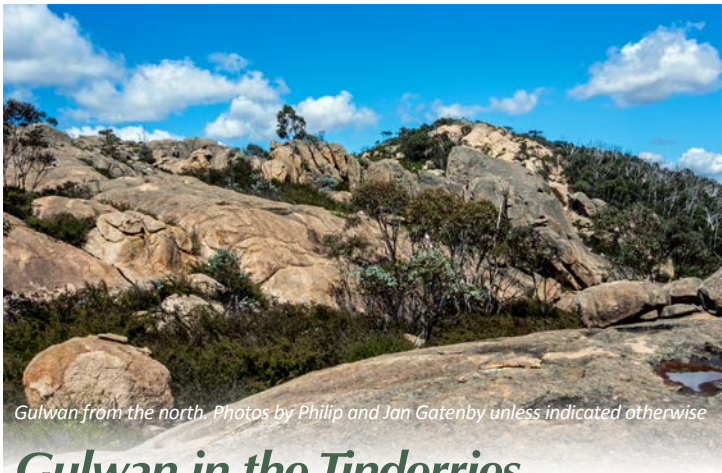
Skink. Photo by Dave Kelly

Dave Kelly

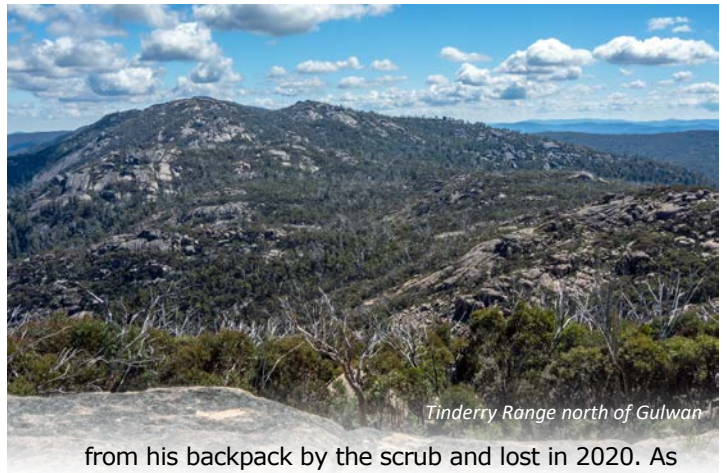


Crossing Valentines Creek. Photo by Jan Gatenby





Gulwan from the north. Photos by Philip and Jan Gatenby unless indicated otherwise



Tinderry Range north of Gulwan

## Gulwan in the Tinderries

**Date:** 25 January 2023

**Participants:** Philip Gatenby (leader), Mark Batey, Cynthia Burton, Andrew Cupit, Jan Gatenby, Phillip Hope, Stephen Joske, Lois Padgham, Leon Pietsch, Lam Sen Fei, Jo Tilbrook

**Weather:** Warm, mostly sunny

**Stats:** Climb 550 m, distance 8 km, time 7 hrs

The Tinderry Range to the east of Michelago is a prominent feature for anyone travelling the Monaro Highway. Its highest point (Tinderry Peak) is over 1,600 m, while Gulwan, the day's destination and the most southerly peak of the Tinderry Nature Reserve, is a more modest 1,481 m. A characteristic of the reserve is its massive granite boulders, piled high in places into outcrops (or tors) dwarfing the surrounding forest. Of underground volcanic origin, the boulders are the result of erosion and other processes that remove the softer layers above and shape the exposed rock.<sup>1</sup> The area around Gulwan burnt in a wildfire in 2009 so the scrub at the southern end of the Tinderries tends to be thicker than elsewhere in the range.

This, an inter-club Wednesday walk, was the third NPA-led trip to Gulwan in recent years, with the previous one a failure. Snow falls in late August across the range at that time made the usually very slow going even slower, not to mention treacherous, so on that occasion time ran out before the main objective of the walk could be achieved.

Snow wasn't a problem this time but the warm weather took its toll as we climbed Gulwan from our car park on the Tinderry Road at its junction with the Round Flat Fire Trail. Lyrebirds serenaded the warm morning. The higher we got, the more prominent became bare rock slabs between the patches of thick scrub and things got a little easier. Those familiar with the Tinderries will know what I mean. Off-track walking involves areas of head-high bush dominated by teatree, cassinia, bursaria and others and, elsewhere, going over, under or around boulders. Getting closer to the ridge top, some of the gaps between slabs were filled by a delightful display of wildflowers, particularly Yellow Kunzea (*K. muelleri*) but also Narrow-leaved Daisybush (*Olearia tenuifolia*) and at least one specimen of the rare *Dampiera fusca*.

Before the walk I was contacted by NPA stalwart Mike Smith. He, half-jokingly, asked me to look out for a walking pole removed

from his backpack by the scrub and lost in 2020. As we approached the summit, Andrew, about tenth in line, found a walking pole. A close examination showed it was in good condition despite appearing to have been in the bush for some time. A day or so after the walk Mike confirmed it was his pole and subsequently was delighted to be reunited with it.

