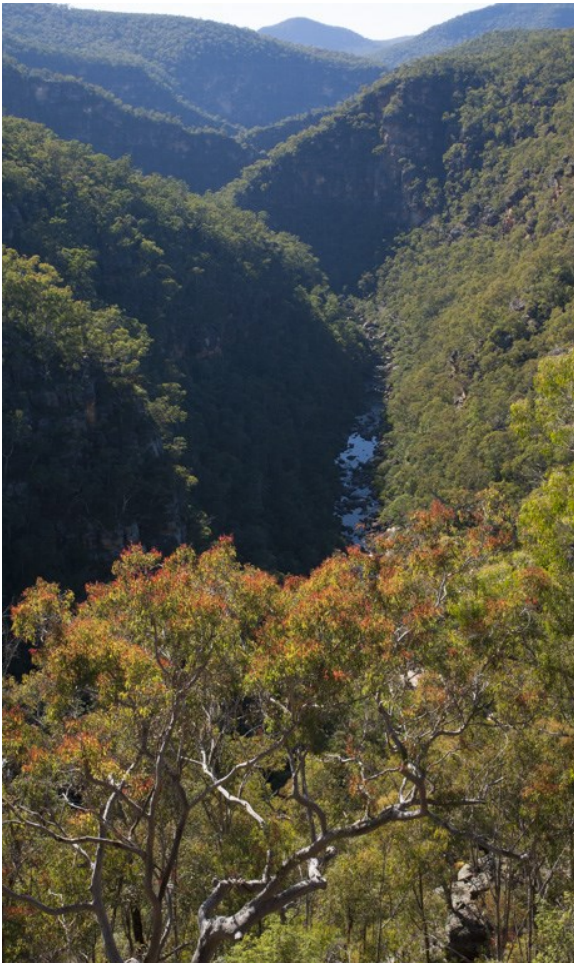


HUT NEWS

Issue No. 317
August 2014



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"



Blue Mountains Conservation Society presents
Blue Mountains Wild River ... The Wollangambe
Sunday 17th August, 2pm
Wentworth Falls School of Arts
(Cnr Great Western Highway and Adele Avenue)

The Wollangambe River is just to the north of Mt. Wilson and for most of its 57km length it is within the World Heritage Blue Mountains and Wollemi National Parks, and the Wollemi Wilderness. Our August meeting is about the beauty of this river and the beast that threatens it.

Andy Macqueen will talk about the river from an historical and geographical perspective. Dr Ian Wright and Nakia Belmer will provide a "state of health" of the river. And all of this will be accompanied by glorious images from Ian Brown and Society members. Read more on page 5.

Visitors are very welcome.



Photos:

Wild River gorge, by Ian Brown;

Ian Wright take samples to test the health of the river, by Nakia Belmer.

BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

Lawson Nursery, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 9am to noon.

The nursery is located in the Lawson Industrial Area on the corner of Park and Cascade Streets, opposite Federation Building Materials - see map on our website

www.bluemountains.org.au

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm.

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of the month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm.

Tube stock \$2.50. Larger pots available.

Discounts for bulk orders and large contracts.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887, nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Threatened Species Day

Threatened Species Day, 7th September, commemorates the death of the last *Thylacine* (Tasmanian tiger - *Thylacinus cynocephalus*) at Hobart Zoo in 1936. Events are held nationally throughout September - Biodiversity Month.

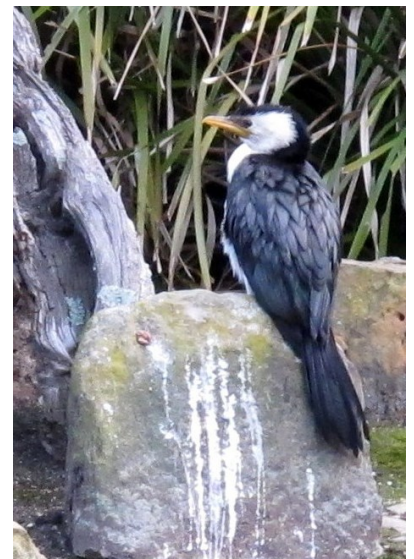
Changes to the landscape and native habitat as a result of human activity have put our unique species at risk. Over 50 species of Australian animals and 60 species of Australian plants have become extinct in the last 200 years, and many more are threatened.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is planning an event at Lawson on Sunday 7th September. Speakers will highlight attempts to prevent extinctions of Australia's fauna and flora, and to restore healthy numbers of threatened species and ecological communities in the wild.

Watch our website for more information www.bluemountains.org.au

Yabbies on the menu!

The Little Pied Cormorant is a regular visitor to the duck pond in the Blackheath Memorial Park. He rests on one of his favourite rocks.



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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT
ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
16 AUGUST 2014**

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Mount Wellington is one of the canaries in the mine.

A trip to Hobart is a trip back to childhood. 50 years might have passed, but the old town looks the same. The same little post-war weatherboard cottages, with their thin streaks of smoke wafting out of brick chimneys. Tiny windows that still let in the cold winter weather through cheaply made timber surrounds. Tin roofs sending any warmth collected by the sun back out to the atmosphere.

Ah – but the atmosphere! It still seeps of Tom Sawyer adventures. Icy frost strewn dawns, skating on the ice on our way to raid the apricot orchard. Even in spring and summer, the chilblains tickling our ears, toes and fingers as we played around the quarry – daring death at every leap.

Last week I enjoyed a trip to Hobart for the mid-winter Festival of Voices. There, towering above the city was Mount Wellington.

All through my childhood there, we would awake to peep out the kitchen window checking how far the snow line had crept down the mountainside. In winter it was almost down to the suburbs. In autumn and spring, the mountain usually wore a cap of white and, even in summer, we would often be rewarded by a day of frolicking in the snow.

