

# NPA Bulletin



- Forthcoming exhibition of NPA members' photos
- Fire trail damage in Kosciuszko
- Goanna project highlights conservation needs
- Paddling the lower Murray

*conservation education protection*

**June 2021 – Volume 58 – Number 2**

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The **NPA Bulletin** provides the association’s members with news on activities and developments in environmental and heritage conservation, education and protection, particularly as bearing on the Australian Capital Territory and adjacent regions. The *Bulletin*, our association’s signature publication and prime source of information about NPA ACT, will be published quarterly, in print and online, compliant with the NPA’s aims and objectives. It will:

- keep readers informed of NPA Committee and Subcommittee deliberations and decisions, and NPA events such as social gatherings, outings, work parties and research projects,
- provide a forum for members and invited guests to express views on matters of interest and concern to NPA ACT by contributing articles, letters, poetry, photographs and sketches,
- fulfil an educational role on conservation and outdoor recreation issues, and
- accept paid advertising, where appropriate.

The editor of the *Bulletin* is bound to observe the foregoing provisions but has the final decision on the contents of each edition.

**Disclaimer:**  
**Articles by contributors may not necessarily reflect association opinion or objectives**

## Contributions and advertisements

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 September issue is 31 July 2021.

## NPA ACT office

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## Cover photos

Front: *Mount Townsend and Abbott Peak* by Stef De Montis

Back (top): *Camels Hump* by Matthew Sherren.

Back (bottom left): *Gang-gang Cockatoo* by Ewen Lawler, (bottom right): *Surgical quick snack* by Yosri Ben Aicha. All back cover photos were entries in the NPA Photo competition 2020.

## This issue was prepared by

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# From the President

NPA ACT continues to return to more normal operations with General Meetings returning to the O'Connor Uniting Church. We have a line-up of interesting speakers but sadly no supper is allowed. Please consider joining us! Managing Committee meetings are now a mixture of online and face-to-face events. We are pleased to welcome a new treasurer, Jan Gatenby (see p.4), and a new committee member, Stefan De Montis, one of the winners in our 60th Anniversary Photo Competition (see p.10). Thanks to Bernard Morvell for his contribution as treasurer for the last 2 years.

Our offer of Namadgi guided walks for new MLAs has been accepted by the five with whom we met, representing all three parties. Unfortunately, there have been some delays as result of the most recent flooding. We recently took shadow

environment minister Leanne Castley on the Rendezvous Creek track (see p.5) and are in the process of scheduling with four other MLAs.

There have been meetings with Minister Gentleman, Daniel Iglesias (Director of Parks and Conservation) and Brett McNamara (Namadgi Manager) with the common themes being Namadgi recovery and reopening, progress in removal of feral animals and issues related to the Orroral fire. We will continue to press our concerns on these issues with all levels of government and EPSDD.

The Committee has recently supported the proposal for a photo exhibition, for members only (see below). Look for an announcement in the June *Burning Issues*. This will be another opportunity to showcase the wonderful environment surrounding us.



*Esther Gallant*

## NPA photo exhibition – Give us your best shot

A proposal for an exhibition of photographs by NPA members later this year has been endorsed by the Committee.

The aims of the exhibition are to celebrate our natural environment and the work of NPA in the fields of environmental conservation, protection and education through the eyes of our photographers. It is also hoped the exhibition will stimulate community support for our work.

Full details will be announced in June via our website, Facebook and Instagram pages, and our monthly e-newsletter *Burning Issues*.

Members will be invited to submit images from 1 July until 31 August, followed by a poll of members to select the most outstanding photographs.

The images receiving the highest number of votes will be announced and shown at an NPA general meeting later this year.

'Many of our members are talented photographers, as seen from the quality of images in the *Bulletin*, our Facebook and Instagram pages, and in publications such as the Namadgi book,' said President Esther Gallant, who has enthusiastically supported the project.

'This will be a great opportunity for many of our regular photo contributors and new members – especially winners of last year's photography competition, who were given a year's free membership of NPA as part of their prize – to again show their talent.'

*Allan Sharp*

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Thursday 19 August 2021**

Business:

- Minutes of AGM 2020
- President's report
- Financial report and appointment of auditor
- Election of office-bearers and committee
- Any other business

Note: All office-bearer and committee positions become vacant at the AGM.

Nominations for office-bearer and committee positions for the coming year are welcome. Please contact the Secretary on 6251 1291 with nominations.

*Sonja Lenz, Secretary*

*Sculptured rocks, Tinderry Peak. Photo by Philip Gatenby*



# Report from the Environment Subcommittee

While it is great to be back walking in Namadgi National Park, the heavy impact of the Orroral bushfire on the Park's ecology is abundantly clear, with regrowth happening very slowly in some areas.

A key message from recent NPA ACT walks is how vulnerable Namadgi now is to the threats of weeds and feral animals. Deer, pigs and horses can easily damage Namadgi's recovering environment. While the ACT has maintained effective feral horse control in the wild western parts of Namadgi, the NPA is further heartened to see the implementation of new culling programs for deer and pigs in Namadgi's fire-affected areas.

The walks also highlighted the potential for the park's ecology to be significantly changed should the severely burnt areas be subject to further fire pressure. The NPA ACT, in its recent submission on a revised draft of the Regional Fire Management Plan 2019–28 (RFMP), welcomed a proposal to halt, until 2023, all planned hazard-reduction burns (prescribed burns) in the areas affected by the Orroral fire. This is a positive step that, given the devastation from the Orroral fire, will not result in increased fire risk in these areas. The RFMP flags a requirement for further consideration of the need for hazard control burns in the fire-affected areas post 2023.

The NPA ACT's submission on the RFMP stated that the pause in prescribed burns makes up only a minor component of the time required for Namadgi to fully recover and therefore such burns in the bushfire-affected areas post 2023 should proceed only if they contribute to the ecological value of the areas. The NPA noted that the RFMP outlines a number of other techniques for bushfire hazard reduction and these alternatives should be considered before re-introducing fire into the Orroral bushfire area.

The NPA ACT's submission also called for a two-tier approach to fire management in bushland: with 1) smaller, more manageable burns on a local scale, which take into account the nature of the vegetation, topography and weather over the period beyond the actual burn and which leave the canopy intact to prevent weeds and fire-obligate species returning; and 2) more concentrated activities in areas close to key assets.

Another recent submission made by the NPA ACT was in response to Victoria's draft Alpine National Park Feral Horse Action Plan. Feral horses cause significant damage to fragile ecosystems of Australia's High Country and proposed actions in Victoria have the potential to influence feral horse management practices in NSW.

The NPA ACT was pleased to be able to compliment the draft Action Plan on:

- recognising the impact that the rapidly increasing populations of feral horses are having on the Alpine National Park's ecosystems
- prioritising the most humane, safe and effective horse control techniques
- its commitment to ongoing monitoring within the Alpine National Park of the feral horse population and its environmental impacts.

The NPA ACT stated that the Action Plan could be improved by clearly identifying reduction targets and by increasing the initial potential reduction of 500 hundred horses in the eastern alps section of the Alpine National Park.

Copies of the NPA ACT's full submissions can be found on our website.

*Rod Griffiths*



Hospital Hill lookout. Photo by Adam Benfatto

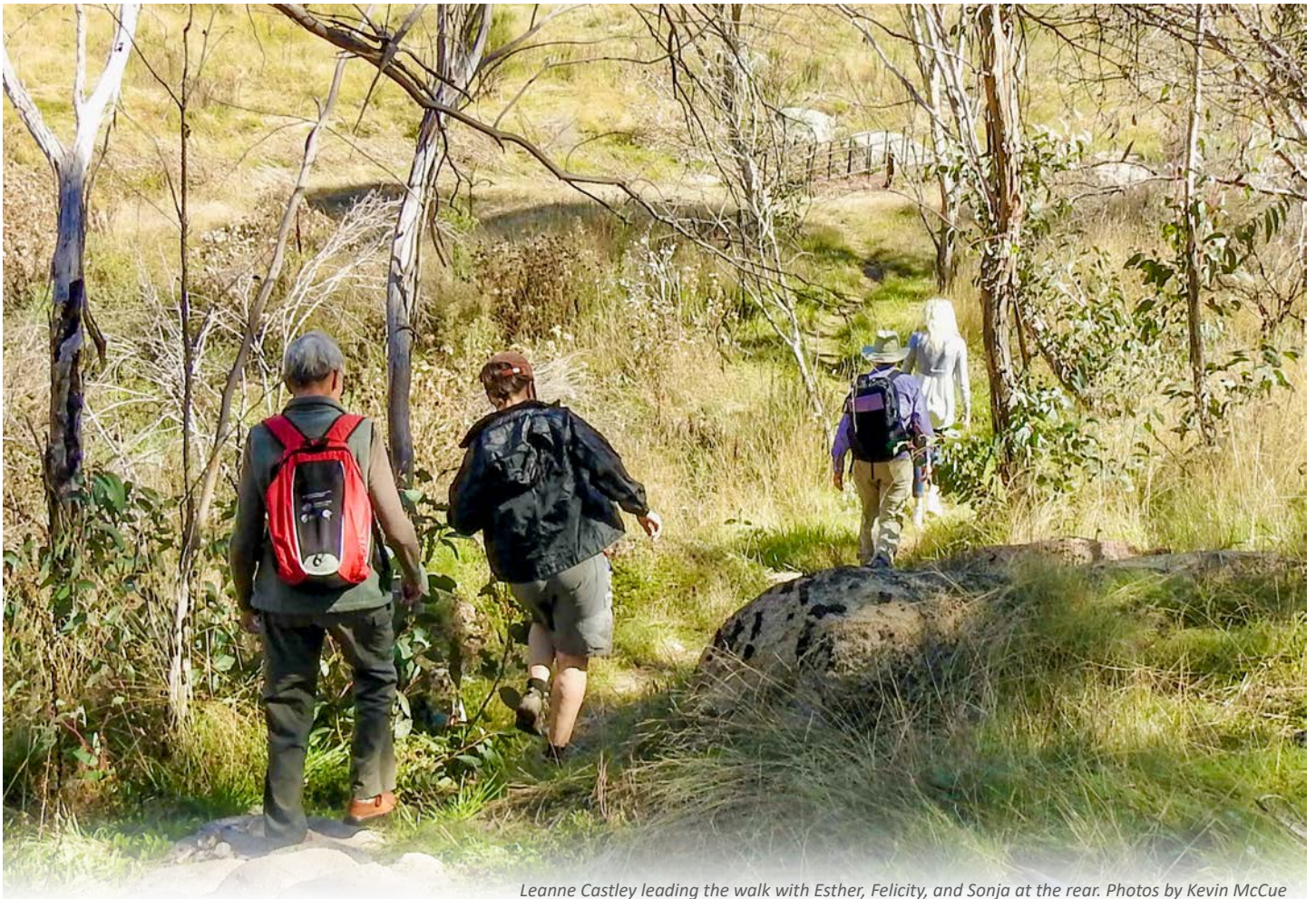
## New treasurer: Jan Gatenby

Jan has been an active member of NPA ACT for many years. She is a keen bushwalker and over the years has undertaken many walks both in Australia and overseas. She has participated in NPA work parties and for the last couple of years has assisted in the NPA office. She has a background in statistics and is not entirely new to the role of NPA treasurer, having done the job for 2 years in the late 1980s. The NPA ACT Committee is extremely pleased to welcome Jan as our new treasurer.

*Esther Gallant*



Jan Gatenby



Leanne Castley leading the walk with Esther, Felicity, and Sonja at the rear. Photos by Kevin McCue

## A walk in Namadgi with local MLA Leanne Castley

The Member for Yerrabi set out at a frenetic pace when we left the Rendezvous Creek car park and I wondered if she could keep it up. Leanne, and her advisor Felicity de Fomebelle, accepted the NPA ACT committee's invitation to participate in a bushwalk in Namadgi National Park on Friday 16 April and five of us rendezvoused at the Namadgi Visitor Centre (NVC) at 11 am.

Our intention initially had been to climb to the Yerrabi Trig but the unpaved section of Boboyan Road to the off-road car park was deemed too rough, so Esther suggested we compromise and stay on the bitumen. The weather was perfect, a Canberra-blue sky, no wind and about 18°C. We had a quick tour of NVC. Esther travelled with Leanne and Felicity in their car as navigator so had plenty of conversational time about ACT politics and the environmental policies of the various parties and we were soon at the car park.

We were pleased that they both expressed their opposition to commercial developments in the park and supported lowering the speed limit to something like 80 km/hour on Boboyan Road through Namadgi. We didn't bring up the vexed problem of dealing with feral horses in the national park – perhaps next time. Leanne is also committed to restoring the tree canopy cover in Canberra and she will have a lot of support on that issue.

The pace set by Leanne didn't slacken: they had another appointment at 1:30 pm in Canberra and we had to cut short our morning tea, coffee and slices (thanks Deidre) before they left NVC somewhat after our target of 1 pm.

The exercise was useful from all vantages: they had never been to the NVC, nor walked in Namadgi to appreciate its beauty and challenges. It was a good exercise for us to tell

them about NPA and our various activities, including our hot citizen-science project on Rosenberg's Goanna. We all admired the work done by Parks ACT to re-establish the walking track after the destructive bushfires and the flooding rain: massive stone steps replaced the burnt logs and one of the two bridges across Rendezvous Creek had been restored.

They have a copy of our Namadgi book. All new MLAs who met with us were presented with a copy after the last election. I am sure this first tentative meeting with the opposition spokesperson on the environment will not be our last and we wish them good luck in formulating policies on climate change and the way forward for our national park.

Kevin McCue

Esther Gallant, advisor Felicity de Fomebelle,  
Leanne Castley and Sonja Lenz at the start of the walk





David Campbell, on the Lone Pine FT in spring 2002. This old-growth forest is now lost. Photos by Di Thompson

## Concerns over fire trail damage from the 2019–20 fires in KNP

In March 2021, Esther Gallant and I trudged up the Lone Pine Fire Trail (FT) from the Yaouk Valley to seek a camping site below Mount Morgan. It was almost 20 years since my last visit to the area: how things had changed. Wildfires in 2003 and 2019–20 and the overzealous use of heavy machinery on the trail had intervened.

The issue that confronted us was the state of the Lone Pine FT and the very large-scale clearing that had affected it during the 2019–20 summer of fires. Since our walk, several other bushwalkers have reported excessive fire trail work elsewhere, both completed and ongoing. These include many inappropriate effects of large machinery on the Snowy Plain, Teddys Creek, Gavels Hut, Circuits Hut, Leura Gap and Farm Ridge FTs. Unfortunately, it is expected that similar damage has occurred and remains unrehabilitated across many of the recently fire damaged natural areas elsewhere in NSW.