Morning tea was near the summit, with spectacular views over the Monaro and beyond, then we headed northward, all the time searching for easier ways through the thick regrowth, towards two knolls, hoping to climb both, but settling for the nearer, as time and motivation drained away in the warmth.

Lunch was just before a scramble to its top. The first part of our descent (to the fire trail) was quite gentle beside a gully of granite monoliths interspersed with towering Brown Barrel (*Eucalyptus fastigata*).



Very big rock

This was followed by thick patches of tea tree and other bushes between smaller boulders and rock slabs, then more open forest at lower altitude. Finally, with some relief, we joined the fire trail a kilometre or so north of the cars.

A walk in the Tinderries is always worth the effort but don't expect it to be easy. The terrain is rugged, the scrub is mostly thick and progress is usually slow.

Philip Gatenby

### Reference:

1. The process isn't quite this simple and is explained well in *A Geological Guide to Canberra Region and Namadgi National Park*, Finlayson, Doug, 2008

Unnamed knoll



Field of Kunzea muelleri



The rare Dampiera fusca. Photo by Lois Padgham



Hyacinth Orchid





## Namarag special purpose nature reserve

**Date:** 12 February 2023

**Participants:** Brian Slee (leader), Virginia Buring, Hugh Coppell, Sandra Kay, Caroline Reid, Ana Tudor, Margaret Wooldridge

**Weather:** Blue sky; warm

Namarag, in the new suburb of Whitlam, exists as an offset for the development of suburbs in the Molonglo Valley. It was much anticipated when first opened in 2021 but is still a work in progress. Access has become more difficult and will only be eased when new areas of Whitlam are completed.

We were fortunate to be accompanied by Hugh, a Greening Australia employee during construction, and his insightful commentary left us with hope that problems affecting the area might be overcome and that its basic vision will be realised. It is fair to say that Namarag is at least an improvement on the sewerage ponds that used to occupy the site!

We set off from Denman Prospect shops at 8:30 am and immediately encountered development reality: Holborow Avenue is being transformed into a major thoroughfare. With no access to the other side of Cravens Creek, we found our way north on tracks past a pond gone weedy. First wildlife was a rabbit, then a kangaroo.

Butters Bridge, high above the Molonglo, forms the southern entrance to Namarag. Sensitive noses soon detected whiffs from the sewage pipe's 'fart chimneys'. Hopefully these can be relocated before the residents of Whitlam move in.

Drawing upon Aboriginal concepts, there are grand designs and art works located amid the weediness and we spent time discussing the traditional meeting place beside the entrance. It would be wonderful to see it used for community events in the future.

After passing by numerous survivors among the plantings of delicate natives, Hugh led us to the playground where fallen timber has been repurposed to encourage adventurousness. Namarag means 'wattle' and many are thriving beside the paths. Sculptured sandstone benches are a feature, and inspired sculptures decorate the scene. We continued to the northern entrance, which will become the main access.

Further west we came upon the other major problem affecting the reserve: erosion. Remedial action is being taken and we hope we will soon be able to

visit some of Namarag's other hidden features. All the time we could see Bluetts Block on the ridge, reminding us that it is a lot easier to conserve nature rather than restore it. Hugh finally took us to the giant Pink-tailed Worm-lizard sculpture: what a joy it is.



At the playground

We returned the way we came, picking occasional blackberries. Chainsaw training was being organised among the pines. Back at the start at 11 am for coffee at Morning Dew; about 4 km. Welcome to the newcomers and special thanks to Hugh for his leadership.

With several high-class playgrounds newly established in adjacent suburbs, will Namarag's offer of the bush experience be competitive? Surely it will attract adventurous children from Whitlam and Denman Prospect. Maybe the locals will form a 'friends of' to provide love and care. We live in hope.

*Brian Slee, with input from Hugh Coppell*

Sculptured bench



Repurposed timber



Pink-tailed worm-lizard sculpture





On Wallaroo Spur. Photo by Mike Bremers

## Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout

**Date:** Monday 13 March 2023 (Canberra Day)

**Participants:** Brian Slee (leader), Andrew Bray, Georgia Bray, Mike Bremers, Martin Duong, Frazer Foley, Scout Hollyman, David Jenkins, Sandy McInerney, Mardi McNeil, Jenny Robinson, Peter Robinson, Frances Summers, Suzanne Williams, Margaret Wooldridge

**Weather:** Chilly at first, clouding over during the morning

Although hard to find when it opened in late 2021, signage is now excellent and the privately developed Strathnairn to Shepherds Lookout track is difficult to fault. It winds unobtrusively through a variety of locations, offering expansive views of the Murrumbidgee and the mountains for much of the way.

We had gathered at McClymont Way car park and set off at 8:40 am. A sign cautioned re cattle but none were encountered. Even the short section to where the track officially begins offered panoramic views of the whole journey. The first of the ingenious metallic artworks modelling native vegetation appeared beside the track.