Things have changed. There was no snow on the mountain when I arrived. None. Not a skerrick. There wasn't the next day either. Or the day after. There was one day during the week when we saw a small dusting on the peak. It lasted a few hours. Then none.

Mount Wellington is one of the canaries in the mine. It tells us we are getting warmer. But Tony Abbott tells us climate change is crap.

Following the decision in the Senate to 'scrap the tax', we will now allow the polluters to get away with their ongoing destruction of our water, our clean air, our agricultural land - and the future ... **unless we stand up and demand our politicians give us an effective polluter pay Carbon Pricing Scheme ... now, before it is too late.**

We all have to lobby our politicians, our banks, our super funds, the media and whoever else we can spare a moment to harass.

Susanne Rix, Wentworth Falls.

Membership Matters

Hello all BMCS members. My name is Ross Coster, and I am the Membership Secretary as of March 2014. I have done the job before, for five years in the 1990's, but things have changed. E-mail distribution of Hut News, allocation of Bushwalks Numbers, Payments by EFT and PayPal, the job has got much more complicated!

There is one simple thing *you* can choose to do to make my job easier. **When you get a Renewal Notice, by mail or e-mail, please Renew as soon as possible.** Follow-up Reminder and Final notices use paper, time and effort, and can so easily be avoided.

You can Renew your Membership by EFT to our Bank Account, by PayPal, or by Cheque or Money Order to our PO Box. Details are on your Renewal Notice, or on our Web Site. Please, always include a reference, such as your Surname or Membership Number or both, so I can figure out who you are! It also helps if you e-mail me to tell me what you are paying for: Membership Type, Bushwalks Levy, Donation (we hope!).

I have been to three Management Committee Meetings so far this time around, and can report that your Society is being run by very competent, smart, hard-working, passionate people who will make great strides in preserving and improving our environment.

Ross Coster membership@bluemountains.org.au

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 9am till noon. Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat. New members are welcome. Phone Karen 4757 1929.



An awkward descent! (Baal Bone Ridge ahead, Coco Creek valley on left)

Protecting the Land ...

“For her children and grandchildren”

After the federal government’s abandonment of a proposed nuclear waste dump at Muckaty Station near Tennant Creek in the NT, traditional owner Lorna Fejo said she had fought hard to protect the land for her children and grandchildren.

“I feel ecstatic,” she said. “I feel free because it was a long struggle to protect my land. My grandmother gave me that land in perfect condition and other lands to my two brothers, who are now deceased,” she said in a statement. “It was our duty to protect that land and water because it was a gift from my grandmother to me.”

Source: Sydney Morning Herald, 19/6/14.

Coalpac: will no-one rid me of this troublesome miner?¹ Brian Marshall

The **Coalpac Consolidation Project (CCP)** was rejected by a Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) and by the Department of Planning. An outrageous proposal had received its ‘comeuppance’!

Coalpac then went into voluntary administration. It seems that the Administrator factored in an arrangement whereby, if Coalpac were to gain approval for a substantially reduced proposal, EnergyAustralia would take over beneficial ownership. The full details have not been made public, at least to my knowledge. Indeed, the ‘government’ may not be a party to, or aware of, the arrangement’s content, although submissions from certain departments make this hard to swallow!

Coalpac (now under administration) guided its reduced proposal through the Commonwealth Government’s Department of the Environment (DoE). Coalpac contended that its proposals didn’t impact matters of national environmental significance under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. We (and others such as the Colong Foundation) submitted reasons why the Commonwealth should deem the proposal a controlled action. We failed because the magnitude of coal extraction (about 9 million tonnes over a period up to 7 years) was deemed insufficiently significant to induce Commonwealth intervention. We were done over!²

Coalpac next lodged (April 3, 2014) its Environmental Assessment (EA) for the reduced proposal with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DoPE). The EA was open for submissions until May 2, 2014, during which period BMCS and others made substantial

opposing submissions. Coalpac then elected to respond to these submissions and also to those from various government departments; this was completed by June 14, 2014. The DoPE then commenced its assessment of the proposals and opposing arguments.

Nevertheless, the DoPE advised BMCS and others that we could comment on Coalpac’s responses to the earlier submissions should we wish to do so. Our additional responses have been made and the assessment process is nearing completion. But what happens next?

The DoPE will finalise its assessment report and this will ‘soon’ be placed on Planning’s website whilst concurrently being forwarded to the PAC for a determination. Our understanding is that the PAC will accept comments about the DoPE’s assessment report and will hold a public meeting in relation to its determination, but the details and time-frame are up to the PAC.

Once the PAC makes a determination, it is all over bar the shouting! **Either** the PAC will sacrifice the CCP’s rejection by approving Coalpac’s reduced proposal, **or** it will affirm the environmental value of a **unique land system**.

Place your bets!

¹ With apologies to King Henry II, or perhaps Thomas à Becket!

² The DoE’s decision was reached while the draft bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW was under consideration. See www.environment.gov.au/topics/environment.../bilateral-agreements/nsw

The walk will showcase how the voluntary efforts of early bushwalking clubs led to the dedication of large national parks and, consequently, wilderness areas in the Blue Mountains. It will celebrate the pivotal role of wilderness in the protection of nature in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. In November the walk and its legacy will be presented to the World Parks Congress.

Colong Wilderness Walk – Dunphy’s Kowmung Adventure September 26 to October 6, 2014

In October 1914 young Myles Dunphy and Herbert 'Bert' Gallop set off on an adventure into the heart of the southern Blue Mountains. Their aim was to trace the length of the Kowmung River.

