

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



# NPA Bulletin



**60 years of the *Bulletin***

**Meet Namadgi's new manager**

**Call for ACT dingo policy review**

**Why NPA opposed Namadgi huts rebuild**

*conservation education protection*

**December 2023 – Volume 60 – Number 4**

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

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

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

Contributions of articles up to 750 words, letters, poems, drawings and photos are welcome. Longer articles will be considered. Photos should be free of embedded information. The editor retains the right of final decision on content and presentation.

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

Contact the NPA office for information and rates for advertisements.

Deadline for contributions to the next issue is **1 February 2024**.

**Disclaimer:**  
**Articles by contributors  
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Front cover: *Namadgi's new manager Simon Stratford*. By Allan Sharp (see p. 9)

Back cover: Top: *Grevillea sp, unnamed plateau*. By Sue Brown

Bottom: *Banksia spinulosa*. By Jan Gatenby

# From the President

## Greetings everyone

As I write this, we've been enjoying a mostly cool October before the predicted hot summer. With these predictions comes a reminder to have our fire and emergency plans ready while hoping we won't have to use them.

Last summer the walks I planned to lead in February and March were cancelled due to forecast 38 degree temperatures. This summer I've scheduled two shorter sculpture walks to start early and, I hope, beat the heat. And thanks to Mike Bremers and walks leaders for putting together another great and varied program of walks and work parties.

I'm delighted to welcome our new committee members, Jenny Barnes, Marian Pearson, Ben Schutte and Steve Perry (see p. 4). It's great to have new ideas and enthusiasm as we plan our activities for the year ahead.

The NSW Government's decision in October to allow helicopter shooting to manage feral horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) was welcome news. We lodged a prior submission to the inquiry into the proposed aerial shooting of feral horses in KNP by the NSW Legislative Council's Animal Welfare Committee (see p. 4). Many thanks to Don Fletcher, members of the Environment Subcommittee and other members for preparing this submission. It was endorsed by the National Parks Australia Council, which asked that it also be submitted under its banner.

The committee endorsed a paper by Don Fletcher and myself on dingo management in the ACT. The paper was submitted to ACT ministers Vassarotti and Gentleman. It's a timely contribution as

the government is considering the issue. A summary of the paper is on page 8.

Committee and other members are also consulting about several ACT Government projects, including the Nature Conservation Strategy and the development of the Tidbinbilla Ridge Trail. We'll keep you updated at our monthly meetings and through *Burning Issues*.

I'm starting the summer again recovering from the removal of another melanoma. All those years working outdoors, bushwalking and skiing have caught up with me. So, a reminder, if you're thinking about a skin check, do get it done.

Our Christmas party on 10 December will be a lunchtime picnic under the trees at Jerrabomberra Wetlands. BYO refreshments and food to share, as well as friends and guests. There will also be a chance for short walks beforehand to explore the wetlands. We look forward to catching up with old members and new.

On behalf of the committee, our warmest wishes to you all for a happy and safe festive season. We hope 2024 will be an interesting and enjoyable year.

*Rosemary Hollow*



## Committee agrees to new media guidelines

New guidelines for NPA ACT engagement with the media have been approved by the committee.

A paper considered by the committee at its September meeting noted that, as a respected and authoritative conservation organisation, NPA ACT will be asked from time to time to comment on or raise issues in the form of a media release, radio or television interview, or letter to the editor.

These occasions can provide valuable opportunities for us to raise our public profile, convey key conservation messages, and enhance our authority on issues relating to national parks and nature reserves.

However, if we want to have our voice heard through the media, generally we will need to be able to respond quickly to meet sometimes tight deadlines. Often it will not be practical within the media timeframe to seek the approval of the entire committee to allow the president or spokesperson to comment.

Generally, the president should be our primary spokesperson on matters relating to NPA policy. If the issue is more specialised (e.g. a citizen science project) the president may designate a NPA member with expertise on the subject to speak on behalf of the association.

If an issue is potentially controversial and does not fit clearly within established NPA policy guidelines, the president or designated spokesperson should consult committee members or other NPA members who are knowledgeable on the topic and who agree to endorse any comment made.

Sometimes, however, this may not be practicable within the media timeframe. In such situations, and if it is still desirable to engage with the media, the president or spokesperson should take an 'in principle' position and make it clear that NPA will consider the issue more closely in consultation with members.

Committee members should, where possible, respond quickly to requests for advice from the president or designated spokesperson on content for media comment. If the majority of the committee is uncomfortable with buying into an issue, we always have the option of saying no.

### Letters to the editor

Letters on topics relating to NPA policy should be signed by the president or a designated spokesperson. An issue that has potential to be controversial or create disagreement among NPA membership should be referred to the committee or appropriate NPA members for speedy advice if the issue is topical.

NPA members who disagree with a public statement from the president or designated spokesperson should be discouraged from doing so through the media or letters pages. Rather, they should refer the issue to the committee. The media thrives on dispute, and to be seen to be disagreeing publicly risks doing harm to the association as a whole.

*NPA committee*



# NPA backs aerial shooting of Kosciuszko feral horses

*The NSW Government's decision in October to approve the resumption of helicopter shooting of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) has been welcomed by NPA ACT.*

In a prior submission to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service supporting the 2023 *Draft Amending Plan for the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan*, and its mandatory target to reduce feral horse numbers in KNP to 3,000 by June 2027, NPA ACT said helicopter shooting is normally more humane than ground shooting.

The submission notes that scientists have estimated the size of the feral horse population in KNP nine times since the late 1980s and an exponential increase the horse population has been plainly evident.

With the average annual increase in the horse population over the past 20 years remaining close to 15 per cent, evidence from other local counts suggests the number of horses has the potential to rise greatly before food shortage begins to restrict population increase. The risk to native Australian species would thereby become even more acute.

There is potential to save threatened species populations if feral horses are removed rapidly enough, keeping in mind that national and international studies have found that even low numbers of horses lead to environmental degradation. Therefore, even if the mandatory target of 3,000 by the end of June 2027 is met this will still leave considerable pressure on KNP's ecosystems.

The current control program is ineffective. The NPA ACT submission argued that aerial shooting is essential to achieve an estimated seven-fold increase



Photo by Mike Bremers

in the number of horses removed per year – this to hold the feral horse population at its current size. Achieving the 2027 target would require a 13-fold increase to remove an estimated 6,800 horses a year for the remaining 4 years.

The submission stressed that no aspect of NPA's comment, or its support for aerial control, should be construed as support for either the NSW *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* or for the deliberate retention of 3,000 horses in KNP.

It also called for greater coverage through a wide variety of media of the environmental damage of feral horses.

In October, a Senate committee examining the impacts and management of feral horse populations in the Australian Alps called for aerial culling to be allowed in NSW. The 153-page report makes 14 recommendations and recommends urgent monitoring of species impacted by feral horses.

*This is an abridged version of a submission prepared by Don Fletcher on behalf of the Environment subcommittee. You can read the full submission at <https://bit.ly/3tUHKQd>*

## New committee members

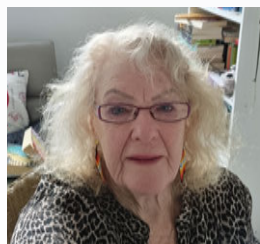
*We welcome four new members – Jennifer Barnes, Steve Perry, Ben Schutte and Marian Pearson – who were elected to the committee at the annual general meeting in August. 'With their diverse backgrounds and interests, Marian, Ben, Jennifer and Steve will bring new ideas and perspectives to our work,' said president Rosemary Hollow.*



**Jennifer Barnes**

Jennifer is our new treasurer, taking over from Jan Gatenby, who relinquished the role after doing an excellent job for several years. 'One of the things I love about the ACT is its identity as the bush capital and I'm keen to support that through the

NPA,' Jennifer said. Environmental and sustainability matters have long been her area of work and interest, especially in water policy and programs, energy efficiency, climate change and agriculture.



**Marian Pearson**

Marian previously worked in private enterprise in human resources and payroll management and has been on various boards as director and president. She lived on the South Coast for 20 years and worked in Marine Rescue as a radio operator and in the catering section at the

Rural Fire Service, including during the 2019–20 black summer fires. She moved to Canberra in 2020, where she has continued to pursue her interests in the preservation of the environment, bushwalking and travelling outback Australia.



**Steve Perry**

Steve has been a member of the NPA since 2022. A chief financial officer at an engineering firm, Steve says he is keen to help out on the committee, particularly in supporting the treasurer and office manager in their roles. Outside of work he enjoys

bushwalking, kayaking and exploring the national parks around the ACT and southern NSW.



**Ben Schutte**

Ben joined the NPA with the aim of doing a few walks, but other commitments have left him little time for this so far. Instead, he joined the committee as a way of giving back. Ben has a life-long interest in nature and a BSc in zoology. He has been volunteering with Bush Heritage Australia

for at least 10 years. As a committed Christian, he feels a duty to be involved in the stewardship of the land.

# NPA celebrates 60 years of the *Bulletin*

We've come a long way in the 60 years since that first bimonthly issue of the *Bulletin* – eight typed pages without photographs – was published in April–May 1963.