After the path crosses grassland, a stile takes walkers over a fence into a rocky *Callitris* (native cypress pine) forest. The path divides for part of the way before emerging at a Scribbly Gum of monumental proportions. A short distance further on is a framed view, down the Murrumbidgee, near where, in 1937, Elioth Gruner painted *Weetangera* (reproduced on an adjacent sign).

From here the track descends steeply to Wallaroo Spur lookout before passing through tea tree forest. A good place for small birds, including tree creepers, flycatchers and wrens. The track ends at a road which heads west for a short distance to Shepherds Lookout. Cloud was building in NSW, but the view here is spectacular whatever the season. A labradoodle introduced itself to whoever showed interest.

Except for a detour around the hill behind the lookout, the return was by the same route, arriving at 11:10 am, 9 km. Three members headed to Coffee Club, Kippax, where orders were made from an exhausting list of options, and paid for, online. Franchises are disconcerting: my croissant looked exactly the same as it had on-screen. All agreed the coffee was 'okay'.

This was NPA's second visit to Ginninderry (earlier report: *NPA Bulletin*, [September 2021](#)). Thanks everyone for the enthusiastic participation. Good to have numerous non-members, including three uni students. Unfortunately, as happened at Googong, the scenery will change. The developers insisted on a suburban layout which comes too close to the Murrumbidgee and cleared land is already visible from the track. 'Dream homes'



At Shepherds Lookout. Photo by Georgia Bray



Track sculpture. Photo by David Jenkins



Brian Slee  
Gruner's Weetangera.  
Photo by Frances Summer



Scribbly Gum. Photo by Frances Summers



View from lookout. Photo by Frances Summers

will fill the space, competing for Brindabella views. After The Link becomes a community facility, it is understood a visitor centre will be established near the river at the end of McClymont Way extended. Cars, ice creams, oh dear!



Betts Creek. Photo by Mike Bremers



Crossing Betts Creek. Photo by Mike Bremers

## Betts Creek to The Paralyser

**Date:** Wednesday, 15 March 2023

**Participants:** Mike Bremers (leader), Brian Slee, Max Smith

**Weather:** Cool, breezy, clouding over at noon but clearing later

**Stats:** Climb 300 m, distance 5.5 km, time 4.2 hrs

We first hiked Betts Creek on the short-notice NPA outing of 28 December 2022, coming up to Kosciuszko Road from the south. Paralyser ridge could be seen on the north-west horizon, a place we had often climbed on snowshoes from Guthega. The thought arose, could it be accessed from this side of the ridge?

We had departed Richardson at 7 am in Max's Outback and parked at Kosciuszko Road, half a km west of Betts Creek bridge. After pondering the veg (would it be impenetrable mint bush and Mountain Pepper?), we set off at 10 am to find out. The moderate slope on the other side of the creek steepened, but Mike kept weaving up through rocky outcrops. Suddenly, a great view over Charlotte Pass told us we were getting somewhere.

The lush growth, still wet with dew, contained nothing daunting, despite the prevailing scent of mint bush. Shy flowers, attended by butterflies, were dotted about. We reached an open area near South Paralyser trig (1,942 m), and settled for a break at 11:15 am. In March, but no March Flies.

The top of the ridge was not as open as Guthrie, but the going became easy as we neared The Paralyser. Massive outcrops framed hazy views of the Main Range; Mount Twynam still had snow. Gentians were massed in alpine grass. Our 12:20 pm lunch spot, at the top of a small valley descending to Kosciuszko Road, was ant-infested, causing us to shuffle about. The 2020 fire boundary was clearly defined south of the road.

Betts Creek is tussocky out on the plain but not so here in the little valley – we began heading down on alpine grass, then through low heathy shrubs. The dwarfed Snow Gums encountered higher up were, in this more sheltered area, impressively lithe and full of characteristic folds, with few signs of borers. The ground became spongy with expanses of green, yellow and orange Sphagnum, broken up by Candle Heath.

Mike saw fish in the creek, a pipit darted from the bank. We dashed across without getting our feet wet and were at the car by 2:20 pm, 5.5 km. Max suggested Stillwell Café which proved to be open; we cleaned up bowls of chips with our coffee. Back in Canberra at 5:30 pm.

This is a beautiful walk and, although more difficult than Guthrie Ridge, worth repeating. In winter, with good snow, it seems The Paralyser could be easily scaled from Kosciuszko Road. Getting around Perisher ridge along the way, however, might need prior investigation.

Brian Slee



Paralyser ridge. Photo by Brian Slee



Descending to Betts Creek. Photo by Brian Slee

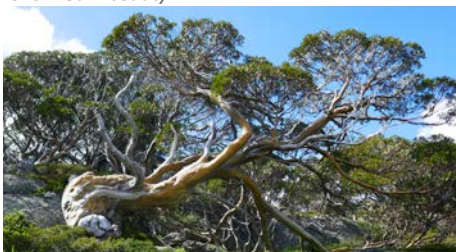


Trig, South Paralyser. Photo by Brian Slee

Snow Gum beauty

Sphagnum

Gentians. Photos by Mike Bremers



# Rosenberg's Monitor in South Australia

If you thought Rosenberg's Goanna was limited to the ACT and Kangaroo Island, South Australia (SA), think again. This article grew out of a chance meeting on a ship, the *Heritage Explorer* (see report of Kevin and Sonja's odyssey to the subantarctic in the *NPA Bulletin*, March 2023), last December between Sonja Lenz and I and a like-minded couple from near Victor Harbor on SA's Fleurieu Peninsula. We were quite excited when the topic of goannas was raised and Pat and Gerald Uppill promised to send us some photos of goannas seen in a conservation zone abutting their house block. Gerald noted that several decades ago he had also seen them on a block of land near Balaclava in the Mid North region of SA.