Leaving Katoomba, they walked via the Six Foot Track to Jenolan Caves. From here, armed with advice from local cave guides and very rudimentary parish maps with more blanks than drawn sections, they entered into the unknown. During the next three weeks, they gained an understanding of the importance of the area through which they had travelled. The original journey concluded at Picton taking 21 days to complete. Along the way they:

- Walked the length of the 6 Foot Track to Jenolan Caves, descending from Katoomba by torchlight.
- Slept in the first Japara tent to be made in the country.
- Dealt with multiple crossings of the Kowmung River in full flood, with some crossings taking over 40 minutes.
- Journeyed through land untouched by contemporary maps and not marked by tracks (though undoubtedly traversed by local indigenous people and graziers).
- Sighted the mighty Morong Falls, which they believed to be the highest falls in the country.
- Visited the silver mining town of Yerranderie, where supplies were bought and Bert purchased patent leather dress shoes to replace his worn out boots.
- Climbed Mount Despond in the pouring rain.
- Witnessed the destruction caused by rabbits before the introduction of myxomatosis.



Lunch on the Kowmung River opposite Dicksonia Fan, 1930
From l to r: Hilda McCartney (with hat), Winnie Ashton, Marj. Barrett, Marjorie Hill, Ilma Ellis, Reginald Hewitt and Nell Gundlach. Photo: the Colong Foundation collection.

- Passed bullock trains as they made their way through land now under the waters of Lake Burragarang.

It was an adventure of epic proportions and soon after completing the walk, Myles founded the Mountain Trails Club, the first bushwalking club in NSW, and the genesis of the state’s bushwalking and conservation movements.

Now, in 2014, five young Adventure Teams will retrace Myles Dunphy and Bert Gallop’s historic journey. Each team of walkers will include a person with a connection to the stage being walked. Some stages will allow others to participate in the journey – whether as walkers, to camp or just sit around a campfire to celebrate.

Dunphy’s Kowmung Adventure – how to get involved...

Walk Launch - 10am Friday September 26:

Katoomba Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street, Katoomba – morning tea provided.

6 Foot Track Day Walk - September 26: An easy day walk, from Katoomba Cultural Centre to Old Ford Reserve. You can choose to walk back to Katoomba or be driven back by bus around 10pm. Basic BBQ dinner provided.

6 Foot Track Day Walk, Old Ford Reserve Campfire and Camp - September 26 -27: Walk as above, stay for a campfire and camp at Old Ford Reserve and walk back to Katoomba (rated a moderate walk).

6 Foot Track Overnight Walk - September 26 – 27: Walk as above, continuing to Coxs River and camp and walk back to Katoomba (rated a longer moderate walk).

Adventure Walk in stages of 3 to 4 days duration - September 27 to October 6: For experienced walkers. Up to 1,000 metre daily ascents some with mild exposure. Join walk leaders for one of five possible stages.

Celebration Camp and dinner, Wooglemai Environmental Education Centre, Sheehys Creek Road, Oakdale - October 5 and 6 (Labour Day long weekend): Last Adventure Team arrives and we celebrate the journey. Camp or stay in a cabin. Bring your own dinner for BBQ.

Use of Old Bushwalking Gear: We intend to use bushwalking gear from throughout the last century. We welcome the loaning of suitable bushwalking gear from years past.

We encourage you to take part where you can. Please visit the event website or Facebook page below to find further details on the walk, and how you can register and become involved.

<https://www.colongwilderness.org.au/about-wilderness/dunphy-kowmung-centenary-walk/introduction>

<https://www.facebook.com/DunphysAdventure>

Our Societal Blind Spot

The growth of our population, and physical spread, is recognised in Australia as a key threatening process to our natural ecosystems and to the endangered species that struggle to survive under an unrelenting assault. Yet there is an astonishing reluctance for too many Australians, including otherwise concerned environmentalists, to grasp the nettle, recognise the fact and do something about it. Globally, in a quest for domination, some religions have always played, and still play, a perverse role in this demonstrably unsustainable practice, and I have lost count of the number of times that I have heard the oxymoronic phrase 'sustainable growth' as a worthwhile goal, or how 'smart growth' is OK.

Well here's a couple of statistics to prick that particular bubble.

- All the elephants, whales, schools of fish, herds of caribou, wildebeest, big cats, hippopotamuses, rhinoceros, birds and other wild animals comprise just 3% of global vertebrate mass. Humans and their domesticated and food animals comprise 97%. No wonder the planet is suffering from the 6th Great Extinction, an extinction caused by us.
- If our species had started with just two people at the time of the earliest agricultural practices some 10,000 years ago, and increased by 1 percent per year, today humanity would be a solid ball of flesh many thousand light years in diameter.

Some people, in their ignorance, claim that to stabilise our population, or, shudder, reduce it, would lead to a death spiral; countries like Russia are supposedly headed for oblivion because population decline can't be stopped. But go back in time to the Black Death, when 30-60% of the population of Europe was wiped out, and yet the world didn't come to an end. Not only did Europe recover and prosper, but the temporary labour shortage seems likely to have played a key role in the collapse of feudalism because serf labourers became far more valuable for the landed gentry. Not only that, but such luminaries as Gutenberg, Luther, Da Vinci, Copernicus, Raphael and Michelangelo were born soon after, and Galilei, Kepler and others over the next hundred years. So, mankind didn't suffer any loss of quality. But that shouldn't come as a surprise, given the honour roll of inspirational Greek scholars from when the population of the world was just a hundred million.

Locally, the progressive demise of the ADI site wildlife lands, the inexorable loss of quality Nepean-Hawkesbury riverine farmland, and the threat of an additional Sydney airport at Badgery's Creek, are reminders of this absurd quest for endless growth. It is driven by developers in search of a quick buck, aided and abetted by their political apparatchiks. There is NO growth that is sustainable, and hence 'smart' growth merely delays the inevitable.