These discoveries were made at a time when various reviews are being undertaken by NPWS on the condition of Kosciuszko National Park

(KNP). What is already known from the effects of feral horses, deer, other pests and weeds, mountain biking, tourism, recreational pressures and Snowy 2.0 paints a picture of a park under duress. We now have serious questions with respect to fire management in KNP. For the Lone Pine FT these include:

- Why was a swathe up to 50 metres wide cleared each side of the Lone Pine FT for the 2019–20 wildfire?
- Under whose authority was this large-scale clearing made – NPWS, Rural Fire Service?
- The significant clearing did not stop the wildfire, despite the bulldozing and loss of so many old-growth trees. Had these trees been left in situ, many (excluding the Alpine Ash) would now be showing signs of epicormic growth and recovery, particularly given the rains of 2020.
- Why hasn't there been better rehabilitation carried out on FTs following the 2019–20 fires?

A further issue arose as Esther and I made our way from the Lone Pine FT, across the swamp towards Mount Morgan. We discovered that the 'hard to find' footpad had become another bulldozed fire trail. In the end we camped on it near water.

Through my membership of the Monaro Bushfire Management Committee and the Southern Ranges Region Advisory Committee, I initiated a number of official discussions and made presentations on the damage to both committees. In the meantime, the debate has spread to bushwalkers, former NPWS staff, NPA NSW and to Dr Evelyn Chia the Nature Conservation Council (NCC) Bushfire Program Co-ordinator.

Those discussions included, in summary, the following points:

- It has become difficult to obtain dozers and graders with operators who know how to work in the bush on fires. Twenty years ago there were large numbers of dozers and operators working in forests in the logging industry, but this has all changed. Last summer, large dozers, too big for the job, were being driven by operators from mines and quarries who had little or no bush experience. This problem is likely to get worse.



Camp on the new Mount Morgan FT, March 2021

- It was a common practice in the past that a good grader operator could peel back the grass and put it to the edge, and after the fire has run along, peel this material back. This is uncommon now.
- Ideally, if plant is used in a protected area it should be accompanied by an NPWS plant supervisor. It has to be said that this didn't occur with some four-lane FTs on steep slopes in Namadgi that I saw as a Board member after the 2003 fires.
- If plant use had been well managed there are claims that the plant bill and the rehabilitation costs would have been significantly lower.
- NCC queried whether NPWS and the RFS had adhered to the guidelines in the [Kosciuszko National Park Fire Management Strategy](#) (e.g. pp 103–104 Guidelines for Control Lines, Earthmoving Machinery and Post Fire Rehabilitation).
- Currently NPWS needs to find the funds for rehabilitation of existing fire trails damaged during suppression operations. It would be helpful if this could be reversed and for NSW Treasury to pay in the long-term.



*A wide swathe has been cleared either side of the Lone Pine FT*

I'm happy to report that some positive actions are now occurring on the Lone Pine FT:

- it is proposed to disperse the windrows
- weed spraying along the side of the FT was observed by a NPA bushwalker and committee member
- a track care group has been formed, through NPWS, to work on the track to Mount Morgan, including we hope some rehabilitation of the new fire trail below the mountain.

Ongoing immediate concerns are:

- FT work and hazard reduction (HR) burns in Merriangaah Nature Reserve (which is north-west of Bombala). This reserve hasn't burned in more than 100 years. The HR burn is likely to change the vegetation mix and increase the fire frequency of the area, adding to the risk of losing the reserve's heritage dog-leg fences.
- The once difficult to find Farm Ridge Track, which was often just a footpad, is in the process of being converted to a major graded FT.
- The loss of the remnant refugia following the 2019–20 fires.

Unfortunately, despite the vigilance and advocacy of individuals, the NPAs and the NCC, real change is likely to be difficult under the current NSW Liberal–National Party Government.

*Di Thompson*



*Windrows, which framed most of the Lone Pine FT prior to the 2019–20 fire, were according to firefighters almost impossible to back-burn through*

Some of the responses included:

- The Manager, Monaro District, NSW RFS, spoke at length with me, and also put in writing the formalities of such works. *The work on Lone Pine Fire trail was authorised under an Incident Action Plan developed by a multi-agency Incident Management Team and coordinated with Riverina Highlands (Tumut) Incident Management Team. This work was supervised by a Divisional Commander and conducted in consultation with NPWS.*
- *The objectives on Lone Pine Fire Trail were twofold and consistent between Snowy Monaro and Riverina Highlands Incident Management Teams. In the first instance, Lone Pine Fire Trail was identified as a fall back line to prevent the Dunns Road fire and then the Marys Hill fire entering the ACT. The second instance was to contain the Orroral Valley Fire (ACT) and prevent further spread into private land and northern areas of Kosciuszko National Park in Snowy Monaro LGA. Firefighters achieved this second objective on Lone Pine Fire Trail.*



*The 2020 fire burnt both sides of the Lone Pine FT, so was not impeded by heavy machinery clearing intervention*



Work party participants. Photos by Isobel Crawford unless indicated otherwise

## GBRG work party report *False Acacia control*

**Date:** 10 April 2021

*Readers may recall Isobel's article in the June 2020 Bulletin on the infestation of False Acacia at Frank and Jacks Hut. Well, something's been done about it.*

The Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group worked at Frank and Jacks Hut on two tasks, the removal of all but four stems of the False Acacia thicket at the sheep dip, and the cutting and dabbing of Sweet Briar and other woody weeds, mainly north of the Hut.

Although False Acacia is categorised in the ACT as an environmental weed and a prohibited pest plant, ACT Heritage has directed that a few stems be retained because of its role as cultural heritage. It was planted near the sheep dip probably to provide shade (for the workers, not the sheep). The original (?) two stems were cut decades ago, and the rotting trunks to c. 40 cm diameter are still visible. Since then, three or four younger suckers to 20 cm diameter have grown and have also been removed.



False Acacia at Frank and Jacks Hut, April 2020. Photo by John Brickhill



Stump of one of the original False Acacia

Ranger Adam Henderson assisted greatly by chainsawing about 80 larger suckers which have grown from the suckers that grew from the original planting, and Kevin, John and Brian dabbed the cut stems, and removed the material.

After lunch, the whole group cut and dabbed the remaining c. 70 smaller suckers, and carefully uncovered the dip and

its concrete surround. A carefully shaped drain on the northern edge of the concrete at the southern end of the dip was uncovered. It would have directed dripping fluid from the yarded sheep back into the dip. At the southern end of the dip, one post remains: it could have supported a gate used to direct sheep into one of two yards after dipping.



Sheep dip uncovered



A fine array of hats was recorded among the large group of Gudgenby Bushies who contributed a good day's work.

We shall have to return annually and cut and dab all new suckers, as the normal reaction of this species to cutting is to sucker vigorously. Seed was collected from some of the four stems retained, to see if it is viable. Until now, there appear to be no confirmed records of False Acacia growing from seed locally, but this could change as the climate warms and dries.

Ranger Adam with Kevin, John and Brian

Isobel Crawford



# Cynthia Breheny's stunning triptych 'puts paid' to feral horses

At the end of the first COVID-19 year (December 2020), Gary and I visited Canberra's Institute of Technology (CIT) exhibition of students' major artworks. We were there to see a poster created by Cynthia Breheny with a special environmental message. Cynthia's acrylic and collage triptych was the stand-out exhibit, and it and Cynthia stood at the entrance to greet us. Her artwork is stunning. It graphically depicts in three large panels the current feral horse saga in Kosciuszko National Park. From left to right, darkness to light, images reflect the progression from damage, to aerial culling to, finally, recovery of the natural landscape.

Cynthia is keen for the poster to be used to protect the environment and has constructed it in such a manner that it is easily portable in an ordinary sedan.

*Di Thompson*



*Di Thompson and Cynthia Breheny with the Feral Horse Poster at the CIT, December 2020. Photo provided by Di*

Triptych text below:

## Feral horses are trampling our mountains

The first explorers, squatters and stockmen came to the Snowy Mountains in the 1830s. On discovering the lush mountain pastures, they established small huts for themselves and their stockmen. By the 1860s, homesteads were being built. By 1890 a great number of horses were to be found all over the ranges. Hay was grown for horse feed as horses were vital in stockwork, horses carried supplies and provided the power for cropping and ploughing paddocks. Horse riding was an intrinsic part of high-country living.

The feral horses, also known as brumbies, are escapees and descendants of escapees from rural properties. Brumbies were viewed by many as a pest and were being chased as early as the 1870s. From the 1920s to the 1950s brumby running and catching was a recreational activity. Feral horses were chased by horsemen who sometimes tied them to trees, never to release them. Often they were herded into small trapyards or salt yards, and being crowded into small areas, injured each other. Later in the twentieth century, cruelty to these horses was forbidden. Since then, some have been trapped and a small number re-homed but if not culled, horses will double in number every 4 years. The 2019 population estimate in Kosciuszko National Park was 19,000 feral horses.

## Feral horses must be eradicated from national parks

Horses like to be where there is moisture. Habitat damage in streams, wetlands and adjacent riparian systems occurs through selective grazing, trampling, track creation, pugging (soil compaction), wallowing, and dust bathing leading to stream bank slumping, erosion and straightening. The sponge effect of the mosses and sphagnum bogs is being destroyed so moisture is not being retained as long, so there is less water in the creeks in summer. Water courses are being polluted so that water is non-potable.

If destruction of this kind were being perpetrated on farms, farmers would be considered absolutely negligent. The Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 was passed to protect feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park but feral animals must be eradicated from national parks. In February 2020 it was determined that 4,000 feral horses should be removed from certain badly burnt areas. Horses are being trapped and transported for slaughter which causes much more suffering than shooting and is ineffective because it cannot keep up with the rate of increase. Horse numbers have still increased. The RSPCA supports professionally managed aerial culling of feral horses as the most humane and effective method of control but it is not allowed by the NSW Government.

## Restore our alpine environment and our pure drinking water

If feral horses were eradicated from Kosciuszko National Park right now, the habitat may be restorable in more than 70 years. Refurbishment of the alpine wetlands may save native animals like the Corroboree Frog and the Broad Toothed Rat from extinction and kangaroos numbers to be restored. Feral horses are not protected in national parks in the ACT.

In 2016, 42 eminent scientists involved in alpine research and conservation decision making wrote the Australian Ecologists' Letter to the NSW Premier in support of effective feral horse control, including the recommendation to implement aerial culling.

**We need to ensure protection of our natural environment, our farm and hydro-electric dams and especially of our drinking water.**

# NPA people

## Relentless bushwalker inspired by Namadgi campaign

*New NPA Committee member Stef De Montis tells Allan Sharp how his passion for bushwalking and the High Country led him to NPA ACT.*

After doing his first solo overnight bushwalking trip to Bungonia Gorge and camping by the Shoalhaven River when he was 18, Stef De Montis knew he was hooked.



Stef De Montis

Now aged 32, as a bushwalker Stef describes himself as 'relentless', spending about 70 nights a year in the bush.

'I continue to be captivated by the outdoors, especially the High Country, and I explore it at every opportunity,' he said.

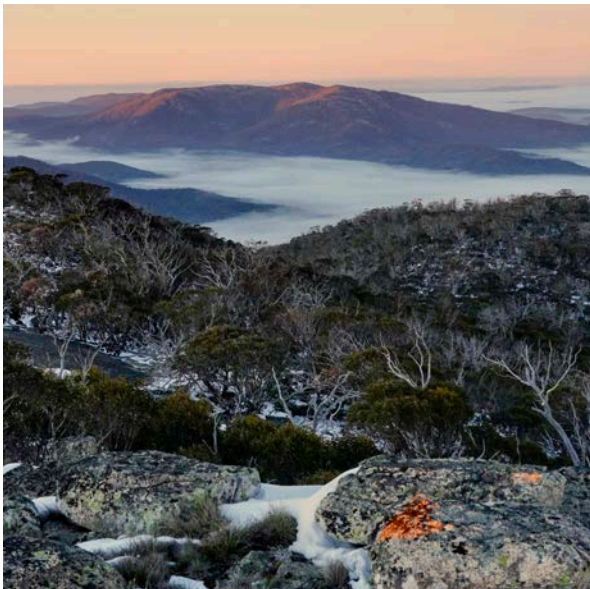
'Most of my interests revolve around the outdoors. I'm a runner, cyclist, and skier but bushwalking is without doubt my number one passion in life.'

As a way of documenting his trips, Stef took up photography and his skills with the camera won him first prize in the landscape category of last year's NPA ACT environmental photography competition. His involvement in the competition finally led to him joining the NPA, and recently the association's committee.

'I first heard about the NPA years ago when I was delving into the history of Namadgi,' he said. 'The story of the NPA's campaign to have the area gazetted as a national park is impressive and inspiring.'

'It seemed every time I googled anything to do with Namadgi or Kosciuszko an *NPA Bulletin* would come up in the search results.'

Yaouk Bill from Mount Scabby



*This has led me down the dark and murky path of ultralight hiking, which is the concept of bringing only what you need and nothing more*

I still pore over those old bulletins. They're an amazing resource.

'Spending as much time as I do outside, I've seen the landscape change for the worse in recent years. The impact on the environment from feral horses, commercial interests, bushfires, increased visitor numbers, ease in accessing GPS data, and projects like Snowy 2.0 have all conspired to put immense strain on those beautiful places. Joining the NPA was the next step, and hopefully a way for me to give back.'

Stef's love of bushwalking eventually led him toward an interest in both the Indigenous and early European history of the High Country.

'I always seem to finish a trip wondering about the huts, sites, place names, rock arrangements, scatters, and overhangs I came across. I spend hours researching after most of my adventures trying to understand what I have seen.'

Another offshoot of his love of bushwalking has been Stef's pursuit of being as unencumbered by his bushwalking gear as possible.

'This has led me down the dark and murky path of ultralight hiking, which is the concept of bringing only what you need and nothing more. I now help run two major online ultralight hiking forums where people share tips, tricks and ideas about cutting weight in their packs for multi-day trips.'

As a new member, Stef says he is most interested in the NPA's advocacy and lobbying work to protect wild places.

'I'd also love to lead some bushwalking trips for the NPA soon. I've been leading trips for years through the ANU Mountaineering Club and always found it a great way to meet like-minded people,' he said.

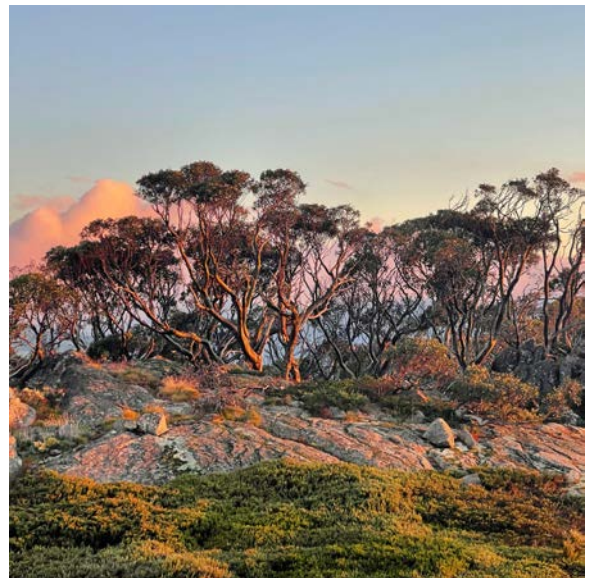
Stef believes the NPA is taking all the right steps in trying to attract younger members who will be the future of the organisation and has some ideas of his own. 'The photography competition and our ever-growing online presence are two great examples of this,' he said.