The driver behind the early *Bulletins* was NPA founder Nancy Burbidge, who also wrote most of them. In those first years the *Bulletin* was copied onto A4 paper using a Roneo machine, then stapled and folded.

But it seems some things never change and that some of the same battles fought 60 years ago are still being fought today.

The main article in the first issue concerned the 'spoilation' of the 'Kosciusko Primitive Area' by works proposed by the Snowy Mountains Authority. Today conservationists are alarmed by the 'spoilation' being caused by Snowy 2.0 and feral horses.

Other topics covered in that first issue were an outing from Piccadilly Circus to Mount Coree with 60 people attending! Something, perhaps, today's walks leaders could dream about – or not. There were also autumn bird and plant notes and a schedule of upcoming outings.

In 1963, Fiona Brand prevailed on a friend to draw the possum which was used on the cover from the October 1963 issue until the June–July 1971 issue when a new look incorporating the NPA badge over an outline of the ACT was introduced. Designed by Ed Slater, the kangaroo and emu 'footprints' on the badge symbolised the two animals in the Australian Coat of Arms – placed either side of a shield spelling out ACT.

For some reason, the logo disappeared from the cover between 1974 and 1980, when the cover feature was changed to a stylised water, tree and mountain image. It reappeared in March 1981 with a new cover designed by then editor Reg Alder, featuring a black and white photo of Namadgi.

And then, in March 2008, under long-time editor Max Lawrence, the *Bulletin* transitioned to full colour.

'There was great excitement when the first NPA *Bulletin* for 2008 was printed with a full glossy colour cover,' Annette Smith wrote in the NPA's 50th anniversary issue in March 2010. 'Our *Bulletin* in 2010 is a showpiece for the wonderful photographers in the Association.'

And so it has been since.

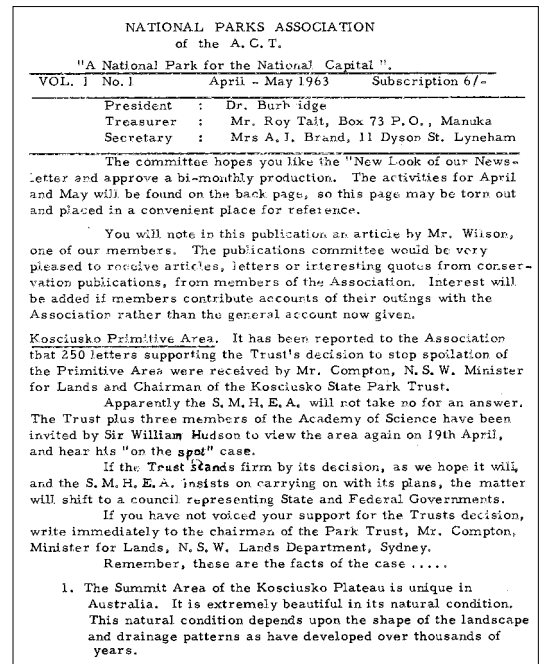
In March 2020, using new software, the *Bulletin* underwent another revamp under Sabine Friedrich, who took over from long-term designer Adrienne Nicholson.

And in December 2022 the old 'kangaroo and emu footprints' logo was replaced with the new NPA logo featuring the Royal Bluebell against a backdrop of mountains.

Over the years the *Bulletin* has covered many significant environmental and conservation issues and campaigns in the ACT and region, and beyond, including the proclamation of Gudgenby Nature Reserve in 1979, the gazettal of Namadgi National Park in 1984 and the disastrous bushfires of 1983, 2003 and 2020.

Another long-term editor, Syd Comfort, noted in an interview for the Oral History Project in 1999: 'For a lot of members the *Bulletin* provides the major association with the organisation.'

And long may it continue to do so. At 60, we are still going strong, thanks to the firm foundations laid by our many past editors, designers and contributors too numerous to mention.



NPA Bulletin Vol 1 No 1 Apr-May 1963

Happy 60th!

The Editors



- NPA Bulletins: (1 to r):  
 Vol 2 No 1 Feb - May 1964  
 Vol 8 No 6 Jun - Jul 1971  
 Vol 11 No 3 Mar - May 1974  
 Vol 18 No 3 Mar 1981  
 Vol 45 No 1 Mar 2008  
 Vol 57 No 1 Mar 2020 (current design)  
 Vol 59 No 4 Dec 2022 (new logo)

# Why NPA ACT opposed Namadgi huts rebuild

*NPA president Rosemary Hollow explains the reasons for not supporting the rebuilding on two huts lost in the 2020 Orroral Valley bushfire*

The rebuilding of historic huts after bushfires has been a challenging issue for NSW, Victorian and ACT park agencies since the loss of huts in alpine areas in the 2003 and 2020 bushfires.

ACT Environment Minister Rebecca Vassarotti announced in October that two new huts would be built in Namadgi National Park near the original sites of Demanding Hut and Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut, which were lost in the 2020 Orroral Valley bushfire. She noted that nearly 90 per cent of respondents in a public consultation process supported rebuilding the huts.

impression that, before the fires, there was an intact hut in good condition. Because these ruins are so close to Horse Gully Hut, the new hut would unlikely ever be needed as a shelter for bushwalkers and cyclists from the weather.

Welcome news in Minister Vassarotti's media release was that, as part of the Historic Huts project, the government will engage with First Nations people 'to include their stories of culture and occupation in the interpretative designs and construction of the new sites'.

Evocative ruins and remains can still tell a story of the site and would be an appropriate response to engage people in the full story of the site, covering use of the area by First Nations peoples and settler/stockmen, and the effect of fire on the huts.



*Artist impression, Demanding Hut. Image supplied*

NPA ACT opposed the proposal to rebuild the two huts at these sites. Our submission stated that a conservation management plan should be prepared for all the stockman's huts listed on the ACT Heritage Register, and that the remediation and interpretation — the ways in which information is communicated to visitors to an educational, natural or recreational sites — of these huts should be part of that plan, rather than being considered separately in the context of fire damage.

We were concerned that the proposal to rebuild did not meet the Burra Charter guidelines, which define the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of heritage places, and that it would be more appropriate to implement the Australian Heritage Council 2019 guidelines for managing ruin sites.

Before the 2020 fires, Demanding Hut was in poor condition from years of neglect and lack of use. From a heritage perspective, it is inappropriate to rebuild a structure even close to the original site that gives the

Our submission referred to the loss of huts after fire and the responses of NSW and Victorian parks agencies. The 2003 fires in KNP destroyed 13 intact huts and one standing ruin.

The 2006 KNP Plan of Management (amended in 2010 and 2014) states that issues to be considered in rebuilding of huts include the recreational use of the hut, its location and park zone in which it was situated; the hut's interpretative or educational role; environmental issues associated with the structure and its use; visitor safety and liability risks; and the costs of reconstruction and ongoing maintenance.

Huts reconstructed or repaired in KNP after the 2003 fires included Teddy's Hut, Doctor Forbes, O'Keefe's and Pretty Plain, which are regularly used by walkers, ski tourers and recreational users. Huts not replaced include Burrungubugee.

In the 2020 bushfires in KNP, 11 huts were lost. By March 2023, two of them, Sawyer's Hill Hut and Delaney's Hut, had been rebuilt from timbers treated with fire retardants, and with watering systems installed. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has announced it will rebuild 10 of the huts lost in the 2020 fires.



*Artist impression, Max and Bert Oldfield's Hut. Image supplied*

In the 2003 fires, 29 huts in the Victoria's Alpine National Park were destroyed. Parks Victoria rebuilt just six of them, including two management huts, two previous cattlemen huts, and Michell Hut and Federation Hut, which are refuges for bushwalkers and ski tourers.

# 'Johnny Boy' makes welcome return to NPA

*Best known to thousands of bushwalkers for his Johnny Boy's Walkabout Blog, John Evans talks about a passion that became an obsession. Allan Sharp reports.*

A desire to share with his family the places he went and the sights he saw prompted John Evans to start his famous bushwalking blog.

'My family really aren't into the outdoors,' John recalled, 'and my dear wife kept asking questions like "Why do you always photograph hills and the bush? What about some people, at least to give a sense of scale?"'

Familial interest quickly faded, and the blog became a vehicle to encourage others to get outside and 'breathe a bit of fresh air'.



*Some people John walks with celebrate significant summits by doing head stands! Photo by John Evans*

In the 20 years since, his Johnny Boy's Walkabout Blog and associated Facebook page have grown to around a thousand subscribers and followers, with nearly 450,000 views by over 200,000 visitors.

John is modest about the blog's success. 'This is encouraging in that a minuscule contribution may be being made to an appreciation of nature, in opposition to the developed world's rampant consumerism and headlong destruction of our ecosystem,' he said.

John took up serious bushwalking when he retired in 2004. 'As a retired baby boomer with a little spare time, I took it up with a passion. I did a hands-on navigation course and got sucked right in.'

'My passion turned into an obsession. I enjoy being in our natural environment, although struggle to identify the varied flora and fauna.'