Peter Green

Sustainable Population and Global Warming Officer.

Blue Mountains Wild River ... The Wollangambe Sunday 17th August, 2pm Wentworth Falls School of Arts

About the presenters:

Andy Macqueen has been an enthusiastic bushwalker and conservationist since the 1960's.

He lives in the Blue Mountains, where he teaches people about the bush, and researches & writes local history.

He links his interest in the region to his great-great grandfather Frederick D'Arcy, who was one of Major Mitchell's surveyors.

Andy's books include:

- *'Blue Mountains to Bridgetown: the life and journeys of Barrallier, 1773-1853'*
- *'Back from the Brink: Blue Gum Forest and the Grose Wilderness'*
- *'Somewhat perilous: the journeys of Singleton, Parr, Howe, Myles and Blaxland in the Northern Blue Mountains'*
- *'Frederick Robert D'Arcy: colonial surveyor, explorer and artist'*

Dr Ian Wright is passionate about waterways.

He first gained employment with the Sydney Water Board (later Sydney Water) studying the effects of urban development and sewage contamination on Blue Mountains stream ecosystems.

He then spent two years working in Sydney's drinking water catchments, based at Warragamba Dam. Ian's PhD research took him to some rare and isolated waters including the lakes of the Tasmanian highlands, Fraser Island and Cape York in search of the humble (but species rich) 'midge'.

He also researched sewage and heavy-metal pollution of the Grose River, and other waterways in the Blue Mountains and Sydney basin. See more at: <http://www.wsud.org/training-events/sydney-urban-water-management-seminar-and-workshop/#sthash.q1Chj58r.dpuf>

Ian lectures at UWS in water and environmental sciences and conducts research on a broad range of ecological and water quality projects involving urban waterways, coal-mine discharges and riparian wildlife.

Nakia Belmer is studying Environmental Management with a sub major in Aquatic Environments at UWS.

He is part of Dr. Wright's team in the study of water quality and ecosystems of the Wollangambe River.

Nakia is the Society's Threatened Species Officer.

(photo by Ian Brown)



Public rejects mine proposal

An overwhelming 221 members of the public and 16 organisations have objected to Centennial Coal's **Airly Colliery modification 3 proposal** to extend the old, 1991, development consent to October 2015. Submissions have now closed. Thank you to all BMCS members who registered their concerns about this proposal.

Of the 242 submissions sent to the Department of Planning and Environment, only five supported the proposal. Two of the five were from government agencies (Environment Protection Authority and Office of Environment and Heritage) and one from Lithgow Council.

As reported last month, Centennial Coal claims it needs this modification to allow it to continue mining while it prepares a big mine extension project (SSD 12_5581). The Airly Colliery operates under Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area.

This modification 3 proposal would permit intensive coal mining which would potentially cause up to 1.8 metres of vertical subsidence.

The next step in the assessment process is for Centennial Coal to respond to the issues raised in the submissions.

Free E-book from CSIRO

From critters to creeks – everything you need to know about our sunburnt country

Biodiversity: Science and Solutions for Australia aims to provide the latest scientific knowledge on Australia's biodiversity in an engaging and clear format. The book describes the ancient origins and unique features of Australia's plants, animals and ecosystems, and looks at how they are currently tracking. It highlights indigenous perspectives on biodiversity and describes how Australia's biodiversity interacts with agriculture, the resources sector, cities and with our changing global environment. Perhaps most importantly, it also identifies practical solutions for managing Australia's globally unique natural assets.

The book is available as PDFs or as an interactive eBook, which contains interviews with the authors, links to additional videos, animations and articles, and detailed information about every species mentioned in the book via the Atlas of Living Australia. You can download your copy from www.csiro.au/biodiversitybook.

Prefer to watch and listen rather than read? Then the good news for you is that CSIRO has also launched a series of video interviews that will give you an insight into different aspects of biodiversity. If you like what you see and hear you can then download the relevant chapter to learn more. Go to <http://csironewsblog.com/2014/07/16/from-critters-to-creeks/>

JOIN Blue Mountains Conservation Society,
or renew your membership online.
www.bluemountains.org.au

Some windy waffle Don Morison

The Baird Government in NSW has made a submission about the Federal Government's Renewable Energy Target which has many positive points to make about solar and wind energy. The Baird Government's position contrasts with other conservative inputs which view renewable energy unfavourably.

This intensifying debate reminded me of an on-air conversation between an Australian prince of waffle (Ian Macnamara, host of ABC radio's "Australia All Over") and Ms Pru Goward, shortly before she became NSW Planning Minister.

During the decades of "Macca's" highly informative programs, one of the most played songs has been David Wilson's "Underneath the Story Bridge" which celebrates the "kerklunk, kerklunk, kerklunk" traffic noise which you hear if you stand under Brisbane's most famous landmark. It was most disturbing to hear that Macca was deeply frightened to hear some wind turbines making a similar noise when he ventured close to them.

There is absolutely no scientific evidence that wind turbines harm people with their noise or anything else that they do, but Macca and Ms Goward were definitely having a mutual non-admiration session about them.

If Mike Baird persists with advocating wind, he will find an ally in the Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory, Katie Gallagher. The Territory Government wants Canberra to be powered entirely by renewables but the ACT is occupied about 50% by low-density housing subdivisions and most of the remainder is beautiful nature reserves and national parklands (as described in the current Hut News series by Christine Davies).

To switch to good news, the under-utilised grazing lands just across the border in NSW are among the windiest regions in Australia and it should be commercially viable for Mr Baird to approve many more wind turbines, with the power sold to the ACT.

To return to bad news, Ms Goward and other identities in the national capital's cross-border hinterland, such as Tony Abbott's razor-ganger Maurice Newman, have not supported wind turbines up till now. But, no doubt, Mr Baird could be very persuasive.