'One thing many young people are missing in our modern world is a sense of community. Once people start building friendships within an organisation their ability to maintain their commitment to the other causes will flow on naturally. More social events aimed at younger people and run by younger people would be a good start.'

'An informal mentorship program could be another way forward. Having a more experienced member of the NPA guiding and encouraging a new member would certainly give that new member a sense of ownership and make them feel welcome.'

'For my part, I hope my passion for keeping our national parks wild and as free from negative human impact as possible will enable me to get involved in an assortment of NPA projects.'

'Put me to work!'



Snow Gums above Charlotte Pass. Photos by Stef De Montis

Allan Sharp

# A willing hand finds a welcome

Like so many Australians, I was appalled by the terrible damage of the 'Black Summer' fires in 2019–20. Having recently moved into 'semi-retirement', I had both the desire and the time to personally do something positive - however modest - in the face of all that destruction. The physical damage to the many fragile ecosystems up and down the eastern seaboard of Australia was matched by the psychic scarring so many of us felt, even if we were 'only' exposed to the dreadful weeks of smoke that meant we were literally breathing in the destroyed bush all around us. As a Canberran, I have a great love of Namadgi National Park and I wanted to do what I could to help the long struggle for the park to recover from the fires. I contacted the ACT Parks Service and they pointed me to the NPA ACT.

I was impressed by the friendly and prompt response to my query about how to help in the wake of the fires, and by the quality of the group's communications through its website, learning much about all the ways members can be engaged with the wonderful natural world around Canberra. After my wife (Marie-Louise Ayres) and I joined, I signed up for the first of several work parties into Namadgi and elsewhere, to help with things like removing old barbed wire fences, weed removal and ecosystem protection for fragile wetlands. The work has not been easy, but nor is it so onerous as to be discouraging. On the contrary, there is great satisfaction to be had from having a crack at activities I have never done before.

On joining NPA ACT, I had hoped to have the satisfaction of making a practical contribution (which I got in spades on the work parties); what I had not really anticipated was the wonderful people I would be working with. I am not well informed on matters such as flora and

fauna species and I am not experienced in seeing an ecosystem, but the generosity and expertise of the professional rangers we have worked with has only been matched by the good humour and knowledge of the long-term work party volunteers. I can certainly say that while it was my concern about the environment that brought me to the NPA ACT and the work parties, it is the people and sheer fun of the experience that keeps me coming back.

Right now, I have to take a bit of time off to recover from surgery, but as soon as that is done, I will be donning my gloves and gaiters, and going back out to see and feel the bushland that needs our care, and to catch up with the other volunteers who do so much for the country around our city.

*Russ Ayres*



*Planting for the future*



*Snowy Flat, what better place to take a break and have a chat? Photo by Russ Ayres*

# Soaked to the skin

'Soaked to the skin' seemed to be a badge of honour and that was how mountaineers were supposed to be. Looking back I wonder how a lot more people didn't die of hypothermia. I suppose we were all young and fit and resilient.

The word 'ventile' comes into my head. It was the material from which the best anoraks were made. Anoraks were windproof, not waterproof, and it was accepted as the clothing technology of the 1950s. It rained hard in the Welsh mountains, and you got wet early in the day, and stayed wet. I suppose that if you kept moving you didn't get too cold.

Before leaving the UK for Melbourne I bought a top quality anorak. Which I never wore because Aussie bushwalkers and Kiwi trampers used oiled japara parkas. I was told it was important to keep the kidneys warm and dry. So that's what I wore for many years in the high rainfall areas of Tassie and NZ. I'm not sure that oiled japara was totally

effective rainwear, but I loved its smell: pungent, homely, comforting. Goretex came in, was it in the '80s or '90s? More effective but rather bland. But then, for me the heroic days in the high mountains were over. Just an occasional adventure, escaping from work and family.

*I store*

*the lashing rain*

*in my memory*

*I hear the river*

*Gerry Jacobson*

# Rosenberg's Project update

The Rosenberg's Goanna Project is in its fourth year. In this time a dedicated band of NPA members, including six who started as student volunteers from the University of Canberra, have spent many hours in the Naas Valley to the south of Canberra, capturing, microchipping and tracking goannas, and counting and mapping termite mounds, under the watchful eye of Don Fletcher. This work has often been done in trying circumstances brought on by the vagaries of the weather, the rough terrain of the research site and drought, bushfire and flood.

At the NPA's April general meeting Don outlined the main findings of the project so far and where it is planned to go from now. The findings of the project cover both the interaction between goannas and termite mounds and other aspects of goanna behaviour. Don also reported on recent fieldwork conducted on Mount Ainslie.

There are about 60 goanna species worldwide and half of them are found in Australia. The rest are mostly in South-east Asia. They range in size from the massive Komodo Dragon (which can grow to 3 m and weigh up to 70 kg) to the diminutive Dampier Peninsula monitor (*Varanus sparnus*), which grows to about 23 cm and weighs in at just over 16 g. Two species are found in the ACT: the Tree Goanna or Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*) which is now very rare in the territory but common throughout much of south-eastern Australia, and Rosenberg's Goanna (RG) (*Varanus rosenbergi*). Superficially, both goannas are similar and have been regarded as separate species only since 1988. The Tree Goanna has a broadly banded tail and face and RG has narrow bands all over.



A hatchling. Photo by Matthew Higgins

north). Unlike altitude, for slope and aspect there was not much difference between species, except perhaps *Coptotermes* favouring a more north-westerly aspect and *Nasutitermes* more northerly. There is also a suggestion that *Nasutitermes* extends on to steeper ground (see charts opposite). Of course, these findings may simply reflect differences in aspect and slope available at the altitudes favoured by each species. Future analysis will look into that. Also, the fieldwork was mainly focussed on *Nasutitermes* and the counts did not go high enough to establish the upper altitudinal limit of *Coptotermes*.

The relationship between location and altitude means that *Nasutitermes* mounds are limited to the northern 6 km of the 25 km long research site. It was also found that both kinds of termite mound are readily killed by intense fire, suggesting fire history may be another factor determining the density and distribution of termite mounds in woodland areas.

In view of the dependence of RG on *Nasutitermes* for breeding, and the restricted distribution of these termites in the Naas Valley, it is intriguing that RGs occupy the entire research site, from the park entrance near Caloola Farm, upstream to near the Mount Clear Campground. RGs are abundant as much as 20 km further up the valley than the termite

Adult visitor to mound. Wildlife camera photo



Crossing the Naas on the way to the research site. Photo by Jan Gatenby

## Termite findings

Rosenberg's Goanna is one of several goanna species in Australia that lay their eggs in termite mounds. Others include the Tree Goanna and the Yellow-spotted Goanna in northern Australia. Of the two types of mounds available in the Naas Valley, RGs use only the mounds of the Gluegun Termite (*Nasutitermes exitiosus*) as incubators. The mounds of this termite are softer, easier to dig into and less cold tolerant than those of the Milk Termite (*Coptotermes lacteus*), the other mound-building termite species to inhabit the research site.

The participation of many NPA members (and future members) in 'termite sweep counts' last winter enabled the location of over 300 termite mounds to be recorded. This showed that while the mounds of both termite species are confined to sunny northerly aspects, *Nasutitermes* mounds are found at elevations between 700 m and 900 m and *Coptotermes* are found mainly over 1,000 m. In further analysis of termite mound data, Ewen Lawler used the 1m ACT Digital Elevation Model to look at mound type in relation to slope (steepness of the ground on which the mounds were found) and aspect (the direction of the slope in relation to

mounds, an anomaly partly explained by results of the movement study mentioned later. This new finding has several conservation implications. For example, current environmental impact survey guidelines in NSW do not recognise the possibility that RGs occur away from *Nasutitermes* mounds.

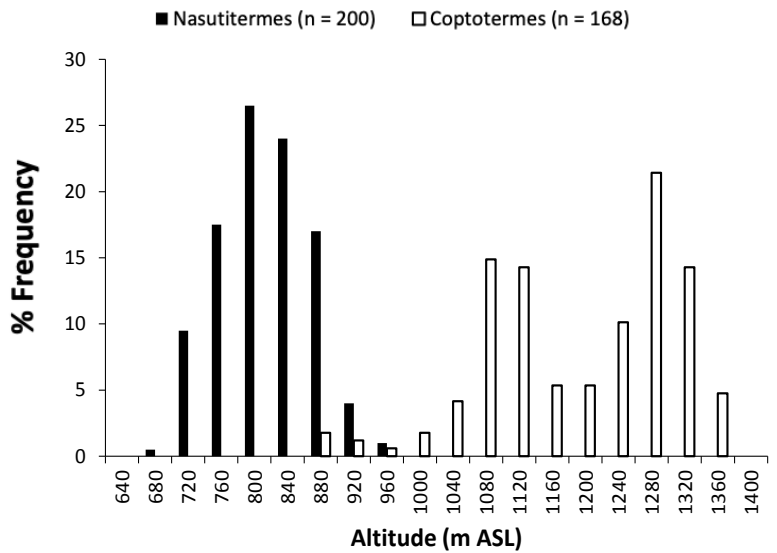
Termite mounds can last for many years, so the locations of mounds laboriously mapped last winter are a future research resource. The first attempt to use this information took place almost immediately. Seven hatchling patrols were walked every week, checking almost all of the termite mounds for 'hatchling exit holes'. When such were found, wildlife cameras were positioned over these mounds in an attempt to count the clutch size in each mound and to record visits by adult goannas and hatchling predators, such as kookaburras. Counting hatchlings proved more difficult than expected and a quick first scan of the photos revealed no predation event, but there were numerous visits by adult goannas. It was also found that hatchlings come and go at night as well as in daytime, which has implications for trapping hatchlings to collect DNA samples.

### Movement and habitat use

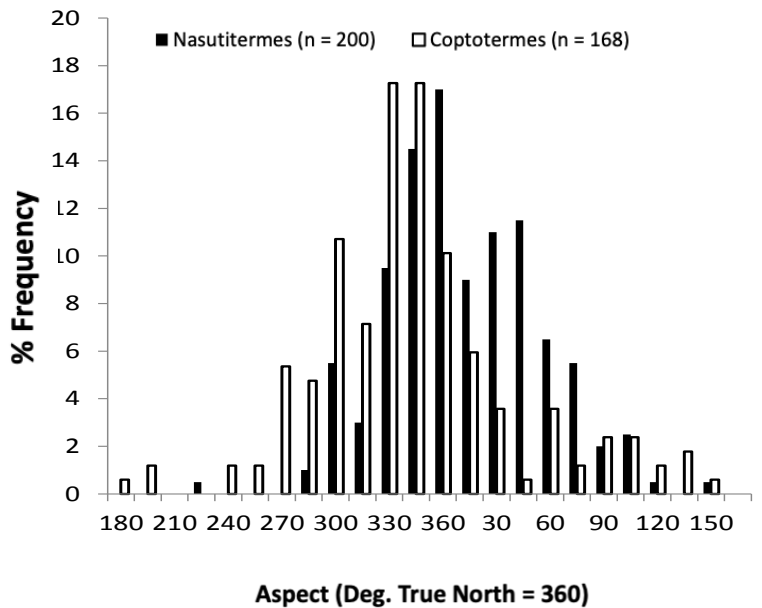
The movements study has involved trapping a number of goannas, recording their vitals, fitting them with a tracking device and then tracking their movements during the active half of the year. Many more males were trapped than females (which have proved more wary and harder to trap and thus harder to study), so any comparisons between males and females need to bear this discrepancy in mind. Male goannas in the study were found to be on average 2.5 times heavier than females and their home range was 5 to 10 times bigger than that of females. For males it was possible to identify primary and secondary home ranges. Not all males migrated to a secondary home range but those that did seemed to do so at mating time. For some, distances covered were substantial. Two individuals migrated east across the Clear Range from home ranges on Naas Creek to secondary ranges on the Murrumbidgee River in NSW. The movements of one of these goannas over 2 years is shown in the map (p.14). Others migrated north into the lower Naas Valley.

Key findings are:

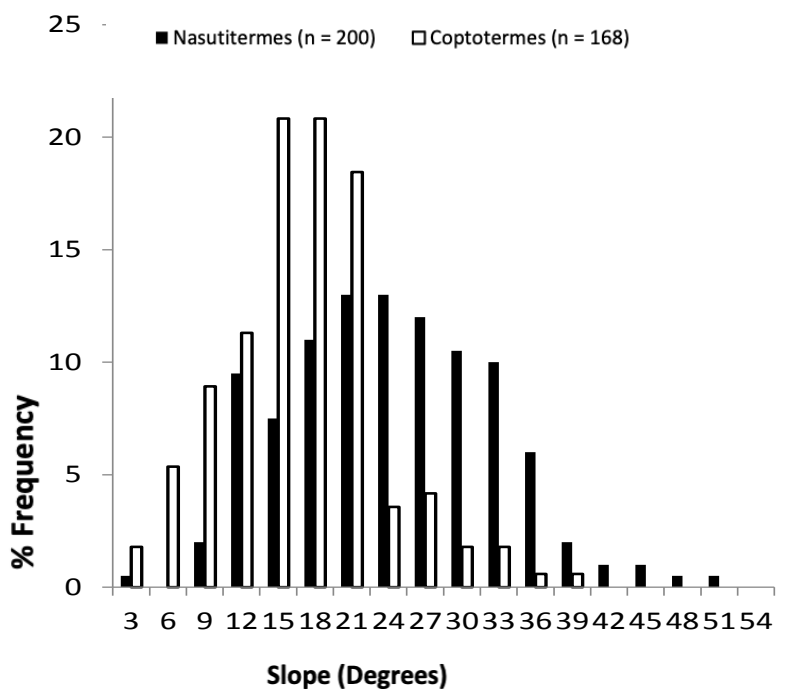
- RGs have home ranges that are consistent within and between years – there is no evidence of 'transitory' animals.
- Some males living outside the distribution of *Nasutitermes exitiosus* make long-range return movements in early summer.
- The long-range movements are direct, with little sign of exploring, or delay. They are sometimes repeated roughly along the same route, crossing obstacles such as mountain ranges at the same place. The purpose of the movements is unexplained but the possibility that these males are moving closer to areas of *Nasutitermes* mounds at mating time, perhaps where receptive females are more likely to be encountered, cannot be ruled out.
- Many, if not all, RGs move to higher ground and rocky, north-facing slopes, in autumn. This may be to access winter burrows in areas with low tree canopy where solar radiation is high.