So how did the name Johnny Boy's Walkabout Blog come about?

'Do you have a child who likes to press your buttons?' he asked. 'I do. That's where "Johnny Boy" came from. I have much respect

for Indigenous people's old culture, hence the "Walkabout".'

John describes himself as an inveterate list ticker who loves poring over maps.

'Bagging the map-named hills in the ACT provided a suitable challenge. There are 21 over 1,500 m and a further 22 worth topping for the views. Of course, it's the relative prominence that can be the killer. After ticking off the list, I discovered there was a geocache on each, so had to redo them.'

Of all the walks he's done he singles out a series of birthday walks to Mount Namadgi, one of the triumvirate of peaks at the heart of Namadgi National Park.

'Over the years it's changed from a very long and hard day walk to a 3-day pack walk as legs weary. It holds memories of celebrations with wonderful friends,' he said.

'The indigenous rock arrangement on the side of Mount Namadgi is a special place to be respectfully visited. On high hills such as this, one feels like a soaring eagle, rather than a flapping old chook!'

And there are walks he wants to do again. 'I've visited the Budawangs several times but would like to walk there again. Recently, I came across a marvellous, professionally produced map by a local ACT walker. It whetted my appetite.'

## *My passion turned into an obsession. I enjoy being in our natural environment, although struggle to identify the varied flora and fauna*

Now into his 70s, John admits to slowing down. 'The big C, a stem cell transplant, ongoing chemotherapy and being immunocompromised has slowed me down dramatically. I took a tumble in the bush some months ago and dislocated my shoulder, damaging nerves to my forearm and fingers. So, I can no longer breaststroke through the regrowth with confidence. Or is it just advancing years?'

His advice for someone wanting to take up bushwalking?

'Join a bushwalking club. Start with a trip within your current capabilities, then challenge yourself in manageable increments. Take advantage of established clubs' safety frameworks and vast knowledge of places to visit. Enjoy walking with others. Ask questions – you'll get ten different answers from six different companions as to gear preferences. After a while, pay something back.'

John rejoined NPA earlier this year, initially at the urging of friend and NPA outings convener Mike Bremers, after discontinuing membership of all but one local club some years ago.

'I've always admired NPA ACT for its strong environmental stance, publications and interesting outings. It's great to be back as a member,' he said.

John received an OAM in 2021 for services to bushwalking, and to the community (see *NPA Bulletin* March 2011). Being primary carer for his disabled wife limits the number of overnight trips he can do.

An active Christian and ordained minister of religion, John used to be known as the 'faster pastor', but now contributes to the bushwalking community by marrying friends who have met through club trips.



*On the way to Illawong, Kosciuszko National Park. (l to r) Mike Bremers, John Evans and Daniel Parsons. Photo by Brian Slee*



*View south from Mount Namadgi. Photo by John Evans*



## Time to review ACT dingo policy

*A rational review of dingo management policy in the ACT is needed, say Don Fletcher and Rosemary Hollow*

Recent national genetic research extends what ACT Government scientists have long known for the ACT region – that the wild-living populations of dog-like animals are dingoes.

Previously referred to as ‘wild dogs’, ‘feral dogs’ or ‘dingoes and other wild dogs’, and *Canis lupus dingo* or *Canis familiaris dingo*, these animals have very little domestic dog in their genome, in spite of their contrasting appearance to the popular conception of what a dingo looks like.

Based on the research, they are best known as dingoes, *Canis dingo*. Also, there are no populations of feral dogs in the ACT region. The recent DNA research showed that even the ACT Government’s understanding of the animals as ‘dingoes with a little dog in them’ needs revising because there has been even less hybridisation between dingoes and dogs than was thought 11 years ago when the *ACT Vertebrate Pest Strategy 2012–2022* was published.

The terms ‘wild dog’ and ‘feral dog’ in relation to either the dog populations in national parks and elsewhere, or the control operations carried out to manage their predation on sheep are no longer justified. The situation is also simpler than previously described. Dingoes are simply native animals which have both harmful and beneficial effects, depending on location and context.

Our observations of ACT dingo management include seeing hundreds of bait stations along some roads, and encounters with contractors or staff doing dingo management. Occasionally we have even seen dingoes struggling in soft-jaw traps. It is evident that, in practice, the dingo has dual status in the ACT, as it should. It is protected in some places and dealt with vigorously in others.

Current management practice complies in principle with the scientific recommendation about how to manage wild species that can interbreed with domestic animals. The premise that dogs and dingoes readily interbreed is now known to be false and therefore the recommendation should be reviewed.

The recommendation itself is probably still appropriate, but for different reasons. It is to implement two kinds of zones: one where the species is totally protected and another where it and its domesticated relatives are heavily controlled.

More recent experience overseas, including with wolves in the USA, could improve the current ACT approach. However, it is commendable that the current strategy follows the science in preference to the legal declaration of the dingo as a pest.

Because of a 2021 declaration under the *ACT Pest Plants and Animals Act (2005)* that ‘*Canis lupus* Wild Dingo/Wild Dog’ is a pest animal, all that is now required for dingo control to become mandatory in the ACT is a pest animal management plan.

Dingo politics in most states and the ACT is volatile and can generate unexpected or irrational management proposals. During a prolonged episode of sheep killing in the ACT that attracted much media attention, the Conservator proposed a wild dog management plan of aerial baiting over the whole of Namadgi National Park. The intervention of the then Environment Minister, Gary Humphries, averted a potential ecological disaster.

The lessons from that ‘near miss’ are, first, that because injured sheep and farmer welfare are both highly emotive topics, decisions about wildlife management and animal welfare should be based on evidence and, second, decisions about protecting grazing businesses be planned way outside the politics of crisis. Important biodiversity protection principles and requirements in legislation and statutory documents should be enshrined as far as reasonable and possible.

There is potential for two kinds of dingo management controversy – a crisis arising from sheep killing and another over the use of 1080 poison. While 1080 use has not been seen in the ACT, experience, especially in Tasmania and New Zealand, shows there is potential for such a controversy. Social media also indicates the potential for the recent genetic research results to be used to ban 1080.

In the 25 years since Gary Humphries’ intervention, we have learned much about the role and importance of top predators. It seems sensible to not only change the legal status of the species but also rational to review ACT dingo management.

One legal solution would be to declare the dingo as a ‘controlled native species’ under the *ACT Nature Conservation Act (2014)* and prepare a succinct management plan that contains the most important policies but leaves room for adjustment of tactics and locations.

Current practice should also be reviewed to explore obvious issues, build stakeholder understanding, and check for technological updates.

*This is an edited version of a paper prepared on behalf of NPA ACT and submitted to ACT ministers Rebecca Vassarotti and Mick Gentleman.*



# 'Backward step' led to dream job

*Namadgi's new manager Simon Stratford talks to Allan Sharp about his path to the job*

When Simon Stratford heard that he was top of the list for the job of manager of Namadgi National Park, he admitted to feeling 'a bit nervous' about accepting the position.

'I walked up Stockyard Spur and up to Mount Gingera and sat on the mountain by myself and looked across the country,' he said. 'It just sat well with me. It was something I needed to do for myself, and for Namadgi to become part of my story felt right.'

Simon started in his new role in July, replacing former long-term manager Brett McNamara (see *NPA Bulletin*, September 2023).

'It's a really interesting time to come in as manager because the review of the 2010 Plan of Management is underway, and it's good to be in at the start of that process,' he said.

As he settles into the role, Simon has been asking a lot of questions, particularly 'around what we do and whether we know it works,' he said. 'There are a lot of steps we can take to improve how we manage the park and nature and cultural preservation, and this being helped with the use of new technologies such as thermal imaging for pest management.'

Recruited into ACT Parks by Brett McNamara, Simon intentionally took a drop in level in 2016 to learn 'on-ground details' by becoming a ranger.

'A year or so at Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve opened my mind to what a beautiful place we have here,' he said. 'It was just fantastic for me to come back and work on the land again.'

From there he moved back into 'town' before stepping up to manage the woodlands sanctuary at Mulligans Flat.

Born in Victoria, Simon studied nature tourism at La Trobe University under Deidre Slattery, author of *Australian Alps*, a book on the climate, geology and soils, plants and animals and human history of Kosciuszko, Alpine and Namadgi national parks.

National parks and mountains are in Simon's blood. 'I've always known what I wanted to do,' he said. 'I was brought up fishing on the Murray with dad and mum and it was just part of what we did, learning about nature and talking about it.'



*Simon Stratford. Photo by Allan Sharp*

***'I'm incredibly grateful to be here, to work with NPA and other people who have a vested interest in the park.'***

After university, Simon did a season as a guide in the Northern Territory, travelling through Arnhem Land, Kakadu, the Kimberley, and Katherine Gorge. Later he completed his Masters of Environment at Melbourne University before working with Giant Pandas for a year in Changqing National Park in China.

'I don't take the responsibilities of my new job lightly when I consider the legacy of people who have been here before me – especially our Indigenous people, the custodians of this place,' he said.

'I'm incredibly grateful to be here, to work with NPA and other people who have a vested interest in the park.'