## Conservation status

Goannas are the last remaining large, native, terrestrial predator in southern SA.<sup>1</sup> Rosenberg's Goanna (also known as the Heath Goanna) is classified as vulnerable in SA and endangered in some Natural Resource Management (NRM) regions, including the Mount Lofty Ranges, Northern and Yorke, Eyre Peninsula, Murray-Darling Basin, and the South East. Rosenberg's are disappearing, with possibly fewer than 100 individuals left in each of the NRM regions in which they occur. One of the places in mainland SA where they're known to occur is Mount Billy Conservation Park (see below), contained within the blue square on the accompanying map.

The reasons for the Heath Goanna's listing as endangered in these locations are:

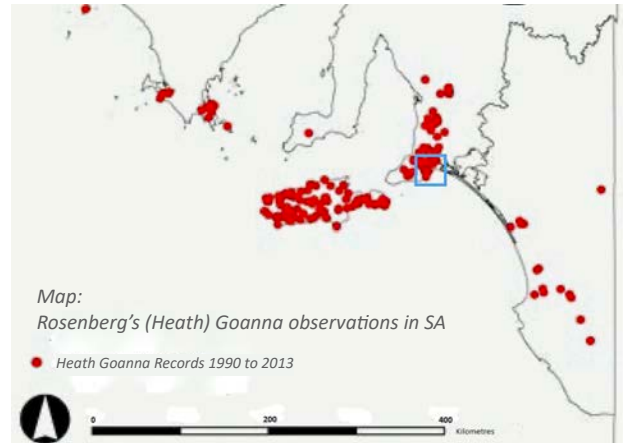
- Habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation through land clearance and grazing has reduced the amount of suitable habitat available to the Heath Goanna. They need large areas of native vegetation to find enough food and maintain sustainable populations

- Removal of termite mounds (used to incubate eggs) and fallen trees and logs (used for shelter) from the bush and grazing land reduces vital habitat for these goannas
- Predation by cats, foxes and dogs
- High road mortality, particularly in areas with sealed roads (with higher speed limits) and extensive road networks.

Kevin McCue

## Reference:

1. See <https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/landscape/docs/ep/heath-goanna-fact.pdf> for more information on Rosenberg's Goanna in SA.



Rosenberg's, possibly gravid female.  
All goanna photos by Pat Uppill and Guy Fishlock Smith

## Mount Billy Conservation Park

The Mount Billy Conservation Park is made up of Sections 159 & 160 in the Hundred of Goolwa, County Hindmarsh, and is about 10 km to the north of Victor Harbor on the southern Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia. Mount Billy, 209 m above sea level, covers Section 159. Approximately 200 hectares, the park is a block of scrubland with significant conservation status which has survived as Crown Land. Following its existence as a 'water block' for reservoir catchment, in 1998 it was proclaimed Mount Billy Conservation Park. The farming district of Hindmarsh Tiers borders the northern boundary, with Hindmarsh Valley to the south. The main road between Victor Harbor and Myponga runs along the park's eastern boundary. Average annual rainfall is 750 mm, falling mainly during the winter months.



One of the many benefits of Mount Billy is its diverse vegetation, ranging from *Eucalyptus baxteri* and *cosmophylla* in the glacial sands of the north, to a beautiful stand of *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* in the fertile soils of the east. In the south is Mount Billy, which supports *Eucalyptus fasciculosa* and *Allocasuarina verticillata* on its rocky slopes. The understory is made up of a range of over 430 species of indigenous plants, eight of which are endangered. This includes over 50 types of orchids that flower at different times throughout the year.

Mount Billy is home to some rare species of mammals, reptiles, birds and plants. The Greenhood Orchid, *Pterostylis bryophila*, grows almost exclusively in the park, with just a few surviving nearby in another reserve. Probably the rarest bird is the Bassian Thrush, sometimes seen making a getaway at low levels. The Western Pygmy Possum lives in the upper sandy area where its main food source, *Banksia ornata*, grows. The possums are being monitored through a series of possum boxes in which they have successfully bred. Echidnas and Western Grey Kangaroos are common,



A couple of goannas



while the status of Brown Bandicoots is unknown although they were present in the last mammal survey in 1998.

Of great importance is the park providing a refuge for Rosenberg's Goanna. They have been seen throughout the park but most recently in the sandier parts. Two have been viewed in the last three months so this gives us some confidence for their survival. Perhaps their main threat is when they wander outside the park and attempt to cross a busy road, and maybe the Wedge-tailed Eagles would find them tasty.