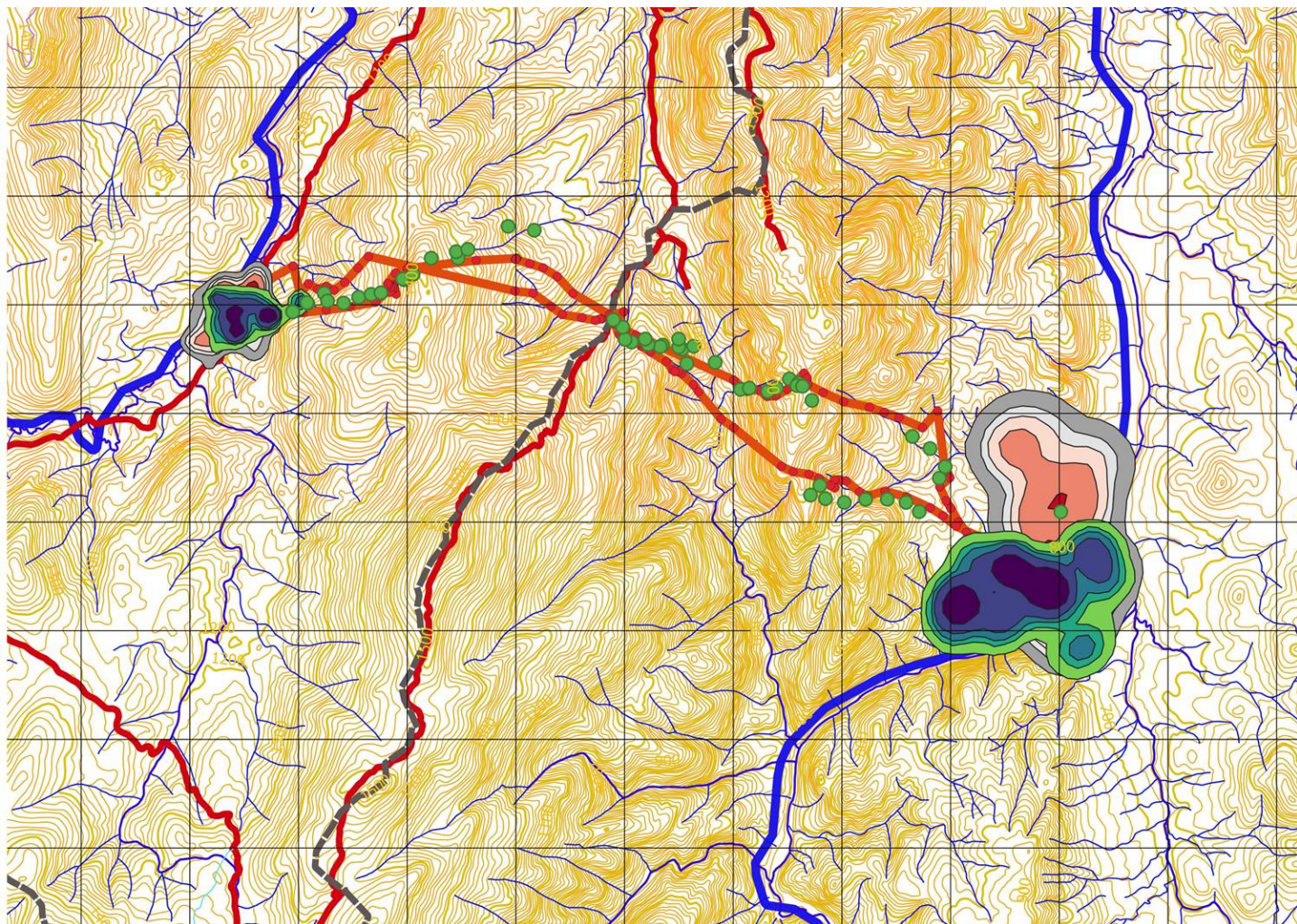
Termite mound distribution by altitude



Termite mound distribution by aspect



Termite mound distribution by slope



RG movements. The primary home range in 2019-20 (red-grey shades) and 2020-21 (blue-green shades) is on the left (Naas Creek). The red line (2019-20) and green dots (2020-21) show return journeys across the Clear Range to the secondary home range (Murrumbidgee River)

### Burrows

We have classified three overlapping types of burrows:

- bolt holes providing shallow temporary refuges from the researcher
- night burrows used in summer
- winter burrows used in winter, for much of which the goanna is brumating.

A few burrows have been excavated. All goanna burrows have a single entrance but some have a number of internal branches and multiple terminal chambers. The longest was 4.8 m deep with a tunnel length (counting all branches) of 6.5 m. That size contrasts with Kangaroo Island, where burrows are 0.75 to 1.0 m in length.

Parks and Conservation has been provided with a report/manual to help reduce the risk to RGs from rabbit warren control activities.

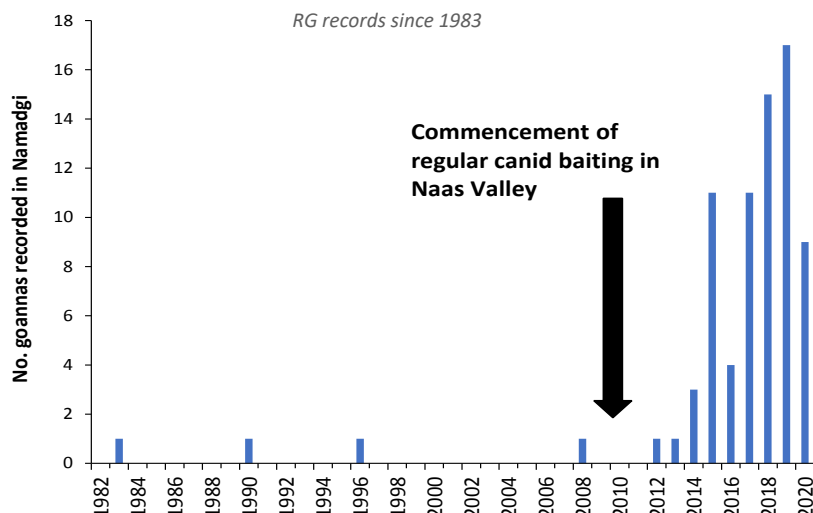
### Mount Ainslie

Over a 4-week period earlier this year 20 baited camera traps were maintained on Mount Ainslie. Three individual RGs were photographed but none was resighted. Therefore an abundance estimate using mark-resight calculations was not possible. It seems that Ainslie-Majura is the only part of Canberra Nature Park (CNP) where Rosenberg’s are still found. Without a change in CNP management and in the behaviour of people who use these reserves, RGs will likely disappear entirely from CNP as has happened with Tree Goannas.

### Implications for conservation

The findings of the research thus far have a number of implications for the conservation of RGs in the ACT and elsewhere. They include the need for multiple populations as an insurance against the species’ disappearance from any particular location.

Goannas naturally produce numerous offspring, few of which survive, but adults are long-lived. Conservation efforts should therefore focus mainly on protecting adult goannas rather than juveniles. Birds, which probably take most of the young, are thus usually of little concern. However, maintaining low abundance of canids (fox and dog) seems to be important for goanna populations to persist. The number of records of RGs in Namadgi increased significantly following the introduction of regular





Quentin installing a wildlife camera. Photo by Lois Padgham

Below: Evelyn radio tracking a goanna. Photo by Kevin McCue



dingo and fox baiting in the Naas Valley. Fox control has repeatedly been shown to increase numbers of inland goanna species. The same probably applies to dingoes but this has yet to be established. Domestic dogs too are well known as a threat to goannas. On Mount Ainslie dogs must be kept on a leash, yet unleashed dogs were photographed at 40 per cent of camera sites. No leashed dog reached any camera site.

Given the distances over which RGs can migrate, for a reserve to be viable for conservation of the species it may require a minimum size as well as the presence of sufficient resources, including food, members of the opposite sex, and *Nasutitermes* mounds. In an urban setting the proximity of arterial roads will be one of the factors determining the minimum viable size of a reserve. For example, Black Mountain Nature Reserve, with high speed roads on most of its perimeter, is probably too small, whereas a similar size area within Ainslie–Majura, where arterial roads are further away, may be viable.

### Next steps

The movements study has uncovered valuable information but still has a yawning gap – the females. We still do not have data for more than one female, for most of an active season. Finding ways to overcome this is important.

A viable method for estimating RG population size has yet to be demonstrated, such as mark–resight survey with camera traps and use of facial recognition. Several problems with the method have been solved, and we now probably have a system that will work in the abundant population at Naas, but which has yet to be demonstrated.

The Mount Ainslie experience, however, shows that more investigation is needed to develop a viable method for low-density populations.

To what extent are burrows reused, within and between years? Are the winter burrows a significant long-term resource or easily replaceable?

What is the status of RG in parts of the ACT where it was recorded in recent decades, such as the reserves along the Murrumbidgee River?

Questions of interest that we will be seeking to answer relating to the nests in termite mounds:

- Are the goannas selecting certain mounds, e.g. mid-size ones?
- How effective are termites in resisting the goannas' use of the mound by blocking the hatchling exit hole?
- Is there more effective resistance from larger mounds?
- Are most of the adult visits to nests by the parents?
- What is the loss rate of hatchlings, and the causes?

*Philip Gatenby and Don Fletcher*

### What's in a name?

The specific name *rosenbergi* commemorates Hermann von Rosenberg (7 April 1817 – 15 November 1888), a German naturalist born in Darmstadt.

From 1839, Rosenberg spent 30 years of his life working in the Dutch East Indies and published books and articles concerning his work there. They covered the geography, zoology, linguistics and ethnography of the islands, though his main interest was in ornithology.

In his book *The Malay Archipelago*, renowned biogeographer Alfred Russel Wallace named Rosenberg as an 'old friend' who, among other things, gave him support on behalf of the Dutch Government.

Source: Wikipedia

*Ed Highley*

# NPA outings program

**Bushwalk grading guide**      **June – September 2021**



## 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
- B Open forest
- C Light scrub
- D Patches of thick scrub, regrowth
- E Rock scrambling
- F Exploratory

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

## Transport

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

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

## Points to note:

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

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 2021 (page 2 of 4)

<p><b>6 June</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>The Pimple and Tidbinbilla Mountain</b> A great walk without too much scrub. Ascend the long and steep ridge to Snowy Corner, then to Tidbinbilla Mountain and down to The Pimple. Return will be either along the ridge to the Camels Hump Track or back the way we came. Gaiters and gloves recommended for parts of the walk. About 13 km and 1,000 m climb. Please register by 5 pm Friday 4 June. Limit of 10.</p>	<p>Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/C/D/E Leader: Barrie Ridgway Contact: 0437 023 140 or <a href="mailto:brdr001@bigpond.net.au">brdr001@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>12 June</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Condition Assessment of Eleanor's Grove near Hospital Creek. 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>14 June</b> Monday holiday walk</p> 	<p><b>Snowy Plain</b> Depart 7:30 am. Drive via Cooma to Nimmo Hill and follow track south, park at CSIRO Hut. Walk south, cross Gungarlin River bridge and visit Daveys Hut. Follow tracks north and complete circuit back to hut. Some wading may be required. Afternoon tea Cooma. Contact leader by Saturday for weather check and departure point.</p>	<p>Map: Nimmo Plain 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/F Drive: 330 km, \$132 per car. Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>20 June</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Calvary Ruins</b> A relatively easy walk to the 'pise' walls which is all that remains of Michael &amp; Susan Maloney's 1903 Calvary homestead in the Southern Bullen Range. After visiting the ruins will continue along Bullen Range to Brett Trig for lunch. Return after lunch back to the cars over Barnes Hill. The walk is mostly on fire trail or in open country. Around 200 m climb. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30 am.</p>	<p>Map: Tuggeranong 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B Drive: 30 km, \$12 per car Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p><b>23 June</b> Wednesday walk</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>Leader: Barrie Ridgway Contact: 0437 023 140 or <a href="mailto:brdr001@bigpond.net.au">brdr001@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>26 June</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Fence Removal – Rendezvous Creek Valley</b> This year we will continue the work on the fences within 1km of the Boboyan Road along the track that runs towards the site of Rowley's Hut. All tools will be provided. Book with leader by Thursday 24 June. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 80 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>27 June</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Bushfold Flats</b> From Apollo Road we take the Mount Tennent Fire Trail, dropping down to Honeysuckle Creek &amp; then climbing steeply up to Bushfold Hut. From there, surrounded by mountains, we follow Bushfold Flats to the site of Dunns Hut for lunch. Mainly on track. About 13 km return and some 500 m height gain over the walk. We return by the same route. Please register with the leader and for more details by 5 pm 25 June. Numbers are limited due to limited car parking space.</p>	<p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading 2A/B/C Leader: Barrie Ridgway Contact: 0437 023 140 or <a href="mailto:brdr001@bigpond.net.au">brdr001@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>30 June</b> Wednesday walk</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>Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p><b>4 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Johns Peak</b> Walk up the fire trail to Camelback Ridge, footpad to Johns Peak, return to fire trail by the way we came but with a short off-track section between footpad and fire trail. A total of 14 km with a 700 m climb. If conditions are suitable, we may continue from Johns Peak to Tidbinbilla Peak – an extra 2 km return and 100 m climb. For weather check and departure point, contact leader by 5 pm Saturday.</p>	<p>Map: Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B Leader: Mike Bremers Contact: 0428 923 408 or <a href="mailto:mcbremers@gmail.com">mcbremers@gmail.com</a></p>



Johns Peak and Tidbinbilla Range from Camels Hump. Photo by Philip Gatenby

## NPA outings program June – September 2021 (page 3 of 4)

<p><b>10 July</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Activity yet to be decided 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: Clive Hurlstone Contact: <a href="mailto:cjhurls@bigpond.net.au">cjhurls@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>11 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Stockyard Spur to Pryors Hut</b> The walk is 16 km and involves a total climb of 800 m, with a steep 500 m altitude gain in the first 2 km. From Corin Dam head up Stockyard Spur (walking track and fire trail) and on to Pryors Hut if conditions are suitable and return via the same route. For weather check and departure point, contact leader by 5 pm Saturday.</p>	<p>Map: Corin Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 3A Leader: Mike Bremers Contact: 0428 923 408 or <a href="mailto:mcbremers@gmail.com">mcbremers@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>18 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Mount Perisher, Mount Wheatley (snowshoe)</b> Depart 6:30 am. Drive to Bullocks Flat terminal and take Skitube train to Blue Cow. Snowshoe south to Back Perisher and Mount Perisher. After lunch, descend to Perisher Gap, climb Mount Wheatley and return via Skitube from Perisher. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. Suitable for beginners. For weather check and departure point, contact leader by Friday.</p>	<p>Map: Perisher Valley 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B Drive: 350 km, \$140 per car + Skitube. Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>24 July</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Fence Removal – Glendale area</b> This will be the second of a series of fence removal tasks in the Glendale area. 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 22 July. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 84 km, \$34 per car Leader: Michaela Popham Contact: 0413 537 333</p>
<p><b>25 July</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Rendezvous Creek</b> From the Boboyan Road we walk up the valley looking for historic sites and a site of interest, and returning, possibly by way of the cascades on Middle Creek. A lovely area and easy walking, mainly on tracks or over grassland. Depending on the time and the party, distance might be 14 km or 17 km. Very little climbing. To register and get further details, please contact leader by 5 pm 23 July.</p>	<p>Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000 Grading 3A/B/C Leader: Barrie Ridgway Contact: 0437 023 140 or <a href="mailto:brdr001@bigpond.net.au">brdr001@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>28 July</b> Wednesday walk</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>Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>1 August</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Mount Tennent &amp; Bushfold Flats</b> Starting at Namadgi Visitor Centre, ascend to the summit of Mount Tennent on the main track. After enjoying a stop at the top, with views of the fire-damaged surrounds, we'll descend on the Mount Tennent Fire Trail, and then take the Bushfold Flats Fire Trail. We'll pass Reads Hut (still standing, but closed due to fire damage), then continue on the track through Bushfold Flats until we join the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT). We might make a very small detour to see what's left at the McMahons Hut site. We'll follow the AAWT up to the ridge and then descend to the Visitor Centre. 19–20 km, with approx. 950 m ascents. Contact leader to register by Thursday 29 July.</p>	<p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading 3A Drive: 40 km, \$16 per car Leader: Margaret Power Contact: 0448 924 357</p>
<p><b>7 August</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Mount Budawang</b> The first part of the walk is on the old 4wd track to the top of Mount Budawang in Budawang National Park. From the summit we go off-track to the headwaters of Currowan Creek which is followed back to the car park. This is a partly exploratory walk and the off-track may involve thick scrub and rock scrambling. Total climb of about 600 m. Limit of 8. Contact leader, preferably by email, by Thursday 5 August.</p>	<p>Map: Braidwood 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/D/E/F Drive: 214 km, \$84 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>14 August</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b> Activity yet to be decided 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>