Clearing of native vegetation in Wedding Bells State Forest in the proposed Great Koala National Park. Photo courtesy of NPA NSW

## NSW biodiversity legislation failing

*NSW biodiversity legislation is not up to meeting current environmental challenges. Ed Highley reports*

A hard-hitting report into NSW's biodiversity legislation says the present Act is 'not meeting its primary purpose of maintaining a healthy, productive and resilient environment, and is never likely to do so'.

At its outset, the report states:

*For centuries, economic development has largely ignored the inescapable primacy of the environment. Ultimately, this has damaged both the environment and development. A nature positive approach recognises nature as essential for human well-being and economic development.*

The independent review of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, headed by former treasury secretary and conservationist Dr Ken Henry, was tabled in the NSW Parliament on 24 August. The panel received over a thousand submissions from individuals, groups and in form letters.

The report details a range of formidable environmental disturbances severely challenging biodiversity across NSW. These include clearing of native vegetation, climate change, invasive weeds, feral animals, extensive bushfires, water extraction from major river systems, and native forest logging. An explicit graphic in the report chillingly illustrates the current parlous state of the natural environment and the ongoing threats to native plants and animals.

Just one such major threat is the unabated clearing of native vegetation. The reviewers note that between 2018 and 2021 the average annual rate of clearing of native woody vegetation increased by one-third compared with 2009–17. For the 4 years (2018–21) since the start of the Act, over 379,000 hectares of native vegetation have been cleared in NSW. Forests are biodiversity hot spots, home to myriad species of interdependent fungi, plants and invertebrate and vertebrate animals, above and below ground.

Because of deficiencies in its operating provisions, the Act has little chance of reversing such trends, the review panel says. Critically, the Act's objectives are undermined by other legislation relating to native vegetation

management, land use planning and approvals, and public and private forestry.

***An overarching message is that even over the short time since declaration of the Act, the world view of development and the environment has changed.***

Also, key programs under the Act are limited in scope, under-resourced and lack sufficient monitoring, reporting and evaluation. The reviewers lament the limited involvement of Aboriginal people in program design and on-ground implementation, noting a need 'to recognise the intrinsic relationship between biodiversity and Aboriginal culture, and embed Aboriginal participation at all levels – advisory, decision-making and delivery'.

An overarching message in the review report is that even over the short time since declaration of the Act, the world view of development and the environment has changed, specifically the balance between economic, social and environmental considerations.

The Act was framed under ecologically sustainable development concepts, with the balance inevitably favouring development. The review panel notes that the balance has now shifted, and that global ambition has moved to a 'nature positive' framing 'that emphasises the need to repair past damage and to take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, putting nature on a path to recovery so that thriving ecosystems can support future generations'. In other words, nature and the environment need to take primacy in development plans.

In summing up, the review panel puts the strong case that the future wellbeing of the people of NSW rests upon beginning the repair of nature. For that to occur, the *Biodiversity Act* must, among many other things, trump competing laws, proactively combat climate change, and guide and promote investment in conservation and restoration activities.

The full report can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3SiAvMb>. It makes 58 recommendations grouped under seven main headings. Many of the recommendations, however, deal with matters that could be considered minutiae in the grand scheme of things. It might have been better to further amalgamate them into a tighter agenda, which would perhaps favour more expeditious attention and response by government.

# NPA people

## From tail-ender to walks leader

*Marlene Eggert recalls her early bushwalking efforts to keep up with the group to planning and leading her own walks*

Bushwalking didn't come into my life until I was 60 years old. Hiking was something that I had been wanting to do for some time. When the opportunity arose to give bushwalking a go, I was lucky that NPA members helped me along the way.

It wasn't the easiest start to a new hobby. During my first few hikes with NPA I focused entirely on keeping up with the group and not complaining. And on coming home I would snooze the effort off on the couch.

When I thought that I would like to do some harder walks, I didn't get accepted because I could not assure leaders that I would manage the hike. I would be asked whether I had been up Mount Tennent or up Mount Gingera from Corin Dam. I hadn't, and I didn't have the confidence to try climbing up on my own until NPA member and experienced walker Margaret Power came to my rescue and did the two climbs with me. I am eternally grateful for her assistance because it gave me the credentials that I needed to spread my wings a bit wider.

Looking at the walks program, I thought I wouldn't mind trying pack walking, but would my, by now, 64-year-old body agree? And I had none of the equipment necessary. I put an ad in the *NPA Bulletin* and was lucky that another NPA member, Judith Webster, sold me her pack-walking gear. I remember my head swimming as Judith went with me through all the bits and pieces. I was particularly stunned by the foldable bucket! But in the end, I put all the gear in the car to take with me. At home, with the help of the internet, I had a go at putting up the tent. I got there but gee, did I think that tent tiny!

### *There is the real exhilarating freedom of self-reliance that comes with carrying what you need on your back*

On my first pack-walking weekend it drizzled non-stop, but I loved it. Waking up at dawn, listening to the bird calls. Or hearing the wind gusts rolling in during the night at Broken Dam Hut in Kosciuszko National Park. Stepping out into the morning frost. There is the real exhilarating freedom of self-reliance that comes with carrying what you need on your back. My body needs some physiotherapy support to cope with pack walking, however.

Last year, after retiring from work, I started leading walks, beginning with simple hikes that I could lead with confidence. I discovered that even on an easy walk keeping the group together takes much watchfulness. I used to work as a registered nurse, so people skills and watching out for people are easy territory for me. Navigation is where I need to develop more skills because I want to be able to navigate without GPS support should the need arise. I am currently doing the Canberra Bushwalking Club



navigation course, and phew, it's a steep learning curve!

There are a few things that I really enjoy about leading walks. Coming up with a new walk is exciting: studying the maps for options and doing a recce to explore a new walk's feasibility. I like enabling busy working folk to get out hiking by offering half-day walks that don't require super fitness. The walks style that I am starting to develop is quite relaxed and focuses on participants enjoying the great Australian bush. I now have people signing up for hikes and reminiscing how much they enjoyed a previous one, which is really lovely. Bring on the next hike!

*If you are interested in becoming a walks leader, contact outings convener Mike Bremers at [mike@npaact.org.au](mailto:mike@npaact.org.au)*



*Camels Hump from Johns Peak, Tidbinbilla. Photo by Jan Gatenby*



## The return of the Bogong

*Cultural and artistic celebrations of Bogong Moths around Canberra bring the moth alive, writes Kathy Binns*

We live in hope that the Bogong Moth population will continue to recover, providing sustenance to high country mammals, reptiles and birds, as well as an important cultural connection for Indigenous people.<sup>1</sup>

When Ed Highley's article 'Is this goodnight to the Bogong moth?' was published in the September 2022 *NPA Bulletin*, there wasn't much hope.

But Tim the Yowie Man's 26 November 2022 *Canberra Times* article proclaimed 'Howzat! Bogongs back from the ashes'.

The *NPA Bulletin* March 2023 linked to good news about this iconic creature that was formerly a bothersome pest in Canberra's early summer. After good rains, *The Guardian* reported, Bogong Moth numbers had bounced back in the 2022 season, with this season's live sighting records of Bogong Moths in Canberra starting in September.

Cultural and artistic celebrations of Bogong moths abound in Canberra. These artworks bring the moth alive by telling many rich stories.

You'll need to put your walking shoes on to visit Namarag, one of the newest sites to tell stories of the Bogong Moth. Namarag was developed in collaboration with the local Ngunnawal people and is a nature space in the Molonglo River Reserve between the new suburbs of Whitlam and Denman Prospect. It includes numerous artworks, including what is probably the largest depiction of a Bogong Moth, on the paving of the Bugang Events Terrace. The video on the ACT Government's Namarag website credits Lynnice Church as the Ngunnawal artist for Namarag.

From your car, in Tuggeranong Valley, you can drive past a large sculptural work 'Moth ascending the capital', designed to evoke the image of a Bogong Moth bursting into flight.

When you park your car to visit the National Museum of Australia, have a look at the [large Bogong Moths](#) based on a design by Ngunnawal artist Jim Williams, next to the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. The work was commissioned to celebrate the history and ongoing culture of the traditional landowners, the Ngunnawal people. Bogong Moths were, of course, an important food source.<sup>2</sup>

Walking through Civic, near the merry-go-round, look down at the pavement to find the [quilt-like image](#) referencing Canberra's Aboriginal and European cultural and natural history. The design features the Molonglo River, the Bogong Moth, Kangaroo Grass and oral histories.