When Macca was on the phone to Ms Goward, she was at the Tarago Show in her Goulburn electorate. Tarago (population 350) is just out of sight of the lookout maintained by the RMS above Lake George on the Federal Highway. You can already see about 30 good-looking wind turbines from this lookout. Also not mentioned in Macca's and Ms Goward's conversation was the largely disused giant open-cut mine in between Lake George and Tarago, where much of Sydney's most obnoxious waste products have been dumped for a number of years.

I myself like stopping on the Federal Highway and watching the wind turbines. I would like to see a lot more. Let's support a policy that ignores the outspoken critics of wind, let's leave as much of the past environmental damage out of sight as we can and not approve future projects involving non-renewables. That way, future generations will have something worth waffling about.

When the people take to the streets ... Robin Mosman.

About three years ago, when I first started to be really aware of the threats presented by coal seam gas mining, I happened to see Bob Debus, at a meeting. Many of you will remember him as our local Member for many years, and our longest serving Environment Minister. I asked him whether he thought there was any chance of stopping coal gas mining. He looked me straight in the eye and said, very seriously, "Only if the people take to the streets".

I still remember how my heart dropped, thinking that Australians would never do it in sufficient numbers to stop the coal industry. But now it seems they are rallying, at least in the country areas where mining is threatening farms and towns. In the northern rivers area whole towns are indicating their total opposition to coal seam gas, and recently thousands of people rallied to the Bentley Blockade to stop Metgasco. At the Leard Blockade, in spite of bitter weather, people are continuing to come, many to get arrested in actions which are blocking Whitehaven Coal's roads and slowing down work on the Maules Creek mine and the clearing of the Leard State Forest.

I decided to email Bob to ask whether he would mind if I quoted him, even anonymously as "a distinguished retired Federal and State politician" having made that prophetic statement. I didn't want to make any difficulties



Robin with son-in-law Craig (guitar) and grandson Tom (banjo)

for him. I just wanted to help folks understand how totally up to the people it is to take action on this issue, given the degree of government capture by the industry.

His reply came back within 2 hours: "Please feel free to quote me by name".

I've since felt inspired to write the following words. I wrote them as a song, to the tune of John Denver's "It's About Time", and my family have just helped me to record it on youtube. You can read it as a poem.

Ben Bullen rock art is authentic

A hand-stencil painting discovered in a cave in the Ben Bullen State Forest in April, which was cited as evidence of Aboriginal art under threat by a coal mine extension and potential subsidence, has been proven to be authentic. The stencil was seen by Lithgow Environment Group's Chris Jonkers and reported to the Department of Planning after consultation with the Mingaan Aboriginal people.

A report, commissioned by mining company Coalpac, questioned the age of the art, saying it's probably a replica of a traditional hand stencil, dating back just a few years.

Blue Mountains Conservation Society commissioned archaeologist Michael Jackson, of Jackson Ward Archaeology, who's worked in the Blue Mountains region for decades. He disputes that the rock art is fake. He said that, the hand stencils aside, the stone tools that he found and recorded prove beyond a doubt that the shelter is an Aboriginal occupation site.

He also said that his site recordings have been independently verified by the Office of Environment and Heritage, which is the state government authority on Aboriginal heritage determinations.

Lithgow Environment Group's president, Dr Richard Stiles, said the finding poses questions about the original archaeological investigation at the unique pagoda landscape in the Ben Bullen State Forest.

"There was a question of the authenticity of a white hand stencil: they found that hand stencil to be authentic; they found a number of other hand stencils in the cave; in the floor of the cave they found chert stone tools which suggested previous Aboriginal habitation.

Take Action for Our Land

Coal is king now in Australia, the miners own our states
Our land will be a quarry, the miners just won't wait
Politicians in their pockets, their profits seem assured
They'll flog our coal and coal seam gas, ship the money
all offshore

It's time we realize it, it's a war we're fighting here
Australia's been invaded, mining companies don't care
The money's all they want from us, they think they have the right
To wreck our land and water, they think that we won't fight

If we're true blue Australians it's time for us to stand
Do things we've never done before if we want to save our land
We need to be an army, to stand firm side by side
Take action every way we can if we want to stem the tide

Time to tell our politicians we want clean energy
Not dirty coal and coal seam gas but a vision we can see
Our country powered by sun and wind, clean water, and our land
Producing food that's fit to eat, so come and make a stand

Chorus:

It's about time we make a stand now, demand clean energy
It's about time we realize it, it's up to you and me
It's about time we start to do it, take action for our land
It's about time, it's about changes and it's about time
It's about you and me together, and it's about time.

"I think it leads to questions about the due diligence of Coalpac consultant's report and it really makes you question how an archaeological consultant could say those things, when there is so much evidence in this cave that there's been Aboriginal occupation and artwork in it," Dr Stiles said.



At Cooma Cottage, Yass. (left to right): Don, Jenny, Jennifer, Neil, Christine, Heather, Nicky, Sylvia, Dina, David.

Thursday Interpretive bushwalking group, five day trip to the Australian Capital Territory and Yass NSW, May 2014. Christine Davies and friends.

Day 3 began with a drive to Black Mountain, where the Telstra Tower provides a spectacular 360 degree view of Canberra and its surrounds. A walk in the Black Mountain section of the Canberra Nature Park was rewarded with many bird sightings. On the lower slopes, the Australian National Botanic Gardens maintains a scientific collection of native plants from all parts of Australia, and the variety of plants in the gardens is impressive. A rainforest has been created in a narrow gully, with a creek running through. After lunch in the gardens we left the Australian Capital Territory.