## NPA outings program June – September 2021 (page 4 of 4)

<p><b>15 August</b> Sunday walk</p>	<p><b>Tuggeranong Hill</b> A walk in two parts. Initially from the Electricity Substation off Callister Cres in Theodore climb NW up and over Tuggeranong Hill and return to the substation on the management track around the back of Conder. About 5 km with 160 m climb, mostly on vehicle track or rocky footpad. From the substation then travel NE, climb about 100 m to another unnamed summit and continue on to the axe grinding grooves near the Monaro Highway at the northern extent of Theodore. Return to cars via the management track at the back of the houses. This section is essentially all on management track but with a short footpad climb to the second summit. Meet at Kambah Village shops to leave at 8:30 am or go direct to the Callister Cres substation by 8:45 am.</p>	<p>Map: Tuggeranong 1:25,000 Grading 2A/C Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p><b>21 August</b> Saturday walk</p> 	<p><b>Guthrie Ridge (snowshoe)</b> Depart 6:15 am. Drive to Guthega carpark. Follow tracks to Illawong and continue south over new bridge at Spencer Creek. Climb Guthrie Ridge and descend to Snowy River before returning to Guthega. Afternoon tea Jindabyne. For weather check and departure point, contact leader by Friday 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/F Drive: 420 km, \$168 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>25 August</b> Wednesday walk</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>Leader: Barrie Ridgway Contact: 0437 023 140 or <a href="mailto:brdr001@bigpond.net.au">brdr001@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>28 August</b> Saturday work party</p>	<p><b>African Love Grass control – Point Hut Hill</b> This is the first time the NPA has visited this site in Tuggeranong. The activity will involve the application of control measures for African Love Grass as directed by PCS staff. Bring gloves, all else will be provided. Book with the leader by Thursday 26 August. Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8:30 am.</p>	<p>Drive: 20 km, \$8 per car Leader: Martin Chalk Contact: 0411 161 056</p>
<p><b>29 August</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Tinderry Peak</b> The walk follows the Round Flat Fire Trail for a couple of kilometres before a steep climb to a rocky outcrop. We then walk north-west for a further 2 km, through scrub which is thick in places, followed by a scramble to Tinderry Peak (1,619 m). The return route is roughly south from the peak, merging with the fire trail about a kilometre from the cars. The walk is mostly off-track, with one section of mild exposure on the final climb to the summit. Distance of about 14 km, total climb of about 600 metres. Limit of 8. Contact leader, preferably by email, by Friday 27 August.</p>	<p>Map: Tinderry 1:25,000 Grading: 2/A/D/E Leader: Philip Gatenby Drive: 140 km, \$56 per car Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>5 September</b> Sunday walk</p> 	<p><b>Budawangs: Maxwells Ladder, Sassafras Mountain, Gilberts Gap</b> An interesting and varied walk in great Budawang's scenery. The walk commences on the Red Ground Track off Meangora Road near Nerriga, before going off-track through scrub to ascend the cliffs up the gully known as Maxwells Ladder. We then walk north for a short distance to a high point before descending the cliffs to Gilberts Gap (aka Galbraiths Yard Gap) and a return to the Red Ground Track. Gaiters and scrub gloves needed. Perhaps take crocs for river crossing. About a 13 km walk &amp; 450 m climb. Numbers limited. Please contact the leader by 5 pm 3 September to register &amp; for more details. Experienced walkers, please, who are comfortable with off-track, scrub and scrambling.</p>	<p>Maps: Nerriga and Endrick 1: 25,000 Grading: 2A/B/C/D/E Drive: 258 km, \$100 per car Leader: Barrie Ridgway Contact: 0437 023 140 or <a href="mailto:brdr001@bigpond.net.au">brdr001@bigpond.net.au</a></p>
<p><b>10-14 September</b> Pack walk</p> 	<p><b>Hoddles Castle and Quiltys Mountain</b> This is a partly exploratory walk in the Budawangs from the Nerriga entrance to Morton National Park. The aim is to spend two nights near Hoddles Castle and a further two nights on Vines Creek near its junction with the Endrick River, exploring on day walks Mount Hoddle, Hidden Valley and more. While some of the walk is on track (which since the fires may be overgrown in places), rock scrambling and finding routes through cliff lines will be involved, and thick scrub may be encountered. More details available closer to the date of the walk. Limit of 8. Contact leader, preferably by email, by Wednesday 8 September.</p>	<p>Map: Endrick 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/D/E/F Drive: 260 km, \$104 per car Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a></p>

## NPA work party summary – Q1 2021

Month	Activity	Agency	Participants
January	No work party.		
February	Snow Gum arboretum pine control. Thirty-two trees removed and seven ring-barked. Felled trees approximately 20 cm trunk diameter at ground level, ring-barked were a larger diameter - up to 30 cm. All-but-one were <i>Pinus radiata</i> .	PCS	10
March	Work party cancelled due to park closure because of flooding.		

Martin Chalk

## Dananbilla Nature Reserve – planting eucalypts

**Date:** 3–5 May 2021

Seven NPA volunteers (Martin Chalk (leader), Rupert Barnett, Margaret Mahoney, Adrienne Nicholson, Brian Slee, Mark Stevenson and Julie Taylor) were available to assist NSW park rangers Andrew Moore and Suzie Jackson with the planting of 700 tube stock eucalypts (Yellow Box, White Box, Blakely's Red Gum, Apple Box and stringybark species) over 2 days in areas where past plantings had low rates of success. Some 22 mm of rain, the first for



Julie working a planter

many weeks, fell just prior to planting, auguring well for a better outcome. We also toured several other sites to view the impressive results of more successful earlier plantings.

The final chore was removal of redundant tree guards and star pickets from plantings along the entrance boundary with 'Barrelli' ('Percys Patch' from 2014 but again renamed (unknown) following a further change of ownership).

The group was comfortably accommodated for 2 nights at Clover Leigh golf club, Crowther, where we enjoyed morning visits from Zebra Finches and a log fire at night. We exited to Lachlan Valley Way via Illunie Nature Reserve.

This was NPA's 19th work party over 9 years in the area, demonstrating its long-term commitment to assisting with restoration of Dananbilla and nearby reserves. Thanks to all involved.



Windermere section. Photos by Brian Slee unless indicated otherwise

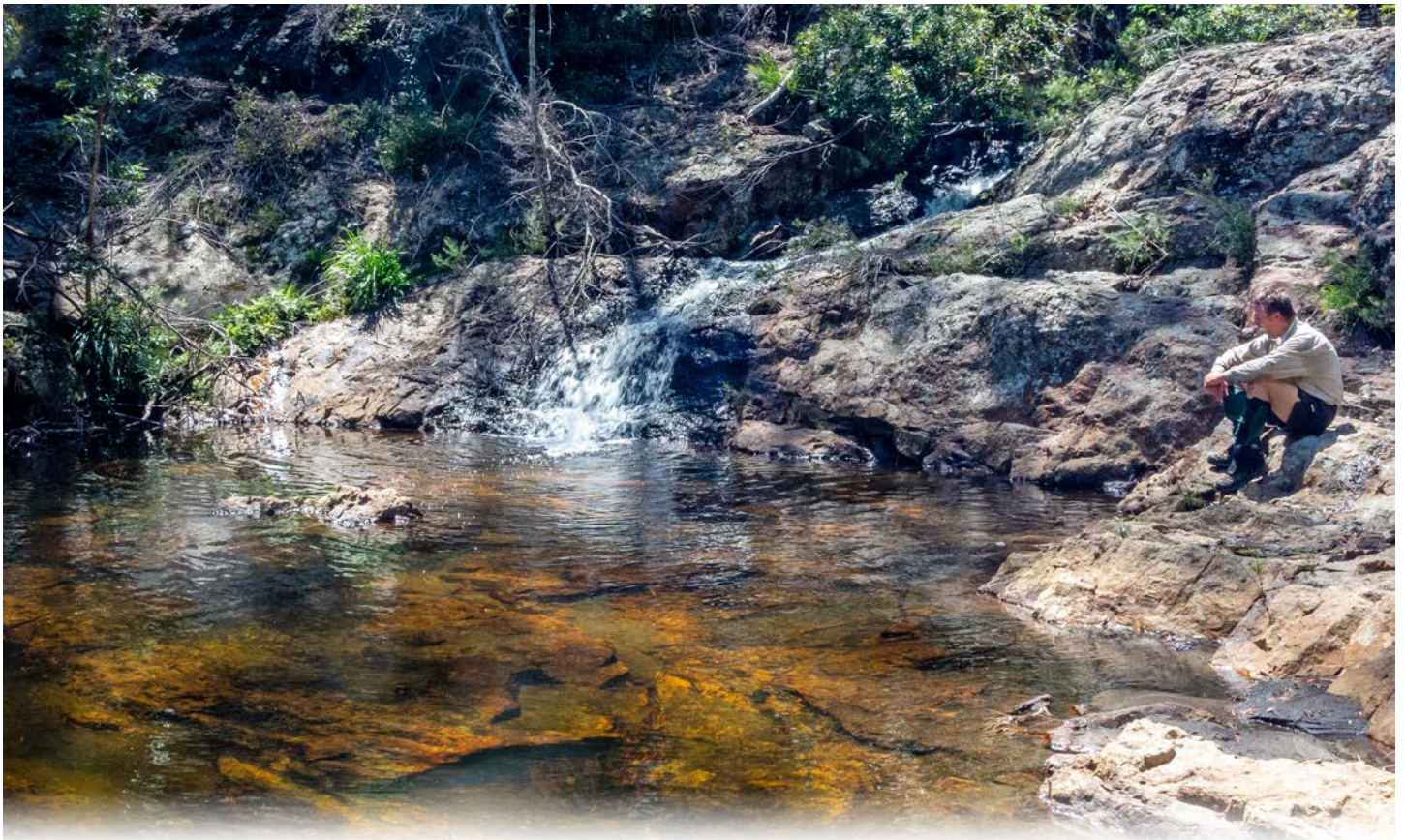


Tubestock

Brian Slee



Dananbilla NR, mist shrouded slopes. Photo by Rupert Barnett



Boolijah Creek. Photos by Philip and Jan Gatenby unless indicated otherwise

## Bushwalk reports

### *Boolijah and Bundundah creeks*

**Date:** 18–21 January 2021

**Participants:** Philip Gatenby (leader), Geoff Barker, Melinda Brouwer, Jan Gatenby, Dave Kelly, Peter May, Jacqui Rosier, Mike Smith

**Weather:** Mixed, sunny and warm, cool and damp

*Soon by the merrily rushing creek  
We hopped among the mossy covered boulders  
In the shady cover of the trees.*

*A waterfall and pool at lunch time ...  
More waterfalls – shining water  
Toppling over ledges to deep tranquil pools –  
Fiery Bottle Brushes  
Sprouting from crevices near the stream –  
One magical water garden succeeding another.*

*From Boolijah the Beautiful, Judith Webster, 1986*

The sandstone plateau to the north of the Nerriga-Nowra Road is dissected by a number of creeks, including Boolijah to the east of Sassafras and Bundundah roughly to the north. The creeks mostly flow north to the Shoalhaven River and have carved deep gorges into the plateau. From my only other trip to Boolijah Creek in 1986 I recalled numerous waterfalls (captured in Judith's words above), interesting rock formations on the northern tip of the plateau to the west of the creek and an idyllic grassy campsite at the junction of Boolijah and Danjera creeks. The plan was to spend the first two nights at this campsite then go west to Bundundah Creek for the last. A plan which proved far too ambitious.

Eight of us met at Nerriga on a foggy morning. A car was left at Greta Road in Sassafras at the locked gate on the Etrema Tops Track, the

planned finish of the walk. The walk's start was 8 km to the east of Sassafras at the locked gate on the Yarramunmun Trail which runs north on the high ground east of Boolijah Creek. There wasn't a gate in the 1980s and it was possible to drive down this trail.

About 2 km from the gate, making use of a waypoint supplied by Peter Conroy, we found a route to the west off the escarpment and down to Boolijah Creek; following it downstream, passing a number of picturesque waterfalls, to its junction with a major western tributary, on the way disturbing a Diamond Python. Large boulders and deep pools made keeping close to the creek difficult in places. Two waterfalls combine at the junction as the creek rushes away to the north. In our footsteps of 35 years ago we left the creek here and climbed on an open ridge to the plateau to the west. A creek line allowed easy access through the cliffs where we camped among the burnt out scrub of the plateau close to the source of Danjera Creek, well short of our intended campsite.



Danjera Creek beyond the plateau



One of numerous falls, Boolijah Creek



Small waterfall, Bundudah Creek



Above: Junction with unnamed creek

Below: Camping cave, both at Bundudah Creek



Negotiating the 'wombat hole'

Walking on the plateau was much easier than through the boulder bestrewn creek, in part because the post-fire regrowth was much less as we made our way next day through fields of *Goodenia* to the end of the plateau above the junction of Boolijah and Danjera Creeks. Approaching its tip we came across a 150 metre long by 10 m wide trench, close to but not on the cliff edge, caused presumably by the underlying rock wearing away and a collapse of the surface rock. The trench has a maximum depth of about 20 m and, according to Mike, can be walked from end to end. From the end of the plateau was a spectacular but hazy view of the creek valley, now somewhat surprisingly named after the lesser of the two creeks, Danjera, as it winds its way to Tallowa Dam on the Shoalhaven. Finding a way off the plateau and down to our campsite at the creeks' junction took a little time and we almost gave up but eventually found the route down to the east of the point, a feature known by some as the 'wombat hole'. It was, as it turned out, marked by a rock cairn. A large tree had fallen into the slot, which temporarily blocked our view of the wombat hole's opening. Closer inspection revealed the opening and the way down. After a pack haul, always a slow process, we descended to the junction through regrowth which thickened the lower we got. Beside the creek the regrowth, some of it weedy, was rampant and of the fondly remembered campsite there was no trace. We scratched around in the regrowth to make room for tents. It was so thick that any thought of exploring either creek was quickly discarded.