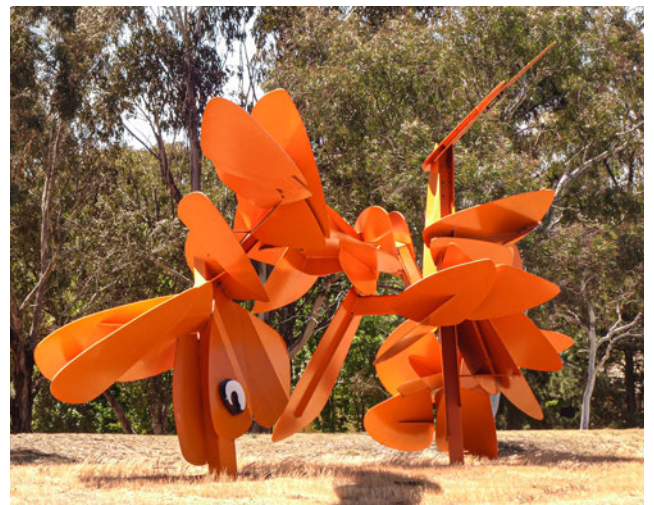
Get your skateboard out (or drive past) [this bright mural](#) by George Rose Phibs on the wall of the skate park behind the Canberra Centre. The little critters featured were part of the theme of flora and fauna native to the ACT region. This theme was voted on by the public.

Take a walk over the bridge to the other side of the lake, just past the National Library, to Reconciliation Place for your experience of Judy Watson's [Fire and Water sensorial journey](#).

*Top: Namarag Bogong Moth, Lynnice Church, Ngunnawal artist for Namarag. Photo by Craig Watson*

*Below (top to bottom): Moth Ascending the Capital, 2012, Drakeford Drive median at Summerland and O'Halloran Circuits, Kambah. Photo by Allan Sharp  
Jim Williams and Matthew Harding, Bogong moths, 2001, cast concrete, National Museum. Photo by Allan Sharp*

*Urban Art Projects (floor design) and Mary Hutchinson (writer), Civic Memory Quilt, 2003. Intersection of Petrie Plaza and City Walk, Civic. Photo by Allan Sharp*



Start at the hearthstone, pass through the bower, rest on, and listen to the sounds of the gathering stone, and continue among the sinuous lines of reeds toward the misting pool.

Michael Hewes' sound design suggests both the congregation of Bogong Moths flying in on their annual migration to the high country and the gathering of people coming together to feast on them.

The hearthstone recalls the large flat Yuriarra moth stone upon which fires were lit. When the surface was hot enough, the Bogong Moths were shaken out of the dilly bags in which they had been gathered, and cooked. The people would come together to share and feast upon this rich cultural resource.

Matilda House, Ngambri cultural advisor for this artwork, stated that the Yuriarra moth cooking stone at Uriarra Station was the base camp in ancestral times for the annual ceremonial Ngambri trek from Gudgenby to the Bogong Mountains to catch Bogong (*gori*) Moths. The ceremony brought together groups of Aboriginal people to hunt and gather, and to renew their relationships. As the traditional custodians of the Bogong Mountains, the Ngambri and their kin group, the Ngurmal, hosted the ceremony.

Finish by walking east along Reconciliation Place, to the artwork '*Ngunnawal*'. *Ngunna yerrabi yanggu* meaning (you may) walk on this country now/you're welcome to leave your footprints on our land—a traditional welcome to Ngunnawal country.

This artwork features a local quarry stone alongside a slumped glass panel, depicting the migratory patterns of the Bogong Moth overlaid on a map of Australia. The moth represents the time when different language groups gathered in this area to feast on the plentiful supply of Bogongs. This annual event also enabled exchange between the various clans to carry out initiation ceremonies, reconcile differences and settle disputes.

Fortunately, there is hope for the Bogong Moth, and the songs of the local Indigenous people have also not ended (despite the lapsing of the traditional annual celebrations coinciding with the Bogong Moth migration to aestivate in the high country). Many of the outdoor art works featured here are by, or significantly involved, Indigenous artists.

So, you should be able to see Bogong Moths in Canberra somewhere this summer any time of the night (or day).

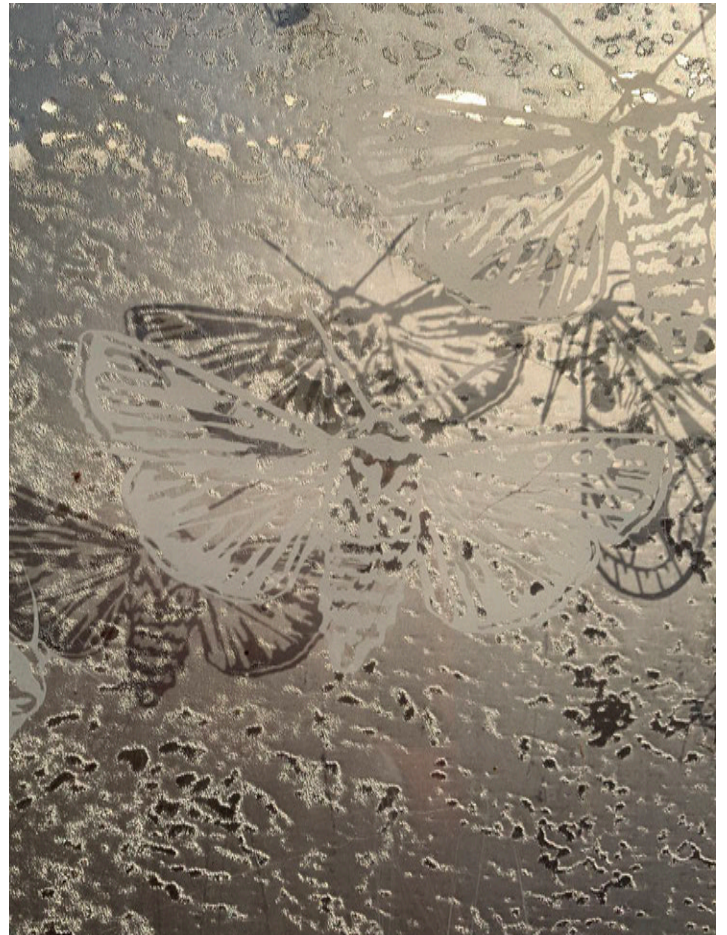


Top: Feature from Civic Memory Quilt. Photo by Kathy Binns  
Below: *Bogong Moths and Corroboree Frogs*, 2017, skate park, Civic. Photo by Allan Sharp

Kathy Binns participated in the 2021 Bundian Way Arts Exchange Program at the ANU School of Art and Design – listening to and learning from Indigenous elders and artists in SE NSW.

- 1: You can contribute to ongoing research into the Bogong Moth by taking a photo and uploading it to the [Victoria Zoos moth tracker](#).
- 2: Comprehensive information on the Bogong Moth is provided on [the Atlas of Living Australia](#).

View of '*Fire and water*' from the hearthstone in the foreground. Photo by Kathy Binns



'*Ngunnawal*'. Reconciliation Place, Canberra. Photo by Kathy Binns

# Confirmed! NatureMapr is thriving



*From small beginnings, an ACT citizen-science initiative is providing a local solution to an increasingly global movement, Jim Lehane reports*

NatureMapr all started with a mountain bike ride that nearly resulted in the trampling of a patch of critically endangered Canberra Spider Orchids in 2013. Thankfully, that event triggered a community of like-minded souls to get connected and a serious locally grown citizen science network to be built around what was initially a rough online database.

As knowledge of Canberra NatureMapr citizen-science platform grew in terms of submissions, contributors and moderators, the technology behind the platform has continued to evolve. The modern NatureMapr contains a range of features to assist contributors in documenting and measuring the natural world around them.

One of the newest tech inclusions is the artificial intelligence that automates the identification of submissions, providing a considerable time saving for the volunteer moderators who check and confirm the species reported.

NatureMapr's evolution has expanded well beyond the ACT and surrounding region to now provide national coverage for citizen scientists across Australia. With a mission to 'empower anybody to report plant or animal information anywhere in Australia and ensure the information gets to the people that need to know about it', NatureMapr is about to see a large growth in users.