Vast numbers of Eastern Grey Kangaroos graze on the ACT grasslands and Canberra offers a bountiful supply of food in its numerous well-watered parks, gardens and lawns. Hundreds of kangaroos are killed and injured every year by motor vehicles. Canberrans try to reduce their numbers with an annual cull which animal welfare groups oppose.

We booked into the Yass Motel. Strangely, the motel has its back turned to the lovely view - a picturesque bend in the Yass River, an old homestead on the hilltop and the sunsets.

On the fourth day we went to Wee Jasper, driving in and out of fog, sometimes thick, which clung to the hilltops. Red-rumped Parrots and Eastern Rosellas flew out of the surrounds and large flocks of Straw-necked Ibis were feeding on newly ploughed paddocks. A photo stop at Taemas Bridge, high over the mighty Murrumbidgee River. When Hume and Hovell crossed

near here the river was flooded, as it had been only recently, but it would have looked very different with Casuarinas along its banks, water running deep and clear, with native fish and other wildlife and no warning of changes which would follow the explorers.

We had morning tea beside the swiftly flowing Goodradigbee River at Wee Jasper. On the way back we stopped for juvenile twin wombats on the road. They hid in a drain. Their mother was not in sight, but there were scats on the culvert and a well-worn track to a fence.

We had a barbecue picnic lunch near a popular fishing spot beside the Yass River. In its meandering journey to join the Murrumbidgee, the Yass River loops back on itself through Yass. This enabled a leisurely two kilometre walk, through parkland opposite the motel, along the riverbank, and finishing on a disused railway line (the Yass branch line) which passes the back gate of the motel. There were lots of galahs and water birds and some Eastern Grey Kangaroos camouflaged among tall granite boulders.

On the final day we visited Cooma Cottage, long-time home of the then retired explorer Hamilton Hume. Our volunteer guide was excellent and we thoroughly enjoyed the tour.

We all agreed it was a wonderful trip and thanked Don for his organisation and leadership.

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men ...

Robert Burns' poem *To a Mouse*, 1786, tells of how he, while ploughing a field, upturned a mouse's nest. The poem is an apology to the mouse:

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane [*you aren't alone*]
 In proving foresight may be vain:
 The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft a-gley, [*often go awry*]
 An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
 For promised joy.

Members will have noticed something "agley" in the copy of July 2014 Hut News they received in the mail, where a computer substituted a petition form from the previous September's Hut News onto page 11.

As Robbie Burns reflects, the most carefully prepared plans may go wrong.



Twin wombats near Wee Jasper.

Loose Feathers, with Carol Proberts

When twilight engulfs the landscape or the first glimmer of dawn breaks, you might hear, from within the sedges and teatree swamps, what is possibly the Blue Mountains' most secretive bird. Slightly larger than a starling, the Lewin's Rail is notoriously difficult to see. It's at home in the most densely vegetated swamps, its narrow body suited for running swiftly through the sedges and rushes where it probes the mud for food with its longish bill. When disturbed it tends to run through the vegetation rather than fly and almost never comes into the open - but you know it's there by its distinctive voice. The typical call is a sharp 'jik jik jik....' which gradually accelerates and slows again. It also has a bizarre series of grunts, and another call that sounds like horses galloping.

Their call regularly betrays their presence in the Gully in Katoomba, around Wentworth Falls Lake, in North Lawson Swamp (the large swamp off Queen's Road) and even in the swamp behind Wentworth Falls shops. They also turn up in various hanging swamps around the upper mountains and at times along densely vegetated creeklines of the lower mountains. Despite their secretive nature, being a ground-dweller they're particularly vulnerable to cats and foxes. In fact the only live Lewin's Rail I have ever seen was one that had been attacked by a cat, years ago when I was a volunteer for WIRES. Unfortunately that bird died while in care.

The Lewin's Rail isn't the only species which lives in the swamps of our area. The larger Buff-banded Rail, an attractive bird with spots, stripes and a fetching white eyebrow, inhabits the same sort of places but is much more inclined to wander into the open. If you sit quietly at Wilson Park near the Wentworth Falls tennis courts, you might see one venturing onto the lawn, even in the depths of winter when frost covers the ground. I saw another one this month in Central Park at Wentworth Falls.

Another swamp-dweller is a long-distance migrant. The Latham's Snipe flies each year from Japan where it breeds in the northern hemisphere summer. They start to turn up in our area in August or September. Take a few steps into the rank edges of a wetland and one may suddenly burst up from near your feet, its flight fast and zig-zagging but its long straight bill clearly visible. They are regular visitors to the edges of Lake Wallace, Wentworth Falls Lake and smaller wetlands around the area.

Every birdwatcher has a "bogey bird" - that most frustrating species that manages to escape being seen no matter how much time and effort you put into searching for it. Unsurprisingly, my bogey bird is the Lewin's Rail (despite having heard them many times). Perhaps one day I'll be lucky enough to lay eyes on one in the wild, but in the meantime, it's simply good to know there's a mysterious and unseen (by me) inhabitant of the swamps out there.

Carol Proberts

origma@westnet.com.au Twitter: @carolproberts

Buff-banded Rail,
photographed by
Trevor Quested.



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You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- Post this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, OR
- Join online at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.
2.
3.

Address:
.....PC

Phone(s)

Email

I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.
2.
3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$30 Concession (Senior/Student) \$20

Household \$35 Household Concession \$25

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

The Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

\$7.50 plus \$1.50 postage.