Back on the plateau the following morning, having retraced the previous day's route through the thick regrowth that lined the lower part of the valley and renegotiated the wombat hole, we turned westwards towards Bundudah Creek, admiring again the post-fire floral display, which included Flannel Flower and, in burnt areas near rock outcrops, *Stylidium laricifolium*. We paused atop the cliff where Danjera Creek plunges over the edge. Further west, overlooking the gorge deeply cut by Bundudah Creek, we found the cairn marking a slot through the cliff and, after a short descent, with packs needing to be passed in one place to avoid a chock stone, were in an enormous crescent-shaped overhang to the east, variously called Rainbow or Discovery Cave and a popular spot to overnight. There's a new log book in the overhang. The previous book was destroyed in the 2019 bushfire. Despite protection in a metal



Regrowth



*Stylidium laricifolium* (Photo by Dave Kelly)



*Goodenia*



Pea Flower



*Diamond Python*

case under a pile of rocks the book was reduced to a few charred fragments. Its remnants are testament to the heat of the fire. One of the surviving fragments is written by a Peter Harris and recounts the discovery in 1979 of Blaydens Pass, a route to the junction of Boolijah and Danjera creeks from the Yarramunmun Trail, named after the route's finder, Warwick Blayden (a Canberra Bushwalking Club member at the time). We'd used this pass in 1986.

'Passages of Time'

On the other side of Bundundah Creek, opposite the overhang, a fracture of the cliff has produced a labyrinth of narrow passages between and through a collection of large sandstone monoliths. It has the descriptive colloquial name of the Passages of Time. That afternoon we explored some of the passages.

Upstream of our large overhang is a smaller cave where camping is possible. The highlight of the cave's outlook is a picturesque waterfall and pool on Bundundah Creek. A great spot particularly on a warm day which it wasn't when we arrived there early on the last day of our walk so there were no thoughts of a swim.

Upstream of the waterfall our route turned again to the west, towards the Ettrema Tops, the area north of Sassafras and end of the walk. It was steadily uphill out of the tributaries of Bundundah Creek, creek banks lined with regenerating ferns. On our first hill tightly packed 2 metre high regrowth of Acacia and Solanum slowed progress considerably. Such thick regrowth was in contrast to other higher areas encountered on the walk which, post-fire, were open, indicating perhaps an area of basalt soils while those of higher areas elsewhere were mostly sandy from underlying sandstone. By lunch time we'd reached the Ettrema Tops Track, just a couple of kilometres from the car left at Sassafras.

*Philip Gatenby*  
Needing a new shirt





## Tidbinbilla Ridge clockwise traverse

**Date:** Wednesday 25 November 2020 (NPA's interclub medium/hard walk)

**Participants:** Barrie (Leader), Leon, Melinda, Luke, Diane, Geoffrey, Ian

**Weather:** Perfect

We set off, bang on time, 8.00 am, from the Mountain Creek Car Park. Right on cue, the 10% chance of rain at this time was ready and waiting for us, clouds right down and a fine Scotch mist. It was lovely to wind along the Lyrebird Track on our way to the long climb up to Snowy Corner, the creeks full and the tree ferns and mosses vivid green.

All too soon though we were climbing. It was very humid, but the wetness brought out all the scents of the bush while the forest was alive with birdcalls.

The plan was to do a circuit: from the Lyrebird Track at Tidbinbilla up the long steep ridge to Snowy Corner, then summit Tidbinbilla Mountain, before heading north along the ridge to Tidbinbilla Peak and Johns Peak, with a detour along the way to The Pimple. Some of the route was off track and scrubby. As it happened we ended up with more than we bargained for, doing over 14 km and over 1,400 metres of height gain.

About an hour into the walk a participant became ill, nauseous and all but collapsed. I don't like splitting the party and although someone volunteered to take her back, I was concerned that she might collapse and one person would not be enough to help her, so we all went back.

Tidbinbilla Range from Tidbinbilla Peak

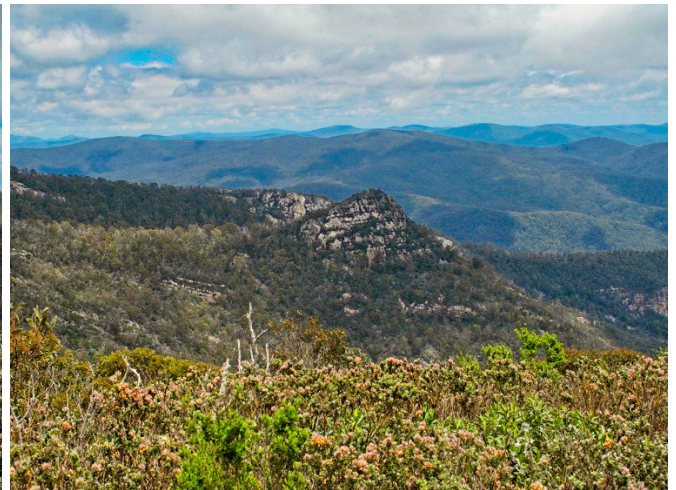


Along the way I rejigged the walk. At the start of the Camels Hump Trail, I left the others and went with the unwell walker back to her car and to re-register the walk.

Now starting 90 minutes late, at 9.30 am, we walked 3 km up the trail towards Camels Hump. At the point on the track known to old timers as the 'old cherry tree' spot, we stopped for morning tea. From here we went off track up the steep ridge to summit Tidbinbilla Peak. Initially we walked through a sea of bright green, wet, waist-high bracken but this eased. The further up the ridge we walked, however, the steeper and rougher and scrubbier it became. The last part was hard, forcing our way through densely packed dead saplings. We reached the peak at noon. Clouds lifting, views superb. A welcome 10 minute drink stop. Party now going well. Now south along the ridge we had to give The Pimple a miss. Lunched on the saddle below Tidbinbilla Mountain, then climbed to its summit. A glorious afternoon, with incredible views. Back down to Snowy Corner and then the tree ferns and creeks of the Lyrebird Trail and so to the cars at 4.00 pm. Not a bad effort!

*Barrie Ridgway*

The Pimple from Tidbinbilla Peak





# Square Rock and Smokers Trail circuit

**Date:** Sunday 14 February 2021

**Leader:** Steven Forst

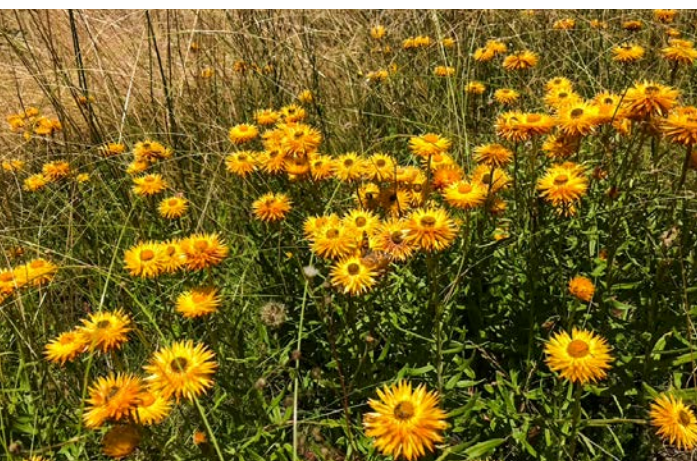
The air was cool and clear after rain in the previous few days. It was a small party of six that left the already busy Square Rock car park at Corin Forest. The well-maintained and much-used walking track to Square Rock is gently graded with a few stone stairs climbing from the car park at an altitude of 1,213 m to the lookout at 1,395 m. The area shows signs of fire damage but is recovering well with significant regrowth.

The walk to the Square Rock lookout, which has great views to the north and west, is 3.7 km each way.

From the lookout you can spot the occasional car on the road to Corin Dam and look down on birds as they float from tree to tree. The crowd at the lookout dispersed and we settled down to



*View from lookout. Photos by Steven Forst unless indicated otherwise*



*Everlasting daisies*

morning tea looking out over this great view. After checking out the Black Skinks living among the rocks we proceeded a kilometre back down the track to take a sidetrack to a viewpoint over the Orroral Valley. Through skeletons of burnt trees Orroral Valley was looking green and flush with regrowth.

Back on the main track we continued another kilometre towards the car park. At this point four of the party turned off the main track onto the link walking track towards Smokers Trail while the rest of party retraced their steps to the car park. The larger circuit back to the car park via the link track and Smokers Trail adds about 7 km to the walk.

Lunch was had by the circuit walkers at Smokers Flat, an area of swampy ground at the western headwaters of Booroomba Creek. After lunch, attempts were

made to take photographs of dancing butterflies attracted by patches of golden everlasting daisies, much to the amusement of the other members of the party.



*Stick insect. Photo by Kevin McCue*

The link walking track soon brought the party to the junction with Smokers Trail. Turning left on to the trail we continued eastward parallel to the creek to the point where it turns sharply southward and drops quickly into the Orroral Valley. Smokers Trail is hard and stony in places, softened only by being under tall eucalypt forest with patches of golden everlasting daisies.

Another foot track turns left off Smokers Trail before it emerges into the remains of the old Corin forestry area taking us north-west back towards the car park. The path meanders through the natural forest before emerging onto old forestry trails descending the ridge to the open ground of the car park. Emerging from the forest we found that a stick insect hitched a ride on my hat. It was rescued and placed back in a tree.

*Steven Forst*



*Square Rock Lookout*



*Colliers and the Molonglo. Photos by Brian Slee unless otherwise indicated*

## Glenburn Heritage Precinct loop

**Date:** Easter Monday, 5 April 2021

**Participants:** Brian Slee (leader), Mike Bremers, Cynthia Burton, Marlene Eggert, Margaret Power, Paul Regan, Chris Roper, Deidre Shaw

**Weather:** Sunny, 25°, light breeze.

Glenburn, isolated in an area east of Kowen Forest, can be a sad place if one dwells on the tenuous existence of its early European settlers. But sitting under Collier's pear tree on an autumn morning, surrounded by trees loaded with ripe quinces, we got a hint that not all their days were miserable. Any unhappiness experienced on this walk stemmed mainly from observing how much the heritage areas have deteriorated since Col McAlister's epic Glenburn work parties concluded in 2018.

The clearly signposted 12 km precinct track links sites at Burbong and Glenburn. Having met at Kingston at 9 am and welcomed Mike back from his mighty Murray kayak, we set out from the Kings Highway entrance at 9:35. The immediate objective was Atkinson Trig (765 m); it was meant to provide an introductory panorama of the area but 5-metre high pines already obscure the view. Oh, well. We gathered around Paul's bunny ears for group photos at NPA's bench.

Descending west on the fire trail, the remains of Colliers homestead soon appeared. Its surrounding fence still excludes rabbits, the ruins looked stable and cared for. 'Heritage' blackberries, of course, persist. Good spot for morning tea, with Easter eggs and Deidre's delicious slice on the table. Margaret delivered a fine recitation of *The Owl and the Pussycat!*

Continuing west, the site of Curleys homestead was unrecognisable, abandoned to a good season of weeds. Climbing the slope brought the strongly flowing Molonglo into view. We undulated beside it before turning to visit Coppins ruins, its precarious chimney still standing amid high grass. The Osage Orange glowed green, turning yellow. River Road took us north from here to Charcoal Kilns. On the way, in welcome shade, we were distracted by red mushrooms, spotted white, pushing up through pine needles. The gun club popped away in the distance.

Lunch was at 12:15 pm in Glenburn homestead. From a distance all looked good; the three pines have grown and the blackberries kept at bay. Col's lashings of preservative have kept the fence solid. Delightful to be back in a place that fosters conversation. Unfortunately, the homestead's airconditioning has been augmented by the collapse of several vertical slabs on the eastern wall. The roof has a gap in it.

In the afternoon we followed the mown path east, our progress slowed by an ailing kangaroo. The Colverwell gravestones are in place but the inner fence needs repairs. Still has a melancholy air. As if on cue, to our south, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos rose in a flock of a size rarely seen since 2003, their short calls lengthening to friendly wails and whistles as they wheeled overhead.

Once past the fenced-off shearing shed and quarters we followed Charcoal Kiln Road back to the cars, arriving 2:30 pm. Worth repeating as a regular NPA outing.

*Brian Slee*



*Top: Glenburn and growing pines  
Below: Standing - Chris, Paul, Mike, Brian, Seated - Margaret, Deidre, Marlene, Atkinson Trig. Photo by Cynthia Burton*





## Some summer flowers – Mount Gingera

Billy Button at Mount Gingera.

Photo by Philip Gatenby.

All other photos by Barrie Ridgway

This summer the wildflowers in the ACT's 'High Country' (the subalpine Brindabella Range along the ACT-NSW border) have been wonderful. Possibly due to the combined effects of the bushfire during the 2019-20 summer and a milder, wetter 2020, a year of La Nina. This summer I walked up Mt Gingera three times. On each occasion the flowers have been quite spectacular. The first two walks had been with walking clubs, but towards the end of February I stirred my stumps and went up there again, on my own this time, and with my good camera. As on the two previous occasions, I walked from Corin Dam up the infamous ascent onto Stockyard Spur (500 m climb in 2 km) and then along the spur to climb the territory's second highest peak – Mount Gingera (1,860 m).



Billy Button seed heads



Alpine Everlasting

When I started out on the most recent time, the morning was fresh with a very cold easterly breeze, but the afternoon was fairly still and too warm for my liking. On this occasion the flowers were again 'out of this world', with many different varieties and species. Now, however, the 'acres' of Billy Buttons from earlier in the summer had gone, replaced by many other species. What had taken me 20 minutes on the way up, the foot path from the fire trail to summit, took me nearly an hour on the way down as I kept stopping for photos. Back on the fire trail I stopped at the picturesque mountain creek which rises higher up on Mount Gingera to fill up my water bottle.



Royal Bluebell



Mountain Lettuce

Going up from Corin Dam through the tall forest is hard, but beautiful in the early morning. The vegetation changes with altitude and soils, from tall forest and understory to open Snow Gum woodland with lovely granite outcrops and an understory of grasses and flowers. Then finally, the beauty of the subalpine, on the tree-lined summit ridge of Gingera.



Wavy Lobelia



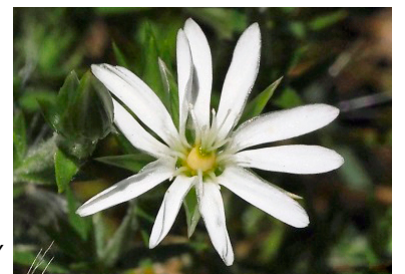
Trigger Plant  
Chamomile Sunray



Purple Eyebright

Coming back, though, is a little different! One is now a little tired. The air has lost its clarity and sweetness, the breeze has died, the afternoon has heated up and heat is reflected back off the ground even though it is a relatively mild day, the foot track off Stockyard Spur is noticeably hard, rocky and sharp, and goes on and on and on.