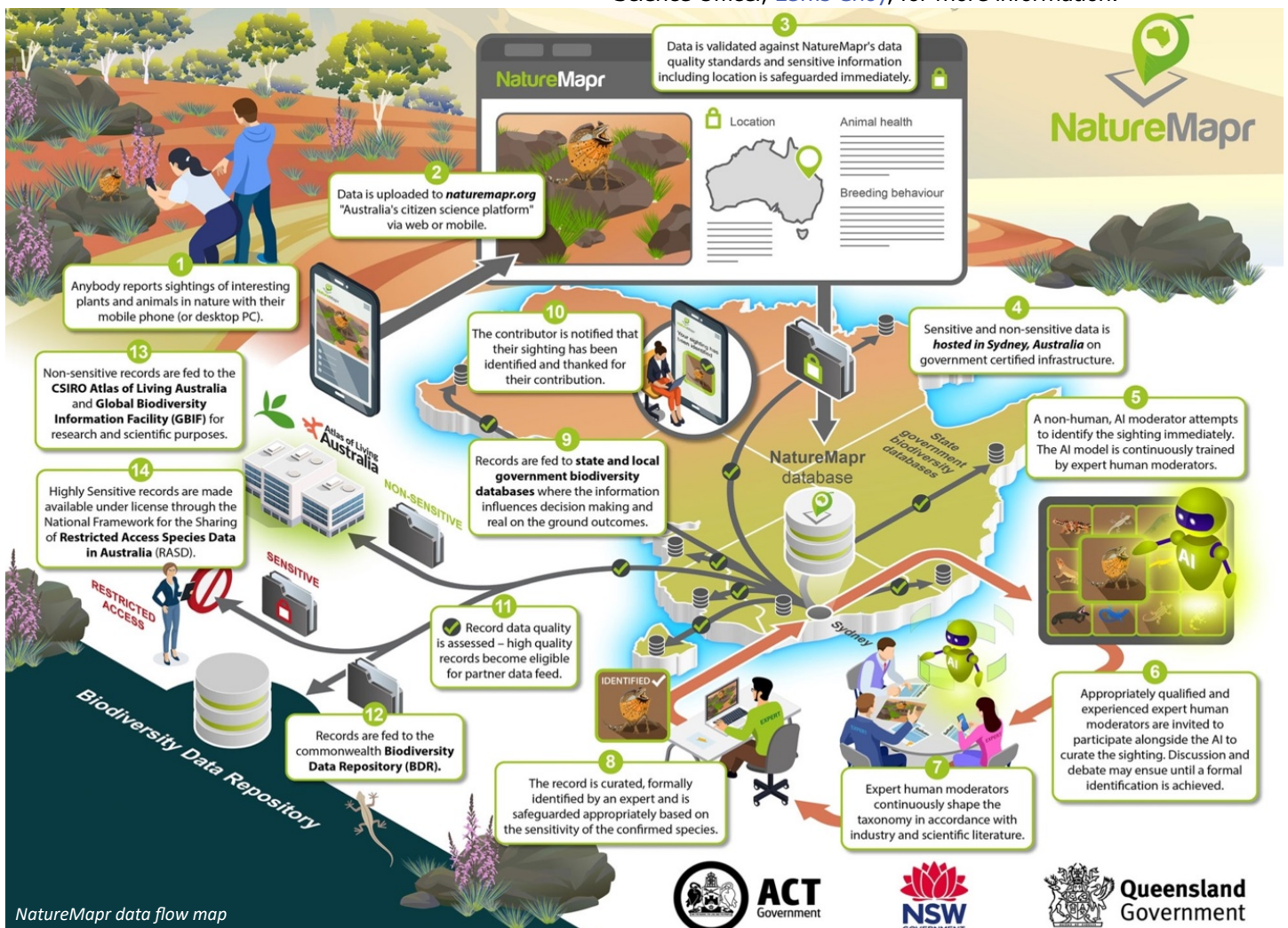
Data management is a critical aspect of the NatureMapr operation and is taken seriously by all involved. To be a respected citizen-science platform that directly feeds data to Australian Government decision-makers, it needs to be.

NatureMapr is integrated with partners through ensuring that data is in conformity with the Australian Biodiversity Information Standard (ABIS). The NatureMapr data-flow image shows how a well-structured system has been established to ensure scientific credibility while maintaining information securely. This is sure to give NatureMapr users confidence that they are contributing to a serious scientific community and that their data will be made visible to decision-makers.

Collecting all this data for the range of end users is a good thing. However, enhancements to the NatureMapr platform have now made Species Richness Scores (SRS) and Survey Effort Scores (SES) available to all users. These scores provide an indication of the general biodiversity of a location as well as exposing locations that may be data deficient and need to be populated with more records. The SRS is a weighted score with increased value placed on native, threatened and migratory species. These additional functions provide interesting information to inspire contributors, but also ease of access for decision-makers seeking to information relating to specific locations.

With over 2 million submissions covering nearly 20,000 species and almost 6,000 locations, NatureMapr will only continue to evolve as Australians become aware and start submitting contributions. Having originated as Canberra Nature Map and now extending across the country, this platform provides a local solution to an increasingly global citizen-science movement.

If you are interested in contributing while learning about local species, you can visit [NatureMapr](#) with its app for uploads at your preferred app store. NatureMapr has also kicked off a schools and community engagement program which is inspiring students and community groups to get involved. Contact NatureMapr's Citizen Science Officer, [Lewis Choy](#), for more information.



NatureMapr data flow map

# MOTH drawn to historic homestead



Farm buildings and machinery at Tuggeranong Homestead. Photo Mike Bremers

*After years of neglect, beauty and biodiversity are returning to a historic Canberra site, Jenny Horsfield reports*

MOTH (Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead) was formed in 1993 as a small group to lobby for the protection of the Tuggeranong Homestead site from sale, subdivision and development.

As a result of this and work by other groups like the National Trust, the 31-hectare site now has protection from development, under ACT Government heritage legislation. Its remnant woodland is a type now considered nationally threatened and worthy of further protection.



Tuggeranong Creek in flood. Photo supplied

MOTH's philosophy has been to direct all our efforts to the preservation of culturally significant aspects of the property but also, increasingly, to try to enhance the biodiversity of what is still a working farm and a commercial conference centre. To this end we have focused on three different areas of the property in the past 20 years: the historic orchard, containing many 100-year-old plantings; the old Tuggeranong Creek line; and the remnant woodland.

In 2001, MOTH was a founding member of the Southern ACT Catchment Group, a group committed to improving the quality of our water catchment and educating people about urban water design and good water practices. We hoped eventually to get money from the \$85 million Commonwealth water grants, in order to establish wetlands on the property, but were unsuccessful at that time. The Healthy Waterways program has recently received new funding and the ACT Government has committed to eventually restore the old creek line as an ephemeral wetland; but no definite timeline has been set for this work.

In 2008 the Catchment Group was able to obtain a \$17,000 ACT Environment grant which allowed much clearing of the old creek line and restoration work in the orchard. Since that time we have planted in the orchard fruit trees that have a historical connection to the place (Kentish cherries, peaches,

pears, hazelnuts). We prune the trees each winter and they are growing well. Nearby is a healthy patch of asparagus which has been growing on the property since the 1890s, cuttings having been brought down from the Riversdale property in Goulburn.

In 2011, Ian Lawrence, Senior Fellow of the Cooperative Research Centre University of Canberra, prepared a technical report about the feasibility of returning water to Tuggeranong Creek as a series of ephemeral wetlands. Ian gave us much valuable advice on how to repair the degraded creek area with suitable plantings. MOTH has spent most of the past 12 years staging a recovery of vegetation along the creek line and surrounding areas, planting local tree species, native shrubs as understory next to the creek line, and grasses and sedges to hold the banks.

This is an ongoing project which includes control of African Lovegrass by shading it out with a growing tree canopy and having native grasses outcompete it. At the margins of the area, we have planted a range of local eucalypts as the beginning of a connective corridor we hope eventually will link to the woodland.



Black Sallee. Photo supplied

The managers still graze cattle occasionally in the woodland but there is a fine collection of Yellow Box and Red Gum trees there, with some regeneration occurring. Some years ago MOTH volunteers, together with Conservation Volunteers Australia, cleared all the large blackberry infestations in the woodland.

MOTH holds regular weekly working bees and we very much enjoy our work at the property. We see beauty and biodiversity returning to areas that had suffered neglect since the 1970s when the local government resumed the property.

*Jenny Horsfield is Chair of MOTH and a Canberra writer and historian*

# NPA outings program

## Bushwalk grading guide *December 2023 – March 2024*



### Distance grading (per day)

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

### Terrain grading

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Transport** The NPA suggests a passenger contribution to transport costs of **45 cents per kilometre** for the distance driven divided by the number of occupants of the car including the driver, rounded to the nearest dollar. The amount may be varied at the discretion of the leader. Drive and walk distances shown in the program are approximate for return journeys.