Mount Billy Conservation Park is supported by an active band of weed pullers, the Friends of Mt Billy,<sup>1</sup> who meet monthly for 3 hours. Our biggest problems are bone seed, *Disa bracteata* (the imported orchid), watsonia and, to a lesser degree, rose, broom, pittosporum and blackberry. Compared with some parks, Mount Billy is remarkably weed free. We take advantage of this and spend some of our time simply wandering around enjoying the diversity of nature that this park has to offer.

Pat Uppill

**Reference:**

1. See <https://friendsofparkssa.org.au/members/members-directory/friends-of-mt-billy-conservation-park/>

Exploring a termite mound



## New Chum

*Easter is the great bushwalking time in Victoria; the highlight of the year. There's always a full moon; it's sometimes wet but often dry.*

*I start with dry. I've been in Australia a few weeks; time to enrol at Melbourne Uni and join the Mountaineering Club. The Easter trip is to Lake Tali Karg in eastern Victoria. We travel down there on the Thursday evening in an old furniture van. About thirty of us. I'm 18 and shy, don't know anyone, but they all seem to know each other.*

*isolated  
in a far corner  
of the van...  
little gerry  
and his private thoughts*

*We start walking over a series of dry scrubby ridges. I have a vague sketch map but no real idea of where we are. We seem to be lost. It's a long day and we have no water. I don't think anyone knows about water bottles.*

*dry country  
heat shimmers  
wind whispers...  
faint croak of ravens  
faint smell of smoke*

*That night there is a 'dry camp' on a ridge. Some people go down the hillslope with rubber tubes to try and siphon dirty little soaks. The tube doubles as a tourniquet for snakebite so I'm told; and real bushwalkers hang them around their necks, prepared. We are all very thirsty and some are starting to stagger, when sometime on the second day we come down to a river. We waded in and drink and splash. It's the Avon River. I've never been back.*

Gerry Jacobson

## Flinders Ranges fossil field opened as national park

The South Australian Government has opened the Nilpena Ediacara National Park, on the western fringe of the Flinders Ranges, as an outdoor public museum.

The park is the site of an extensive fossil field of ancient marine life that existed in the Ediacaran Period, between 538 and 640 million years ago when the Flinders Ranges were covered by shallow tropical ocean.

The site had previously been part Nilpena Station, two-thirds of which were purchased by the SA Government from the Fargher family in 2016. As guardians of the site, the family had restricted the access to it to palaeontologists.

ABC News <https://bit.ly/3UZcARa>

## Local new butterfly species identified

The first new species of Australian butterfly to be discovered in 8 years has finally been identified after it was first photographed in 2017. The Spotted Trident Blue Butterfly – *Cyprotides maculosus* – is normally found in high altitudes in the southern ACT and adjacent areas of New South Wales, in the areas of Namadgi and Kosciuszko national parks.

Australian National Insect Collection Associate Professor Michael Braby described the discovery as significant and that it highlighted how incomplete the knowledge of local biodiversity was.

ABC News <https://bit.ly/3omE7zX>

## Hazard-reduction burns questioned

The results of a new study modelling fire behaviour in Red Tingle forests (*Eucalyptus jacksonii*) of south-west Australia question the effectiveness of prescribed burning as a means of reducing fuel loads.

Professors Philip Zylstra and Grant Wardell-Johnson said their analysis of Red Tingle forests helps explain why the fire risk in WA's south-western forests and many other eucalypt forests is so much lower if they're left unburnt and allowed to mature.

Using an advanced fire-modelling tool to determine which plants will ignite – and importantly, which plants won't ignite but will instead calm the flames, they concluded that 'if we still want forests in our flammable country, we must stop burning their defences away'.

The Conversation <https://bit.ly/3GOL2ZO>

## Gamba Grass threat to NT national park

A new report has recommended the NT Government expand its current Gamba Grass eradication zone in Litchfield National Park and increase funding. The highly flammable weed has taken over about 20 per cent of the park, which is one of the NT's most treasured tourist attractions. Experts say the weed is now virtually impossible to eradicate.



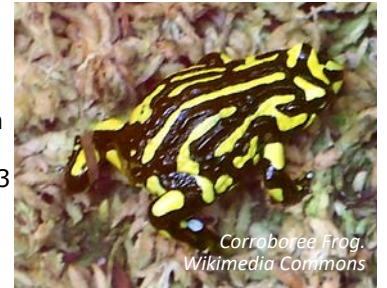
Gamba Grass.  
Wikimedia Commons

In a recently released report, ecologists from the National Environmental Science Program and Charles Darwin University recommended the NT Government urgently expand its current Gamba Grass eradication zone.

ABC News <http://bit.ly/3JRS8fZ>

## More endangered frogs released in KNP

A second batch of Southern Corroboree Frogs was released in Kosciuszko National Park in February 2023 as part of continued efforts to boost numbers of the endangered species following the Black Summer bushfires. One hundred were released in March last year.