Barrie Ridgway



Prickly Starwort  
Yam Daisy





Ochre Cliffs near Renmark. All photos by Mike Bremers

## Paddling the lower Murray

*In the last two issues of the Bulletin, I described my 2020 kayak journey down the Darling River from Brewarrina to Wentworth, a distance of about 1,680 km, which took 65 days. In March, after a 4-month break I continued the journey down the Murray River from Wentworth to the Murray Mouth near Goolwa, a distance of about 830 km.*

COVID-19 outbreaks in NSW and Victoria over the summer, and subsequent border closures, presented logistical difficulties in the planning stage of this journey. Fortunately, all borders opened by the time I left Canberra in late February so I was able to drive to Wentworth, leave my kayak and gear at the riverside caravan park before driving to Goolwa where I left my car. From Goolwa I caught a bus to Adelaide, flew to Mildura and caught a taxi to Wentworth. This whole process took 4 days but it was nice to know that my car was waiting for me at the end of the journey.



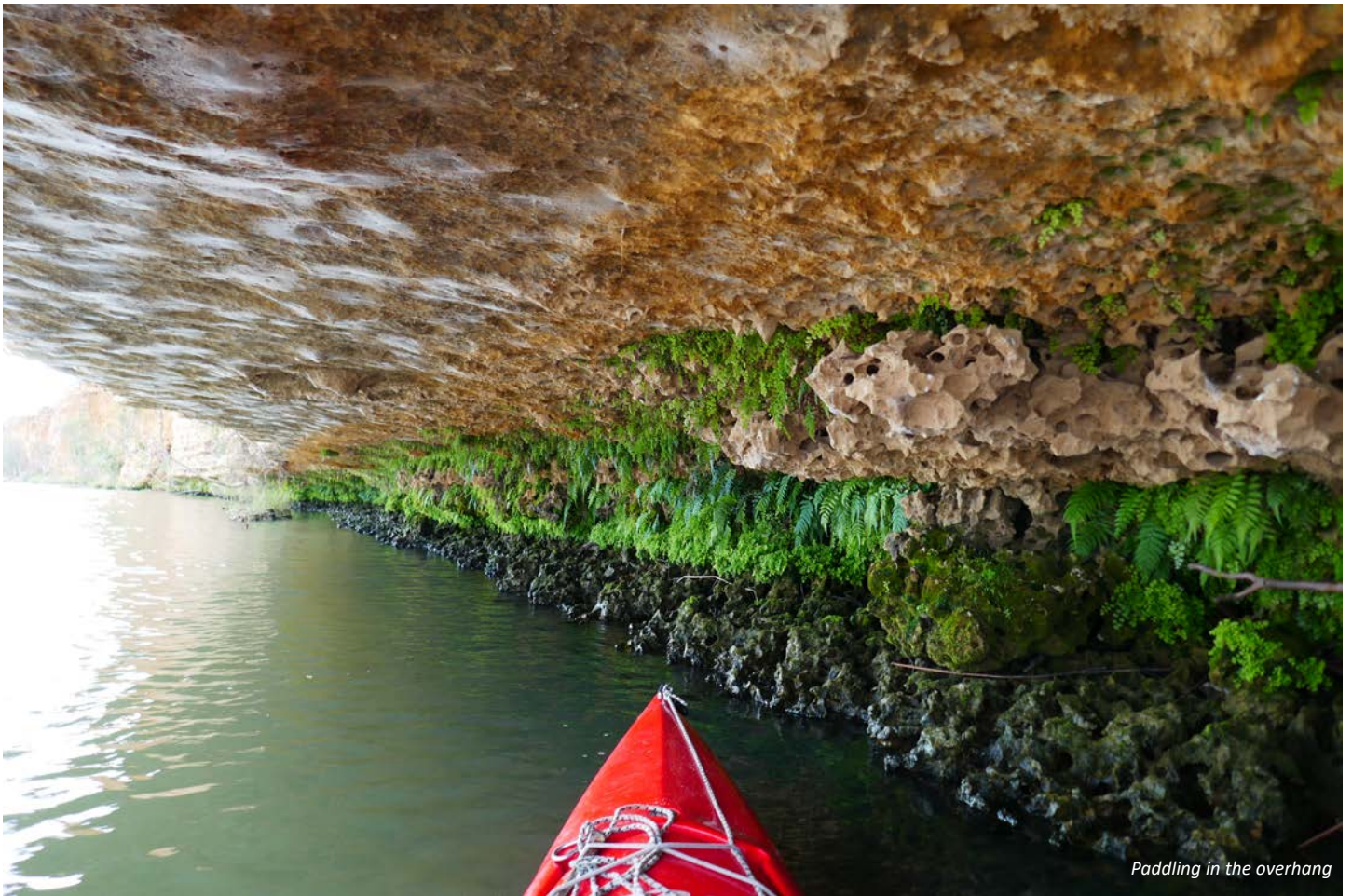
Devils Elbow

### Wentworth to Renmark

This 7-day, 268 km section is the most remote part of this journey down the lower Murray. However, it is not nearly as remote as much of the Darling River. There are five weirs with locks, lockmasters, campers and houseboats along the way, such that every day I saw people. In the first few days I was particularly affected by the difference from the Darling. The contrast was striking, the Darling was narrow, shallow and had very high banks – there was always something to look at or look out for. The lower Murray was wide, deep, generally straight and, due to water backed up behind the weirs, often I was looking out onto the forest floor. Also, there seemed to be much less birdlife, the birds may have dispersed to billabongs and wetlands away from the main river channel, possibly due to a wet summer.

The highlight of this section was camping opposite the cliffs at Devils Elbow. These cliffs are unlike any other on the Murray being actively eroded by both river flow and surface water run-off. Devils Elbow was named because it was such a difficult piece of navigation for paddle steamers. The sharp hairpin bend has been cut through by the water so it's not difficult any more. Sturt on 26 January 1830 reported<sup>1</sup> that on examination of these cliffs both he and Fraser 'had well nigh been buried under a mass of cliff that suddenly became detached'. Raven-Hart in about 1947 described<sup>2</sup> these cliffs as 'Neapolitan ice-cream horizontal strata'. The soft light at sunset and sunrise made for a beautiful scene.

My final 2 days of this section, after crossing into South Australia and approaching Renmark, coincided with a long weekend. Water skiers



*Paddling in the overhang*

and jet skis were out in force and, whilst they were well behaved, I was satisfied in the knowledge that I expected my journey to be completed before the Easter holidays at the beginning of April. The cliffs upstream of Renmark are characterised by a beautiful orange-ochre colour. They were especially brilliant in early morning sunlight.

### **Renmark to Morgan**

After a rest day in Renmark, it took another 7 days to reach Morgan, 244 km downstream. The Murray River is now flowing through the Riverland region of South Australia with its orchards and vineyards and sizeable towns every 2 or 3 days. After the long weekend the river was quiet with very few other watercraft to be seen.

The highlight of this section of the river was the beginning of the sandstone cliffs that plunge vertically down into the river such that it was possible to paddle within a metre or two of them. My favourite campsite in this section was opposite Cave Cliff. I arrived at the end of a cool, blustery day with rain threatening. I found a gap in the reeds, quickly set up my tent and then spent the rest of the afternoon sheltering from the rain. However, the next morning was calm with brilliant sunshine such that I paddled the short distance upstream, something I am usually extremely reluctant to do, to investigate the cave that gives the cliffs its name. There is a canoe tree outside a limestone cave with a squarish entrance. Apparently the cave has been used by the local Aboriginal people for thousands of years. I then paddled close to the vertical cliffs admiring the ferns and other plants that grow in the rock crevices just above the waterline.



*Canoe ring tree*

The town of Morgan is located at North-west Bend where the Murray dramatically changes course from north-west to a generally southerly direction for its final 320 km to the sea. In 1878 Morgan became one of the busiest ports on the Murray when the railway line from Adelaide was opened. A section of the wharf and two of the original hotels, both of which I visited, are still open, as the town now relies mainly on tourism.

### **Morgan to Mannum**

From Morgan the river is often lined with palatial houses or 'shacks' as they are called by South Australians. These, combined with cliffs and reedy banks makes finding good campsites difficult. Often, accessible beaches are taken up by houseboats moored for the night. However, regularly spaced towns with riverside caravan parks provide a good option. It is 46 km from Morgan to Blanchetown, which I decided to do in a day. However, the caravan park is located just downstream of Lock 1 so I had the deadline of reaching it by the last lockage at 4:30 pm. With an early start and light winds I made it easily and was able to enjoy a beer or two and a meal at Blanchetown Hotel which, being established in 1858, is reputedly the oldest pub in the Riverland. Camping in riverside caravan parks does have its benefits!

It took me 5 days to travel the 170 km to Mannum. Again, the main highlight of this section of river is the magnificent limestone cliffs that plunge vertically into the river. Often these cliffs continue for a number of kilometres and I could paddle under the overhang in places. It was fun to see the antics of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos that shelter in hollows in these cliffs. Back in 2006, when

I first paddled this stretch of river, I wondered if it was the result of habitat loss. However, my question is answered by the journal of Capt. Charles Sturt who recorded<sup>1</sup> 'The reader may form some idea of the height of these cliffs, when informed that the king of the feathered race made them his sanctuary.'

### **Mannum to Goolwa**

The final 150 km to Goolwa and the Murray Mouth can be broken into two halves. The first, from Mannum to Wellington, generally comprises a wide meandering river lined with shacks, houseboats, reeds and willows. It is not particularly scenic especially on the grey, cool days that I encountered.

Shortly downstream of Wellington the river flows into the large expanse of Lake Alexandrina which is roughly 30 km across. It is a final challenge for people paddling the length of the river. The lake is shallow and very exposed to winds such that large waves can form. In 1939 Hunt and Harrison<sup>3</sup> waited for 2 weeks for light winds before crossing the lake. Some paddlers<sup>3</sup> go directly across, even choosing to go at night when the winds are lighter. Navigation is an issue because there are no clear landmarks when you enter the lake, even in daylight. One paddler<sup>3</sup> accidentally circumnavigated the lake – his advice was to carry a compass! My plan was to follow the southern shoreline of the lake and have an overnight stop at a camping reserve at Narrung about halfway around the edge of the lake. It ended up being a rather wet and uncomfortable day. The winds seemed to be stronger than forecast, or I had underestimated the wave height that would be generated, such that most of the day was spent paddling with a cross-wind and waves crashing into the side of my kayak. Later I found a 6 cm fish under my kayak seat! The forecast was for a sunny day that turned out to be cloudy. It even rained as I got near Narrung – not that it mattered as I was already soaked. Nevertheless, I made good time by doing the 35 km in 6 hours without a break. The weather

*Wentworth sunrise*



cleared to a sunny afternoon, the wind dropped and there was a beautiful sunset and sunrise the next morning.

I stayed another 2 days at Narrung waiting for light winds. The nearby Point Malcolm lighthouse, built in 1878, was a pleasant outing. It is Australia's only inland lighthouse and its smallest. The final night at Narrung was marred by the arrival of a camper with a serious snoring problem. Even deaf campers who turned off their hearing aids were complaining the next morning!

The final 35 km from Narrung to the Murray Mouth was an easy paddle in light winds. After portaging over Tauwitchere Barrage I was now in the salt water of the Coorong. It was now a very enjoyable 12 km paddle to the Murray Mouth. The clear water, seals, sand dunes, the sound of the ocean and even seagulls standing on the backs of pelicans were all new experiences after so long on the river. My wife Christine met me at the boat ramp on Hindmarsh Island opposite the Murray Mouth to be whisked away to the comfort of a motel. The next day I returned to where I left off for the final 12 km paddle to Goolwa where I was greeted by the team of the Inland Rivers National Marathon Register (IRNMR) who presented me with a certificate for my journey from Brewarrina to Goolwa. The IRNMR was started in 1954 when Bill Confoy arrived in Goolwa after paddling a canoe from Goondiwindi. He approached a nearby fisherman, Frank Tuckwell, asking where he could register his journey. There was nowhere to register but Frank gave Bill a scrap of paper noting his arrival and thereby started the IRNMR<sup>3</sup>. Frank Tuckwell is now 87 and still greets many paddlers who arrive in Goolwa so it was a special honour to receive my certificate from him.

*Mike Bremers*



*Mike with Frank Tuckwell*

### References:

1. Sturt, 1833, 'Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia, during the years 1828, 1829, 1830 and 1831', republished 2001, University of Sydney Library, <http://adc.library.usyd.edu.au/data-2/p00096.pdf>
2. Raven-Hart, R, 1948, *Canoe in Australia*, Georgian House Pty Ltd, Melbourne.
3. Bremers, Angela & Bremers, Mike, 2017, 'Murray-Darling Journeys: Two hundred years of significant rowing and paddling journeys on the rivers of the Murray-Darling Basin: 1817 to 2016'.

*Australia's inland lighthouse*



## Dendrobium Mine expansion refused

To the great relief of many, the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) has refused the proposed expansion of the Dendrobium coal mine, south-west of Sydney. Approval would have continued the highly damaging mining from 2024 to 2048.

Mining would have triggered extensive fracturing of the overlying rock, high volume and in perpetuity water losses, drainage of water courses and swamps, water course contamination, loss of biodiverse habitat, landscape dislocation and destabilisation, loss of cultural heritage sites, greenhouse gas additions, and increased risk of extreme fire.

Coming less than 2 years after the IPC review, the expectation was that the commissioners would approve the proposal. That it was refused underscores its dire nature. The NPA and its Illawarra, Macarthur and South Sydney branches contributed comprehensive presentations and submissions across a range of concerns. Those from Ann Brown and Gary Schoer, determined campaigners for many years, were outstanding.

The refusal will be especially significant for Julie Sheppard and Dr Ann Young, who've been raising concerns for the Special Areas, particularly with respect to Dendrobium, for decades.

*Nature NSW, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Autumn 2021)*

## Time to give a hoot

With deep hoots, Powerful Owls have been discovered for the first time in decades in the forest of Mount Cole. Unfortunately, this threatened species is living in areas scheduled for logging by VicForests. This cause for celebration mixed with dismay reaffirms the need for the Victorian Government to protect these critical habitats in new national parks – before they are destroyed.

Australia's largest nocturnal bird was detected using remote acoustic recording devices, or 'song meters' set up by VNPA citizen scientists at three sites in Mount Cole between COVID-19 lockdowns. Ecologists who analysed the recordings confirmed that a significant population of *Ninox strenua* is present in Mount Cole forests – in and around planned logging coupes. VNPA formally submitted the threatened species detection report in February to the Victorian Government and the Office of the Conservation Regulator.

VicForests don't conduct pre-logging surveys in the areas they plan to log in the west. There are 10–14 logging coupes planned or already logged within the Mount Cole area. Powerful Owls need large hollows for nesting. These hollows, occurring only in older trees, are destroyed by clearfelling or in post-logging burning used in forestry operations.

Powerful Owls lost a substantial amount of habitat in the 2019–20 bushfires. With several detections confirmed, Mount Cole appears to be a stronghold for this giant of the sky. Calls of other iconic wildlife were also captured by the song meters in Mount Cole – the short barks of Krefft's Glider and grunts of Koalas. This is the third threatened species detection report submitted using survey work by VNPA citizen scientists. We will continue to conduct survey work in these areas and call on the Victorian Government to

permanently protect them before they are irreparably damaged by logging.