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

### Points to note:

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

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

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

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

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

### Check-in/Emergency contact:

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

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

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

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

### COVID-19 arrangements:

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

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

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

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

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



## NPA outings program December 2023 – March 2024 (page 2 of 4)

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>2 December</b><br/>Saturday morning walk</p>   | <p><b>Granite tors walk (NPA/CBC)</b><br/>Begins with short walk on old road to the Geodetic Observatory above Orroral Valley. Grand views. We'll then head north-west, at first using the track that winds along the ridge. We'll continue off track through Lunar Laser Rocks and Haggis Rocks, so named in rock-climbing book <i>ACT Granite</i>. They are magnificent tors. A little scrambling. A steep descent down spur to bend in James Creek. Around 10 km and 400 m climb. Early start and home for lunch. Wear a Christmas decoration! Register with leader by 29 November.</p>  | <p>Map: Rendezvous Creek 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 2A/B/D/E/F<br/>Drive: 70 km, \$32 per car<br/>Leader: John Evans<br/>Contact: 0417 436 877 or <a href="mailto:jevansact@gmail.com">jevansact@gmail.com</a></p>      |
|    | <p><b>3 December</b><br/>Sunday morning walk</p> <p><b>Taylor Conservation Area</b><br/>New area between Taylor in Gungahlin and NSW border. Climb from Trewenack Street car park to border, follow Centenary Trail east, return via forest tracks. Views to city, wild flowers, kangaroos. Easy walk; many fences but none are difficult. Register with leader by 1 December.</p>  | <p>Maps: UBD Canberra street directory maps 18, 19<br/>Grading: 1A/B/C/F<br/>Leader: Brian Slee<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>                            |
|    | <p><b>9 December</b><br/>Saturday work party and Christmas party</p> <p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b><br/>Meet 9 am at Namadji Visitor Centre. Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds in vicinity of Gudgenby Cottage and Homestead (to be followed by Christmas party at Cottage). Car-pooling available for journey and tools will be provided. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>   | <p>Leader: Doug Brown<br/>Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>10 December</b><br/>Sunday Christmas party</p>   | <p><b>NPA Christmas party</b><br/>Bring friends, family and food and drinks to share at Jerrabomberra Wetlands from 11:30 am to 3 pm.<br/><i>More details in <a href="#">Burning Issues</a> and website closer to the date.</i></p>   | <p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow<br/>Contact: 0413 977 708 or <a href="mailto:rosemary@npaact.org.au">rosemary@npaact.org.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>17 December</b><br/>Sunday walk</p>        | <p><b>Perisher to Charlotte Pass</b><br/>13 km walk with total climb of about 400 m on new walkway between the two resorts. Expect spectacular views and plenty of wildflowers. Car shuffle required. Afternoon tea at Charlotte Pass Village or Jindabyne. Register by midday, 16 December.</p>  | <p>Map: Perisher 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 2A<br/>Drive: 400 km, \$180 per car + Park entry fee<br/>Leader: Mike Bremers<br/>Contact: 0428 923 408 or <a href="mailto:mcbremers@gmail.com">mcbremers@gmail.com</a></p> |
| <p><b>30 December</b><br/>Saturday walk</p>      | <p><b>Hanging Rock</b><br/>Walk partly on track from Berlang Campground in Deua National Park. Take track towards The Big Hole, then off-track to an old trail which is followed north for a kilometre. Then more off-track on an undulating and circuitous route which eventually climbs Hanging Rock from north. Return to trail and back to campground via Big Hole. About 14 km and total climb of 650 m. Partly exploratory and suitable for experienced off-track walkers. Limit of 8. Book with the leader by 28 December, preferably by email. Weather and fire conditions may mean a change of plans.</p>  | <p>Map: Kain 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 2A/B/D/F<br/>Drive: 168 km, \$75 per car<br/>Leader: Philip Gatenby<br/>Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a></p>     |
|  | <p><b>Short notice walks</b><br/>We hope to offer some short notice walks in this period. Email <a href="mailto:outings@npaact.org.au">outings@npaact.org.au</a> to join the short notice/weekly outings email list.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>7 January</b><br/>Sunday morning walk</p>  | <p><b>Yanununbeyan National Park</b><br/>We enter Yanununbeyan NP via Groses South Trail, climbing to connect with Foxlow Trail and make our way to Mount Foxlow (1,210 m) where the day's climbing ends. No views but trail allows glimpses of valley below. From summit is a steady descent down Foxlow Trail to Camelot Trail. Some venerable trees to be admired. Camelot Trail gives some views over Molonglo Valley. We go off-track for last 2 km to return to Groses South Trail to close loop, avoiding Camelot property. 17 km, 761 m elevation gain. Note: If weather is hot a very early start may be required. Limit of 10. Register with leader by 6 January.</p> | <p>Map: Captains Flat 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 3A/B<br/>Drive: 70 km, \$32 per car<br/>Leader: Marlene<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:marleneeggert@bigpond.com">marleneeggert@bigpond.com</a></p>                      |

## NPA outings program December 2023 – March 2024 (page 3 of 4)

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| <p><b>13 January</b><br/>Saturday kayak trip</p>     | <p><b>Burrinjuck Dam</b><br/>15–20 km kayak trip on Burrinjuck Dam. Exact location will be decided closer to date and will depend on water level and weather conditions. BYO kayak or canoe. Optional swim. Suitable for fit novices. Limit of 8. Contact leader by 11 January.</p>  | <p>Map: Yass 1:50,000<br/>Grading: Flatwater<br/>Drive: TBA<br/>Leader: Mike Bremers<br/>Contact: 0428 923 408 or <a href="mailto:mcbremers@gmail.com">mcbremers@gmail.com</a></p>   |
| <p><b>14 January</b><br/>Sunday morning walk</p>     | <p><b>Circumnavigating Curtin</b><br/>Meet 8:15 am at Redbrick (cnr Theodore and Carruthers, Curtin) for coffee. Circuit includes Dawson Street garden, Whyte Place rain garden, Reef Hill, Illoura, Tuggeranong track, cork oaks, 'Great Wall' and new diplomatic area. Finish with brunch at Curtin shops. 9 km, some bushland and uneven ground. Book with leader by 13 January. Walk will proceed only if forecast max is below 29°C.</p>  | <p>Maps: UBD Canberra street directory maps 67, 68<br/>Grading: 1A/B/C<br/>Leader: Brian Slee<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>  |
| <p><b>20 January</b><br/>Saturday walk</p>   | <p><b>Short notice walk</b><br/>A walk at a location to be decided a week beforehand based on weather forecast and fire risk. Details to be published on website and the weekly email.</p>   | <p>Leader: Linda Groom<br/>Contact: 0474 507 259 or <a href="mailto:lbgroom@gmail.com">lbgroom@gmail.com</a></p>   |
| <p><b>24 January</b><br/>Wednesday walks</p>   | <p><b>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity</b><br/><i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>  | <p><b>Medium/hard walk</b><br/>Leader: Philip Gatenby<br/>Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a><br/><br/><b>Easy/medium walk</b><br/>Leader: Elaine Atkinson<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:elainem.atkinson@gmail.com">elainem.atkinson@gmail.com</a></p> |
| <p><b>27 January</b><br/>Saturday walk</p>         | <p><b>Queanbeyan River, Yanununbeyan SCA</b><br/>Follow ridges from Corner Hill down to a sharp bend in the still wild Queanbeyan River. This is a reasonably short, off-track walk through open bushland with nice views of surrounding hills and river. About 8 km, 370 m elevation gain. Start time depending on the temperature on the day, but sometime between 5:30 am and 8 am with aim of being back at cars before it gets too hot. Limit of 10. Contact leader by email to book.</p>   | <p>Map: Captains Flat 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 1B<br/>Drive: 35 km, \$32 per car<br/>Leader: Marlene<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:marleneeggert@bigpond.com">marleneeggert@bigpond.com</a></p>  |
| <p><b>2–4 February</b><br/>Weekend car camp</p>  | <p><b>Nunnock Swamp, South East Forest NP</b><br/>Drive down Friday afternoon. A gentle walk each day, concentrating on plants and animals. Contact leaders for more information. Limit of 10.</p>   | <p>Leaders: Isobel Crawford, John Brickhill<br/>Contact : 0429 798 887 or <a href="mailto:johnbrickhill@gmail.com">johnbrickhill@gmail.com</a></p>   |
| <p><b>4 February</b><br/>Sunday morning walk</p>   | <p><b>Anzac Parade sculptures</b><br/>Starting early to avoid the heat, meet 8 am for leisurely 2-hour walk up and down Anzac Parade to view war memorial sculptures. An introduction to the artists, landscape, events and people they commemorate. Will conclude with conversations at a nearby cafe. Contact leader via email to register for walk and receive meeting details.</p>   | <p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow<br/>Contact: 0413 977 708 or <a href="mailto:rosemary@npaact.org.au">rosemary@npaact.org.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>10 February</b><br/>Saturday work party</p>  | <p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b><br/>Meet 9 am at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds at site to be determined in Gudgenby Valley. Car-pooling available for journey there and tools will be provided. Contact leader for registration arrangements. NB: This work party is dependent on weather being suitable for control activities and is subject to cancellation.</p>  | <p>Leader: Doug Brown<br/>Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>18 February</b><br/>Sunday morning walk</p>  | <p><b>Molonglo's ponds and playgrounds</b><br/>Meet 8 am at ACT Parks' Stromlo depot, Coombs (heading west, first right turn from Cotter Road after Streeton Drive). Follow paths connecting North Weston Pond, Coombs Pond, Ruth Park, Holden Creek Pond and Ridgeline Park. Descend to Stromlo Leisure Centre for coffee. Return via Stromlo Forest Park and Holder Wetlands. 10 km. Plenty of public art. Optional brunch at Cooleman Court.<br/>Book with leader by 16 February. Walk will only proceed if forecast max is below 29°C.</p> | <p>Maps: UBD Canberra street directory maps 56, 57, 66, 67<br/>Grading: 1A/B<br/>Leader: Brian Slee<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>  |