Corroboree Frog.  
Wikimedia Commons

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment's senior threatened species officer, Dave Hunter, said that without this conservation program the frogs would become extinct. The Southern Corroboree Frog has been under threat since the late 1990s. It is listed as critically endangered due to a fatal disease caused by chytrid fungus but is also threatened by feral animals and climate change.

ABC News <http://bit.ly/40rpZn2>

## SA cuttlefish sanctuary added to National Heritage List

The Cuttlefish Coast Sanctuary Zone on the upper Spencer Gulf has been added to Australia's National Heritage List – the tenth South Australian site to be added to the list. The listing will help protect the site as a cuttlefish breeding area. The zone is the site for Australia's largest breeding migration of the Australian Giant Cuttlefish.

Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek said the move would protect Australia's 'underwater lightshow'. 'The annual migration of Australian Giant Cuttlefish to the Cuttlefish Coast is a natural wonder,' she said.

ABC News <http://bit.ly/3TUZBzp>

## NSW acquires vast new national park

Thurloo Downs, in the far north-west of NSW between Bourke and Tibooburra, is being acquired by the NSW Government for addition to the national parks estate. At nearly 4,400 square kilometres – almost twice the area of ACT – it is the largest acquisition of private land for national parks in the



Arid woodland landscape.  
Photo by A Pike, DPE

state's history. Thurloo will transition to a national park over the next 2 years and will open to visitors from 2025–26.

The property contains exceptional biodiversity values, filling important gaps in the national park estate and protecting landscapes and ecosystems not found in any other national park. These habitats support an array of threatened species, including Black Falcon, Flock Bronzewing, Bustard, Stripe-faced Dunnart and Woma Python. The property also has extensive Aboriginal cultural heritage.

*NSW Department of Planning and the Environment*  
<http://bit.ly/3nv8ZxK>

## New players in conservation

Not-for-profit conservation organisations such as The Nature Conservancy, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Bush Heritage Australia and Trust for Nature own, manage or influence growing chunks of Australia, writes Professor Hugh Possingham of the University of Queensland in *The Conversation*.

Together such NGOs contribute to management of over 3 million square kilometres, including owning about 50,000 square kilometres, with Australia now second to only the United States in percentage of land managed privately for conservation.

This growth has come as federal and state funding for protected areas has stagnated, Possingham writes. 'To have any chance of hitting our international commitment of 30 per cent of land conserved by 2030, we will have to rely on fast-growing non-government conservation land alongside Indigenous Protected Areas.'

*The Conversation* <http://bit.ly/3LZp6hk>

## Springbrook National Park water extraction opposed

A proposed water-mining operation close to a World Heritage-listed Gondwana rainforest is 'unacceptably risky' to the health of the ecosystem, say environmental groups fighting a court battle to block the drilling.

The Queensland Planning and Environment Court began a hearing in February into the plan to extract 16 million litres of water from a site 400 m from the Springbrook National Park. The applicant, Hoffman Drilling, argues the proposal would operate alongside two legacy water mines and have 'an insignificant impact' on the environment. In 2019 the Gold Coast council rejected the plan. Hoffman Drilling is appealing the refusal in court. The case is being jointly defended by the Australian Rainforest Conservation Society.

*The Guardian* <http://bit.ly/3G00a3A>

## War on feral animals in Kakadu

Parks Australia rangers have declared war on feral animals in Kakadu National Park, where pigs and buffalo are causing widespread destruction, including destroying ancient Aboriginal rock art by rubbing up against it.



*Buffalo at a waterhole. Wikimedia Commons*

Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek says feral animal populations exploded after aerial culls in the park were halted for a safety review in 2019. Culls have now resumed and are set to be ramped up in 2023.

Ms Plibersek said the federal government believed there were now around '100,000 feral animals in the park'. Kakadu park manager Shaun Barclay believes the feral populations can be brought back to pre-2019 levels within a year.

*ABC News* <http://bit.ly/3nrtQlq>

## Conservation groups welcome Labor's koala park pledge

Conservation groups have welcomed the new NSW Labor Government's election promise to create a koala national park in Sydney's south-west. Public land between Glenfield and Appin will be used for the new Georges River Koala National Park. Labor says that this will save local colonies which, unlike other populations in the Sydney basin, are chlamydia-free and thriving.

Koalas are on track to extinction in NSW by 2050, according to a parliamentary committee report, with new figures showing populations have declined by almost a quarter in the past 20 years.

*ABC News* <http://bit.ly/40tZQUD>

## Call to protect Yorta Yorta cultural identity

Feral horses are trampling protected habitats, endangered plant communities, destroying threatened species' homes and damaging First Nations cultural heritage in the Barmah National Park and Murray Valley National Park, says Victorian NPA Executive Director Max Ruchel.

VNPA is one of several peak environment groups calling on government agencies to commit to protect and preserve the Yorta Yorta People's cultural identity and traditional knowledge to ensure the ecological recovery of the national parks. The Yorta Yorta's traditional ownership and custodial rights have been recognised in joint management of the Barmah National Park since 2018.