*Park Watch (VNPA) No. 284 (March 2021)*

## What is happening at Warragamba Dam?

Warragamba Dam supplies about 80 per cent of Sydney's water. Built more than 60 years ago, it draws on six rivers in the Hawkesbury–Nepean catchment. It hit 100 per cent capacity on Monday 12 April, having filled rapidly during heavy rain periods this year. A year ago it was less than half full.

Stuart Khan, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of New South Wales, said the risk of severe flooding was real if there was heavy rain, but stressed the "if". He said a series of bottlenecks below Warragamba Dam increased the threat to homes if there was a major spill, but the dam being at 100 per cent capacity was not itself cause for alarm.

The NSW Government is proposing to raise the dam wall by 17 metres to reduce the risk of flooding in the Hawkesbury–Nepean Valley. The controversial project has been in development since 2017 and will require environmental assessment and approval at state and federal levels. The state originally proposed raising the dam wall by 14 metres but lifted that to 17 metres in June. The plan has been delayed. Water NSW was due to finish an environmental impact statement, examining the potential impact on natural and cultural heritage, last year, but it is still being drafted.

The project is not about increasing Sydney's water supply. The government says raising the dam wall will reduce the risk to human life and of property damage on the floodplain. Local government areas in the Hawkesbury–Nepean Valley include Penrith, Hawkesbury City, the Hills Shire and Blacktown. The flood risk is projected to increase due to the climate crisis. The government says lifting the dam wall would give it greater capacity to temporarily hold floodwater before releasing its controlled release.

Experts have questioned this rationale. In a submission to a NSW parliamentary inquiry examining the proposal, Jamie Pittock, from ANU's Fenner School of Environment and Society, said it was driven by a desire to expand residential and commercial development. Pittock argued that this would put an additional 134,000 people in the potential flood path, and warned this sort of strategy had failed elsewhere, notably in the 2011 Brisbane floods in which 35 people died. The government responds that the region has to plan for population growth. But the dam raising, and holding more water in the Blue Mountains World Heritage area upstream from the dam, will have potentially serious environmental and cultural ramifications.

Stuart Ayres, the Minister for Western Sydney, said this year has shown an east coast low could fill the dam at breathtaking speed. Widespread rain in February had increased the dam level 30 per cent in a few days. He said if the dam had been more than 80 per cent full at that point, with no flood mitigation wall, the valley below would have 'been in a lot of trouble'. 'Without a raised dam wall there would be no opportunity to allow water to recede in the catchment forward of the dam before releasing water. The only outcome in this situation is a more severe flood.'



But Pittock said there were flaws in the government's analysis. In his submission to the inquiry, he said flood mitigation dams tended to help during small and medium-size floods only and that there was 'no configuration of the Warragamba Dam' that would prevent flooding in the Hawkesbury–Nepean Valley. On average, 45 per cent of floodwaters that reached the valley came from other catchments that were not upstream of the dam. 'There would still be people in harm's way,' he told The Guardian Australia. Almost no matter how big you build a dam inevitably there will be a flood the dam cannot hold.

[www.colongwilderness.org.au/blog](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/blog)

## Lost opportunities for new national parks in Queensland

Five Queensland conservation groups have identified 175 properties with very high biodiversity value that could have been bought and protected since 2015, but were not, because the Queensland Government has not budgeted for new national park acquisitions to service its 2015 promise to greatly expand parks and other protected areas. The *Lost opportunities for new national parks in Queensland* report recommends ambitious strategic expansion of the national park system to save unique wildlife and boost nature tourism.

'We were initially excited that the Palaszczuk Government announced its vision of building a world-leading protected area network in 2015, but five years on, the resources simply haven't been committed to make this vision a reality,' said Graeme Bartrim, President, NPA of Queensland. Funding for the purchase of land for new national parks has instead been dramatically cut by 70 per cent since 2015. According to Dr Martin Taylor, conservation scientist with WWF who ran the analysis of properties, 'to save the wildlife and beautiful places that ... draw high spending visitors from all over the world, the state government must put real money behind its promises and greatly increase funding for new national parks'.

The report calls for \$55 million a year to be allocated by the Queensland Government for acquisition of land for new national parks, as well as a \$56 million a year boost to ensure the expanded park system is well-resourced and managed.

<https://npaq.org.au/current-issues/lost-opportunities-for-new-national-parks-in-queensland/>

## Launched! Kooparoona Niara (Great Western Tiers) National Park proposal

The Wilderness Society Tasmania, Friends of Great Western Tiers/Kooparoona Niara, the Tasmanian NPA, Mole Creek Caving Club and the Great Western Tiers National Park Campaign are calling for the creation of Kooparoona Niara National Park. This is in response to a State Government process for 16 areas of currently unallocated Crown Land in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). The State Government is proposing to accord these 16 areas either Regional Reserve or Conservation Area status and has invited public submissions.

Tom Allen for the Wilderness Society says this is not enough:

*With tourism rebuilding and an ever-increasing need to properly protect declining ecosystems, now is a good time to create ... Tasmania's first substantial new National Park in 30 years. The social, environmental, economic and Aboriginal benefits of a new National Park far outweigh the unambitious proposal to turn these reserves into Regional Reserves and Conservation Areas.*

The proposal would see the consolidation of valuable karst areas near Mole Creek, currently under a complexity of

tenures, with the existing Mole Creek Karst National Park. Adding reserves to the adjacent Walls of Jerusalem, Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair and South-West national parks is also proposed.

Nick Sawyer, President of the Tasmanian NPA, called on the state government to think big, saying:

*... there is no place within the TWWHA for the limited protection provided by Regional Reserves and Conservation Areas. There needs to be a review of the tenure of all of the land within the TWWHA that is not already National Park, with the intention of reserving all appropriate areas as National Park. This should include a new Kooparoona Niara (Great Western Tiers) National Park, and a contiguous Mole Creek Karst National Park.*

The tenures that the State Government is proposing – Regional Reserves and Conservation Areas – still allow logging and mining and are incompatible with protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the TWWHA and unacceptable for World Heritage properties.

<https://tnpa.org.au/kooparoona-niara-great-western-tiers-national-park-proposal/>

## Post fire: where The Track is at....

Given 80 per cent of Namadgi National Park was burnt in the 2020 fires, no-one was surprised that the ACT section of the Australian Alps Walking Track took a major hit. James Overall, in his role as Program Coordinator/Infrastructure Fire Recovery, is well positioned to describe the process of repair. Immediately after the fires 'we had crews out on all our trails assessing hazardous trees to make the track safe for staff and contractors.'

Those first months were a time of stocktaking, of assessing the landscape, to gauge its key vulnerabilities, to gain a sense of priority and action. James said 'we're going back to basics: asking ourselves what do we want to achieve here; with our assets; with the visitor experience'. He's also factoring in future fires as well as resources to cover everyday maintenance. 'We're making changes to the trail alignment in sections, adjusting the route to run along contours, using fewer steps. This will make the Track less prone to erosion from storm events and needing less maintenance generally.'

Work has commenced along priority sections – close to camp grounds or more popular sections of the Track – reinstating the trail surface, making adjustment to the route, building steps and drains in stone, replacing signs and ultimately burnt timber bridges with steel. As always, landscape management involves weighing up your options. Safety – for Parks staff, contractors and future walkers on the Track – sits above everything. Yet how do you reduce the risk in a way that is safe and also doesn't destroy the character of the landscape? In theory, you could drive a tank through and clear the trees but you would lose the landscape values.

Areas that can be reached with a small 5-tonne excavator can have the tree nudged, lifted and placed at the side of the Track. Then for areas where access is tricky, a skilled arborist will go in. So at this point, of the 60-odd kilometres of the Track that were fire affected, the most straightforward 30 km have been treated. Which leaves the challenging 30 km – between Johnnies Top and Misery Road – still to go.

*News from the Alps, No. 67 (February 2021)*

*Compiled by Hazel Rath*

# NPA Bulletin board

## NPA ACT welcomes the following new members

Phillip Moore  
Kathryn Tracy (rejoining member)  
Madeleine Gisz & Orson Reynolds  
Jan Gough-Watson  
Pamela Steele Sherpa  
Matthew Haynes  
Blain Serafin  
Desley & Matthew Oliver  
Marie & Tyla Perrins  
Joanna Korecki & Robert Maclean  
Michelle Weston  
Janet & Peter Manley  
Sarah Todd & Robert Douglas  
Simone Whyte  
Aimee Carter & Mark Aller  
Fiona Matthews  
Natalie Treloar  
Matthew Tasker  
James Lindsay & Pamela Collett  
Viv Schweizer  
Ash Watson & Rosie Korda

*We look forward to seeing you  
at NPA activities.*



*Snowy River, Byadbo Wilderness. Photo by Philip Gatenby*

## Membership fees are due at the end of June

All members will be receiving a letter asking for membership renewal and donations in June, either as a digital document (if we have your email address) or as a printed copy through Australia Post.

- The letter contains the data we store confidentially on our membership database about you. Please check the information we have and amend your details if necessary, and send the whole form with your membership dues (and donation if possible) back to the office *by post together with cheques or money orders*.
- The completed form can also be scanned and sent to [admin@npaact.org.au](mailto:admin@npaact.org.au) by email or you can use 'Trybooking' to send us any amendments to your details when using that facility for payment.
- You can also pay *online by bank transfer* - your letter contains detailed instructions. Please still send the completed form back to the office with an indication of payment method after paying online.

Thank you for your cooperation.

*Sonja Lenz, Secretary*

## 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 NPA. It can be to lead walks or 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.

## Gerry Jacobson's new book

### *Altitude: High Country Haibun and Tanka Poetry*

by Gerry Jacobson, 42 pp. Cost: \$20

ISBN: 0648445410, 9780648445418

Published: 21 March 2021

Canberra: Hill Corner Press

Available from Gerry, phone 02 6281 3850 or

email [jacobson@netspeed.com.au](mailto:jacobson@netspeed.com.au)



## Links to nature videos by Matthew Higgins

Waterway Wanders [https://youtu.be/itU\\_7pIBMKc](https://youtu.be/itU_7pIBMKc)

Bush Bounty <https://youtu.be/F97JpPq0JYo>

Red-belly Summer <https://youtu.be/5ERIq1qAKvA>

Kestrel Windhover <https://youtu.be/ui01bGK2BRI>

Go Goanna <https://youtu.be/Go9Vm2j-5IA>

Whales: Humpbacks ahoy <https://youtu.be/z5ZIVjFSJdQ>

Doin' the Dragon <https://youtu.be/1UTqfGI5TTs>

Bush Birth <https://youtu.be/uQksV2qW6xs>

Wombat Wanders <https://youtu.be/dndxE2yJ0zU>

Wild Black Range <https://youtu.be/Ti4FBWdmtDY>

Platypus Morn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QphTZ1DAh0&t=1s>

Wedge-tailed Eagles: Audax 2020 <https://youtu.be/OyZCrLvb4E8>

High Stakes: Snowy Mountains Winter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blUXZmCtKu0>

*'Matthew filmed these videos in the broader Bega Valley area during the last twelve months and they reflect the biological diversity of the area. All were filmed on private land and outside conservation areas which is heartening too. The film 'High Stakes' was shot by Matthew in the Snowies during 2006-09 and reflects a cross-country skier's view of winter in the back country, including huts, wildlife and climate change.'*

# General meetings

Third Thursday of the month,  
7:30 pm, Uniting Church hall, 56 Scrivener Street, O'Connor

Please refer to *Burning Issues* or the website closer to the date

## Thu 17 June

**Environmental planning in the ACT:  
opportunities and challenges**

**Rebecca Vassaroti and  
Shane Rattenbury**

The ACT's Minister for Environment, Rebecca Vassaroti, and Greens Leader/Attorney General, Shane Rattenbury, will share the ACT's government's goals for the Territory's environmental future – along with the opportunities for, and challenges to, achieving them.

## Thu 15 July

**Ginninderry Conservation Trust:  
A New Way of Working Together**

**David Maxwell**

*Managing Director*

Learn about this innovative model for nature reserve management, including an update on what is happening in the ACT area of the Murrumbidgee Corridor.

## Thu 19 August

**Annual General Meeting  
followed by  
Tracks to Destruction?**

**Di Thompson OAM**

*NPA member*

Is the claimed protection of some firebreaks/fire trails in Kosciuszko National Park & elsewhere worth the environmental costs?

More for your calendar	June	July	August
<b>Public holidays</b>	Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> – Queen's Birthday	–	–
<b>Committee meetings</b>	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</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.

### Office-bearers

<i>President</i>	Esther Gallant
<i>Vice President</i>	Cynthia Burton
<i>Secretary</i>	Sonja Lenz
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jan Gatenby
<i>Minutes Secretary</i>	Debbie Worner

### Committee members

Mike Bremers	George Heinsohn
Stef De Montis	Rosemary Hollow
Chris Emery	Kevin McCue
Rod Griffiths ( <i>Immediate Past President</i> )	Allan Sharp

### Conveners

<i>Bulletin Working Group</i>	Kevin McCue
<i>Cultural Subcommittee</i>	Rosemary Hollow
<i>Environment Subcommittee</i>	Rod Griffiths
<i>Outings Subcommittee</i>	Mike Bremers
<i>Publications Subcommittee</i>	Kevin McCue
<i>Promotion and Outreach Subcommittee</i>	Allan Sharp
<i>Work Party Co-ordinator</i>	Martin Chalk

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

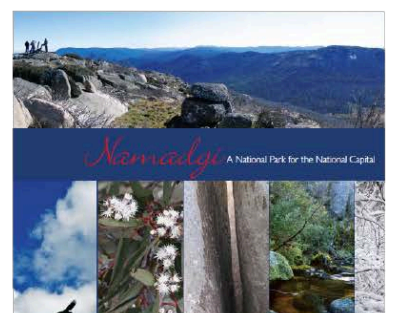
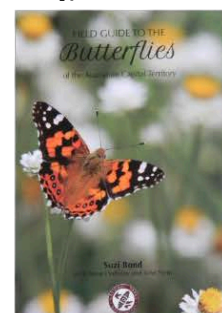
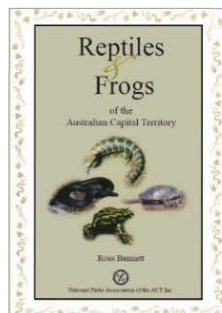
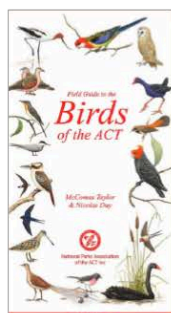
The subscription rate is \$22, which includes a **digital copy only** of our *Bulletin*.

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

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

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

NPA books are available from some bookshops (e.g. ANBG), or contact the association office.





For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our **website:** <http://www.npaact.org.au> and follow us:  
**Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/npa\\_act/](https://www.instagram.com/npa_act/)  
**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/Lovenature321>  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheACT](http://www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheACT)