Buy the map online

(www.bluemountains.org.au) or

write to BMCS, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 with your cheque or money order.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY Inc**

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Blue Mountains

Conservation Society

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

**The Greater Blue Mountains
World Heritage Experience**
www.worldheritage.org.au

A BEQUEST

Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

Down the Wallaby Track: a backward glance, with John Low

LADY MARY VISITS THE FALLS

It could be argued that Leura Falls was once the most favoured picnic spot in the Blue Mountains, from which a system of well-made walking tracks featuring 'rustic' timber steps, ladders and bridges led off into the bush to hidden places, views and cascading water. If royalty visited, as it did in 1901, the falls at Leura would unquestionably figure in the itinerary.

Following their opening of the new Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall & York (later King George V and Queen Mary) travelled to Sydney and when the Duke headed off for a spot of shooting at Forbes the Duchess found herself with a day to spare. Arriving in Katoomba by train on Tuesday 4 June and greeted by perfect weather and a large crowd of locals, she and her entourage boarded a 'royal' carriage for a three-hour scenic drive that included stops at Katoomba Falls, Echo Point and Leura Falls.

Leura Falls proved especially popular with the visitors and here, to the amusement of the local press, the Duchess and her friends indulged themselves on the swings in the reserve before walking down the "rustic step and ladder" track to view the falls. Their lungs filled with Mountain air, they were then whisked away to Chief Justice Sir Frederick Darley's country seat of 'Lilianfels' for afternoon tea before boarding the royal train again for Sydney.

Reading a press account of this visit I discovered that, among the Duchess's party, was Lady Mary Lygon (1869-1927) who, a year earlier, had ridden horse-back from Mount Victoria to Jenolan Caves while her friends had chosen the comfort of coaches. The sister of William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp, she had accompanied her unmarried brother to Australia in 1899 to partner him at official functions during his term as Governor of NSW. Music lovers will recognize Mary as the lady widely accepted as Sir Edward Elgar's 'mystery woman', to whom he addressed his 13th *Enigma Variation*.

Like Elgar, she too came from Worcestershire and met the composer through her involvement in the Worcester music scene, becoming a personal friend and regular guest in his home. By the time she left for Australia in April 1899, Elgar had completed the variations and had also dedicated another composition, *Three Characteristic Pieces*, to her. She was already in Sydney when the *Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma)* received its public premiere at St. James's Hall, London, on 19 June 1899. Elgar wrote to her with the news of its success.

Though still popular with picnicking families and casual walkers, Leura Falls is sadly no longer the pristine 'paradise' that welcomed the royal visitors in 1901 and made the location the centre of attention in earlier years. Nevertheless, despite bearing the scars of heavy human impact during the intervening years, the area is still inviting and along its tracks the pleasure of discovery remains. Whether visiting the falls or listening to variation #13, the thought of a young, aristocratic woman - described by a friend of Elgar as "a lively intelligent creature" - freed for a time from the strictures of protocol, sharing with friends the enjoyment of swings and a walk down a bush track to view a waterfall enhances both experiences.

John Low (grizzlybear3au@yahoo.com)

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?

Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?

Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml



NIGHT BIRD

It was not what it seemed,
that dried up lump of wood,
piece of a rotten branch
caught up where the tree trunk forked.
It moved, shuffled a wing,
opened great night-wise eyes,
became a frogmouth, preened.

Graham Alcorn
Leura Cascades lunch, 9 October 1988.

Write to Premier Baird:

Protest the NSW Government's plans to log and graze in conservation parks

The NSW Natural Resources Commission has released a draft report that proposes legislative changes to allow logging and grazing in the Pilliga's conservation parks. These proposals would also allow native white cypress trees to be used to generate green electricity. Tens of millions of dollars in timber industry restructuring money spent in 2005 will be wasted. Under these plans, taxpayers will be slugged up to \$560/ha or \$3.5million/year for the privilege of having their parks logged (NRC, page 105). The Commission is accountable to the Premier of NSW, so please write to him and object to plans to log and graze conservation parks in the Brigalow-Nandewar region:

The Hon. Mike Baird, Premier of NSW, Level 40, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney, 2000 or webpage www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/contact-premier-new-south-wales

Points you could mention in your letter:

I oppose the proposal to log and graze conservation parks in the Brigalow-Nandewar region. Plans to obtain 1,000 to 14,000 cubic metres of sawlogs and 23,000 cubic metres of landscape products a year in Pilliga's parks are totally unacceptable.

I strongly object to the use of taxes to subsidise logging of conservation parks and that trees felled in these parks be burnt to generate 'green' electricity. To assist logging of conservation parks through green energy subsidies is unethical.

The Commission has described White Cypress Pine trees in our parks as invasive native species. This is loaded language designed to make the proposed logging appear more appropriate. If White Cypress Pine trees were so invasive why then is there such a shortage of these trees? The truth is that White Cypress Pines have been logged out of state forests and private land. Sawmills which over-exploited these resources should not be allowed to log our parks.

Logging and grazing will not improve the ecological health of conservation parks. The Natural Resources Commission's proposals will further transform conservation parks into more heavily modified post-logging and post-grazing landscapes.

www.colongwilderness.org.au/news/2014/stop-nsw-government-s-plans-log-and-graze-parks

DUNPHY'S KOWMUNG ADVENTURE

Join this Historical event which is so important for both Bushwalking and Conservation - for more details see page 4 of this HutNews. Enquiries to: Tara Cameron 0419 824 974 taracameron4@gmail.com or Jim Percy 4758 6009 or jp34@tpg.com.au

Friday, Sep 26

Dunphy Wilderness Walk Launch, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Katoomba, 10am start.

Celebratory Walk, Katoomba to Old Ford Reserve, Megalong (8 km, Grade 3 – maps Katoomba and Hampton). Meet 11.30, BM Cultural Centre. Option to walk back to Katoomba, **OR**

Celebratory function and campfire at Old Ford Reserve, Megalong (map Hampton). From 3 pm. Basic BBQ dinner provided. Be driven back by bus around 10 pm, **OR**

Camp overnight at Old Ford Reserve.