Acting for the Yorta Yorta Nation, lawyers from Environmental Justice Australia say pro-feral horse groups appear to have been involved in dropping large amounts of hay at sensitive sites within the park, leading to ecological harm and damage to Yorta Yorta culturally significant sites registered under the Victoria's *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

*Victorian National Parks Association* <http://bit.ly/3nv5QRz>

## Australia's most complex restoration project?

Restoring the Western Grassland Reserve might well be the most complex restoration project in Australia's history, according to an article in the latest issue of *Park Watch*, the Victorian National Parks Association magazine.

The latest mapping of the extent of weed invasion shows that more than 50 per cent of the 15,000 ha reserve is majority weed cover. In addition, the reserve includes Bunurong, Wurundjeri and Wadawurrung country, with rich cultural heritage.

Four local governments are involved under a joint Commonwealth – Victorian agreement and there are

*NPA Bulletin* – Vol. 60, No. 2 – June 2023



1,000 hectares of land with unexploded ordnance. Plus, there are competing conservation priorities, and the Public Acquisition Overlay means the 'land bankers', who own much of this land on Melbourne's rapidly growing urban fringe, could 'bog progress down for years in court'.

*Park Watch* <http://bit.ly/42KYVRb>

## Kimberley national parks reopen following floods

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) says most of the Kimberley's national parks will be open this tourism season following unprecedented flooding in January. However, significant flood damage to visitor infrastructure and post-flood visitor safety risks at Danggu Geikie Gorge and Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) national parks mean they will remain closed for the rest of 2023.

Both Danggu Geikie Gorge and Bandilngan (Windjana Gorge) are jointly managed by DBCA and Bunuba Traditional Owners, who have requested time for Country to heal and for those who speak for Country to reconnect with flood-affected areas.

For the latest information about park closures and related works visit: <https://alerts.dbca.wa.gov.au>.

*DBCA* <http://bit.ly/3ZXT9ZK>

## Tas brand 'at risk', warns TNPA

The Tasmanian National Parks Association has warned against the Tasmanian Government's determination to cater for ever-increasing visitor numbers in the state's national parks. It says this is not in the long-term interests of the state's tourism industry and will devalue the brand.

Commenting on the opening of the Parks and Wildlife Service's new viewing shelter at Dove Lake, Cradle Mountain, in February, TNPA said it was a tragedy that no thought had been given to enhancing the lake's naturalness by revegetating the car park rather than using it for a 'grandiose viewing shelter'.

TNPA said the government's future plans are 'even more alarming', adding that 'we don't need to further detract from the naturalness of Cradle Valley with commercial developments adjacent to the visitor centre and an intrusive and unnecessary cableway to replace the shuttle bus service.'

*TNPA* <https://bit.ly/41cZUsp>



*Dove Lake and Cradle Mountain. Photo by Philip Gatenby*

## Alliance concerned by conflict between nature and renewables

An alliance of 11 nature groups in South Australia is calling for 'no-go zones' for renewable energy projects in the state. The alliance argues that climate action should not come at a cost to

biodiversity. South Australia is aiming for 100 per cent net renewable energy generation by 2030.

The Alliance is concerned at the extent of approved native vegetation clearance in the state for renewable energy projects from 2016 to 2018, with a wildlife habitat loss of more than 2,700 hectares. SA's environment minister says changes to project approvals are being considered.

*ABC News* <http://bit.ly/3zKVsvJ>

## Ningaloo Coast leads way in climate change strategy

Western Australia's spectacular Ningaloo Coast has become the first World Heritage site to finalise a resilience strategy to adapt to climate change. The strategy takes a holistic view of the threats facing Ningaloo Reef and the local community.



*Ningaloo Coast. Wikimedia Commons*

The Ningaloo Coast Resilience Strategy was developed through a community-driven process led by the Resilient Reefs initiative, supported by the WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in consultation with the Baiyungu, Thalanyji and Yinikurtura Traditional Owners, scientists and local businesses.

The Ningaloo Coast is one of four World Heritage sites participating in the initiative. The others are the Lagoons of New Caledonia, Rock Island Southern Lagoon in Palau and Belize Barrier Reef.

To view the strategy, visit: <http://bit.ly/3KtaUKL>

## Contractor fined over KNP pollution

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has fined Snowy Hydro and its contractor Webuild \$30,000 over two alleged pollution incidents in 2022.

The authority said that, despite warnings from officers, the companies had inadequate sediment and erosion controls in place at two locations in the Kosciuszko National Park. The authority alleged that in June 2022 a sediment plume was created that stretched more than 2 kilometres down Yarrangobilly River, and in September sediment-laden water from roadworks at Tantangara flowed into the Nungar Creek.

An investigation launched by the EPA found Snowy Hydro and Webuild failed to adequately implement at the two locations specific measures required to address potential pollution incidents. Both were issued \$15,000 penalty notices over the incidents.

*ABC News* <http://bit.ly/3mlsqIX>

*Compiled by Allan Sharp*

# NPA bulletin board

## *NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:*

Alex McCoid  
Dagmara & Ron Kelly  
Louisa & Michael Barnsley  
Stephen Knight  
Frank Hoeren & Kim Newell  
Robyn Hall  
Emma & Delilah Collins  
Ella Doney & Aengus Doney MacLeod  
Peter Lindenmayer  
Bridget Donovan  
Peter & Jenny Robinson  
Gregory Buckman  
Sandy McInerney  
Daniel Parsons  
William Willis  
Andrea Coomblas & Mike Brett  
Margaret Wooldridge  
Jo Brown  
Steve Glaznieks  
Kate Smith  
Robert Walters  
Ana Vrancic  
Meryl Joyce  
Leigh Haversekara  
Ralph Seccombe  
Fiona Elliot

*We look forward to seeing you  
at NPA activities*



*Alpine Tiger Moth (Phaos aglaophara). Photo by Philip Gatenby*

*Beautiful Leaf Moth (Gastrophora henricaria). Photo by Jan Gatenby*



*Line-moth (Smyriodes sp.).  
Photo by Kevin McCue*



*Ghost Moth (Abantiades labyrinthicus).  
Photo by Kevin McCue*



*Anabranch near confluence with the Murray. Photo by Mike Bremers*

## *Volunteers needed*

We always need new volunteers to take over from members who have volunteered for a long time and need a break. Please consider putting your name forward for any jobs you think you can spend some time on for the good of the environment and NPA. It can be to lead walks or participate in or lead work parties, set up the meeting room for our general meetings, sell our books at public events, or by joining a subcommittee to spread the load.

If you can help please email [admin@npaact.org.au](mailto:admin@npaact.org.au) or leave a message on the office phone (02) 6229 3201.

## *Membership fees due by 30 June*

Renewal notices will be emailed to members in June. We hope you'll renew for another year.

This year the renewal process will be largely paperless. To renew, you will need to select an option based on how you wish to pay, and provide the information requested. Please also check your membership details and let us know of any changes using the 'Any changes to details?' field in the renewal links. Payment can be made by credit card, bank transfer or cheque.

Members who don't have an email address will receive their renewal letter in the post.

In addition to renewing your membership, you may wish to consider making a tax-deductible donation to assist us in our many conservation programs. All membership fees are reduced to \$11 if a donation of \$100 or more is made.

If you have any difficulties with the renewal process, please contact the NPA office by email ([admin@npaact.or.au](mailto:admin@npaact.or.au)) or phone ((02) 6229 3201).

# General meetings

*conservation education protection*

General meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, usually at **Weston Creek Uniting Church hall, 16 Parkinson Street, Weston, at 7:30 pm**

Following the success of online meetings last year, the meetings in June and July will be held online via Teams. The links will be included in the June and July *Burning Issues*.

## Thursday 15 June

### Preserving the ACT's heritage

**Gary Kent**

The ACT is rich in heritage places and objects, but what is being done to promote and preserve them? Gary Kent, President of the National Trust of Australia (ACT), will talk about the role and work of the ACT branch, focusing on the Territory's built and cultural heritage space.

Online meeting



Mugga Mugga Cottage

## Thursday 20 July

### Update on the Rosenberg's Goanna Project

**Don Fletcher**

Project Leader

Over the last 12 months, the Goanna Project has switched to Ainslie-Majura Nature Reserve after several years of research in Namadgi. Don will present the findings so far from the research at the new location.

Online meeting



Training session field exercise

## Thursday 17 August



### AGM Annual General Meeting

Come along to Weston Creek Uniting Church hall to hear about our organisation's achievements over the past year and plans for the future. Help us elect a new committee for 2023–24.

#### More for your calendar

#### June

#### July

#### August

#### September

**Committee meetings** (5:30 pm to 7:00 pm)

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>

## 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.

### Membership subscription rates (1 July to 30 June)

The subscription rate is \$22, which includes a digital copy 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.

### Office-bearers

President

Rosemary Hollow

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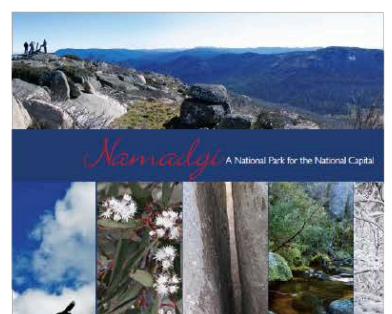
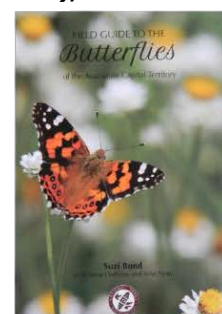
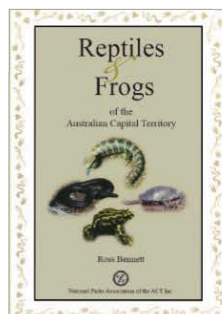
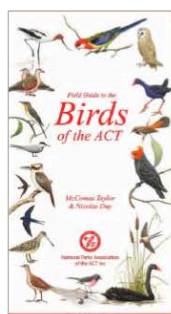
Promotion & Outreach Subcommittee

Allan Sharp

Work Party Co-ordinator

Martin Chalk

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