Saturday/Sunday, Sep 27/28

Celebratory Walk, Old Ford Reserve, Six Foot Track, camp at Cox's River (6 km, Grade 2.) Walk back to Katoomba (14 km, Grade 3 – maps Katoomba and Hampton).

Sunday/Monday, Oct 5/6 (Labour Day Long Weekend)

Celebration Camp and dinner at Wooglemai Environmental Education Centre, Sheehys Creek Road, Oakdale (map Burragorang). The last Adventure Team arrives and we celebrate the journey. Camp or stay in a cabin. BYO for BBQ.

Helpers needed

The Society will be helping to set up the area for the campfire and camp at the Old Ford Reserve on **Fri 26 September**. We need volunteers to help put up the stalls and set up the area.

I'd love your help!
Please contact Tara 0419 824 974
taracameron4@gmail.com

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942 email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Jim Percy—phone 4758 6009, email jp34@tpg.com.au Check www.bluemountains.org.au for updates.

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

- Aug 9 **Gardens of Stone.** A short, slow walk, Gr. 3/4 exploratory. 4WDs necessary. Leader Hugh 0423309854 After 7.00pm.
- Aug 16 **Fairy Bower Loop** - Let's explore the remains of the Mt Victoria Chert Road Metal and Timber Company Tramway from bottom to top (some off track)-Leader **Jim** 4758 6009-Meet Mt Vic Station Carpark-8.30am -7Km-Gr3-Map **Mt Wilson**
- Aug 23 **Gardens of Stone.** A short, slow walk, Gr. 3/4 exploratory. 4WDs necessary. Leader **Hugh** 0423309854 after 7.00pm Bookings open 11 Aug
- Aug 30 **Sunnyside Ridge Firetrail No 8-** Leader **Bob** 4757 2694 Meet at Wentworth Falls Stockade Carpark-8.00am-7Km-Gr3 Map Cullen Bullen
- Sept 6 **Lions Head Great views into Kedumba Valley along Lions Head Ridge.** 3rd time lucky?-Leader **Diana** 4751 3935-Meet at W Falls Stockade CP - 9.00am 7Km-Gr3 Map **Jamison**
- Sept 13 **Gardens of Stone.** A short, slow walk, Gr 3/4 exploratory. 4WDs necessary.-Leader **Hugh** 0423309854 After 7.00pm-Bookings open 1st Sept
- Sept 13 **Mt York Historic Walks** - Lockyers to Lawsons Leader-**Warren** 4787 5403. Meet at Mt Vic Stn CP 8.30am Gr3 Maps **Mt Wilson/Hartley**

ADVANCE NOTICE—TO ALL BUSHWALKERS
Sept 26/27/28 and Oct 5/6 Contact Jim and Tara and take part in the Dunphy Kowmung Adventure—see page 11.

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, keithdor53@hotmail.com

- Aug 11 **Red Ledge, Narrow Neck, Katoomba.** Meet Katoomba rail station (north side) 8.30 am. Car pool fare \$5. Mary Read 4739 0786. Grade 2.
- Aug 18 **Pulpit Rock to Govetts Leap and return.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.45 am. Car pool. Leader Tera 4757 2855. Grade 2.
- Aug 25 **Newnes Pipeline Track.** Walk beside the Wolgan River, then a slippery 300m ascent to a lookout with great views, lunch, then return walk. 7km. Map: Mount Morgan & Ben Bullen. Meet Blackheath Station car park 8.45 am. Car pool fare \$7. Leader Meredith 4782 4823. Grade 3.
- Sept 1 **Lapstone to Emu Plains,** down escarpment then along Nepean River to Emu Plains with an optional lunch at O'Donahue's Pub then return to Lapstone by train. Meet Lapstone Rail Station 9.25 am. Leader Ken 0423 450 200. Grade 2.
- Sept 8 **Lost World, Martin's Lookout,** Springwood. Steep climb down and up. Great views. Meet Springwood Station (north side) 9.05 am. Car pool. Leader Francoise Matter 0438 512 301.

Sept 14 and 15 Two walks in the Lane Cove National Park (part of the Great North Walk) and optional stop over at Lane Cove Tourist Park.

Walk 1: Sunday, North Ryde Fairyland Circuit, approx. 7km. Mainly a mix of shaded bushland and open parkland with some road walking.

Walk 2: Monday, Roseville Station and Lane Cove River to Tourist Park, approx. 9 km. From Roseville, through bush to the Lane Cove River. Views of sandstone rock formations, the river and the Blue Hole. Back to North Ryde Station via tourist park.

(For more details contact Judith 4758 6310 or 0419 780 640, judithbushwalker@hotmail.com or go to our website.)

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, roybev12@bigpond.net.au

- Aug 14 **Watsons Bay to South Head and Gap.** Buy fish and chips at Watsons Bay for lunch. Meet top of escalators Central Station 9.30am. Leader Chris 4721 4309. Grade 1
- Aug 21 **Evans Crown Traverse.** Walk up the usual way then descend a short distance and wander through trackless open forest to Split Rock which you can scramble into. Car pool \$5. Lunch at Tarana Pub or bring your own. Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.45am. Leader Phil 4787 5560. Grade 2 to 3
- Aug 28 **Fairy Bower Mount Victoria.** Walk through beautiful forest. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2
- Sept 4 **South Lawson Waterfalls.** Adelina, Junction, Federal and Cataract Falls. 4Km circuit. Take lunch. Meet Honour Ave near highway 8.40am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 2
- Sept 11 **Rigby Hill.** Views of Grose Valley. Car pool \$5. Take lunch. Meet Mount Victoria Station 9.50am. Leader Rosemary 6355 2292. Grade 2.