## NPA outings program December 2023 – March 2024 (page 4 of 4)

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|---|--|--|
| <p><b>24 February</b><br/>Saturday work party</p>   | <p><b>Honeysuckle area exotics control</b><br/>Meet 8:15 am at Kambah Village shops. This site has been visited on four previous occasions, most recently in 2020, when we removed a variety of exotic plants from the area. Cut and dab equipment will be provided, just bring gloves. Book with leader by 22 February.</p>   | <p>Drive: 87 km, \$40 per car<br/>Leader: Brian Slee<br/>Contact: <a href="mailto:brianslee@iprimus.com.au">brianslee@iprimus.com.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>25 February</b><br/>Sunday morning walk</p>   | <p><b>ANU sculptures</b><br/>Meet 8 am outside the Street Theatre in Childers Street. A leisurely 2-hour stroll starting early to avoid the heat. We'll explore some of the sculptures around the grounds of ANU and finish with conversations in a campus cafe. Contact leader via email to register for walk and receive walk details.</p>   | <p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow<br/>Contact: 0413 977 708 or <a href="mailto:rosemary@npaact.org.au">rosemary@npaact.org.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>2 March</b><br/>Saturday walk and work party</p>  | <p><b>Stockyard Arboretum and Falls</b><br/>Exploratory walk to find alternative route to Stockyard Arboretum since traditional route succumbed to regrowth and fallen timber. We will also visit the spectacular falls below the Arboretum. On our way through the Arboretum we will remove any pine wildings that we come across. Expect steep climbs and thick regrowth. Register with leader by 29 February.</p>   | <p>Map: Corin Dam 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 1A/C/D/F<br/>Drive: 130 km, \$60 per car<br/>Leader: Martin Chalk<br/>Contact: 0411 161 056</p>  |
| <p><b>9 March</b><br/>Saturday work party</p>   | <p><b>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group</b><br/>Meet 9 am at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds at site to be determined in Gudgenby Valley. Car-pooling available for journey there and tools will be provided. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>  | <p>Leader: Doug Brown<br/>Contact: 6247 0239 or <a href="mailto:kambalda@tpg.com.au">kambalda@tpg.com.au</a></p>   |
| <p><b>17 March</b><br/>Sunday walk</p>                | <p><b>Gigerline Nature Reserve</b><br/>Meet 9 am at Calwell Club car park (cnr Johnson Dr and Were St). From Angle Crossing Road we enter Gigerline Nature Reserve on eastern side of the Murrumbidgee. We walk along a fire trail for a few hundred metres before turning north off track through open woodland up and over a prominent hill with good views. We continue north to visit Guises Creek before heading cross country to the Murrumbidgee. Our return commences with climb up a steep spur then to the cars. Mostly undulating, steep at times, with some walking on fire trails but mostly off track. 8 km with 330 m ascent.</p> | <p>Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000<br/>Grading: 1A/B/C<br/>Drive: 40 km, \$18 per car<br/>Leader: Phillip Starr<br/>Contact: 0419 281 096 or <a href="mailto:phillipstarr1945@gmail.com">phillipstarr1945@gmail.com</a></p>               |
| <p><b>23 March</b><br/>Saturday work party</p>  | <p><b>Bullen Range Nature Reserve pine control</b><br/>Meet 8:15 am at Dillon Close, Weston. This work party is a continuation of the July 2023 work party. Exact location of work party will be advised closer to the date. Bring gloves, all other tools will be provided. Note that road access to site requires 4WD, please advise leader if you can offer the use of one. Book with leader by 21 March.</p>   | <p>Drive: 50 km, \$22 per car<br/>Leader: Michaela Popham<br/>Contact: 0413 537 333</p>  |
| <p><b>23–25 March</b><br/>Pack walk</p>   | <p><b>Kosciuszko National Park</b><br/>3-day pack walk in Kosciuszko National Park.<br/><i>Check website or March Bulletin for details.</i></p>  | <p>Leader: Stephen Marchant<br/>Contact: 0401 094 606 or <a href="mailto:sMarchant151@bigpond.com">sMarchant151@bigpond.com</a></p>  |
| <p><b>27 March</b><br/>Wednesday walks</p>  | <p><b>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity</b><br/><i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>  | <p><b>Medium/hard walk</b><br/>Leader: Philip Gatenby<br/>Contact: 0401 415 446 or <a href="mailto:philip.gatenby@gmail.com">philip.gatenby@gmail.com</a><br/><b>Easy/medium walk</b><br/>Leader: Mike<br/>Contact: 0412 179 907</p> |



Black Mountain walk. Photo by Jean Geue

## Bushwalk report



### *Brown Trig – an outing worth repeating*

*View westwards. Photo by Steve Glaznieks*

**Date:** Sunday 13 August 2023

**Participants:** Brian Slee (leader), Joanne Brown, Bronwyn Drain, David Drain, Kerry Fereday, Steve Glaznieks, Sandy McInerney, Jonathan Miller, Margaret Power, Galia Shy

**Weather:** Cloudy, cold

When listing this outing in the NPA program, I envisaged a frosty morning, blue skies and views of snow. In the event it was cold but with few of the glories. Even the early year greenery had disappeared. However, the wattle was blossoming, and it proved to be an easy walk in an area unfamiliar to most participants.

The attendance sheet again warned of cyclists but only one was to be seen all day. We had gathered at Coopers fire trail car park, next to Uriarra Road, at 9 am and set off south at a fast pace. After stringing out along the

road, we reassembled within sight of the trig to ponder the structures located where ANU Ionospheric Trail descends from Mount Stromlo.

According to the ANU website, its station, originally called the Ionospheric Prediction Service hut, was built in 1935. While no longer occupied, the equipment continues to monitor solar storms and radiation. The ionosphere (between 75 and 1,000 km above Earth) is made up of radiation from the sun and space and is also where satellites are in low Earth orbit. Solar flares increase radiation and can interfere with satellite communication.

One advantage of climbing to Brown Trig in winter is the wilted state of the weeds that otherwise infest the slope. We were on top (719 m) at 10:10 am for morning tea. And yes, cloud sat on the distant peaks. Nice to see lots of roos bouncing about. A trio of Flame Robins also paid a visit.

Trunks of pines from the former forest now litter the contoured northern slope; a flock of choughs fled before us. It is an awkward descent in places, but we were soon returning north on Stoney Creek fire trail before steering onto Bennett fire trail. Back at the cars at 11:45 am, 10 km, no rain. Afterwards, most of the group gathered for a chatty brunch at Morning Dew, Denman Prospect.

Good to have two non-members join the walk. An outing worth repeating in an easily accessible area close to the city. Choose one of those ideal days and be startled by the views.

*Brian Slee*



*Steve bags another trig. Photo by Brian Slee*



*Descending from Paralyser Trig. Photo by Brian Slee*

## Snowshoeing reports

### *Paralyser Ridge — a snowshoeing favourite*

**Date:** Monday, 21 August 2023

**Participants:** Mike Bremers (leader), John Evans, Daniel Parsons, Brian Slee

**Weather:** Mild; clear at first, clouding over from late morning; breezy on peaks

In the middle of a changeable season, this outing was postponed for 2 days to take advantage of a moderate snow dump. Conditions were still expected to be only marginal but, after an icy introduction, proved to be almost ideal.

We convened at Calwell at 6:15 am where John and I were invited aboard Mike's new 'Wildfire red' Prado for the journey south. Who could refuse to be transported in a vehicle equipped with a drink-chilling console and heated leather seats? Fog persisted until well past Cooma, but we met Daniel in Guthega at 9 am under a bright sun (some car spaces remained).

What snow there was in the village was icy and it was not until more than a kilometre along Illawong Track that we put on snowshoes, first time for Daniel. A fox fled on the other side of the Snowy. During morning tea at Illawong Hut, Mike decided not to cross the river but continue south and make a circuit, retracing our 2022 route up onto Paralyser Ridge (*NPA Bulletin* Dec. 2022).

You initially climb the slope with an eye for a clear passage on good snow. Once above 1,750 metres and past the dead Snow Gums (ringbarked by beetles), the allure of ancient colourful Snow Gums begins to affect your course. Hence, no two climbs are the same. We emerged onto the ridge at a



*John Evans and Mike Bremers at Paralyser Trig. Photo by Brian Slee*

rocky hill, north of the 2022 route, and within sight of the trig. All the Main Range peaks filled the western horizon. Lunch at 12:35 pm was out of the wind, east of the trig (1,987 m), with Mount Perisher in view. Snowboarders and skiers came and went.

A cloud front had been steadily advancing from the west, so our descent began at 1 pm in beautiful pearly grey light. The snow had softened, and it was a delightful descent right down the spine of the ridge to Illawong Track and the bridge across the creek. Back in Guthega at 2:45 pm, 10 km. Basecamp café was still open; we had tea/coffee on the deck; cold metal seats but lovely framed view.



*John Evans climbing the ridge. Photo by Mike Bremers*

Avalanches reported in the High Country by *Wild* were not evident on The Paralyser. However, Mike noticed a substantial slump had occurred on a Main Range slope.

We did not stop on the return drive, arriving 6 pm. This route has become a snowshoeing favourite so will surely be repeated. Unfortunately, several starters were prevented by work commitments from attending on the rescheduled date and it is hoped they can come sometime in the future.

*Brian Slee*



Peak 2100. Photo by Mike Bremers

## South Ramshead Range: snow aplenty

**Date:** Thursday, 24 August 2023

**Participants:** Mike Bremers, Max Smith, Brian Slee

**Weather:** Blue sky, cold wind

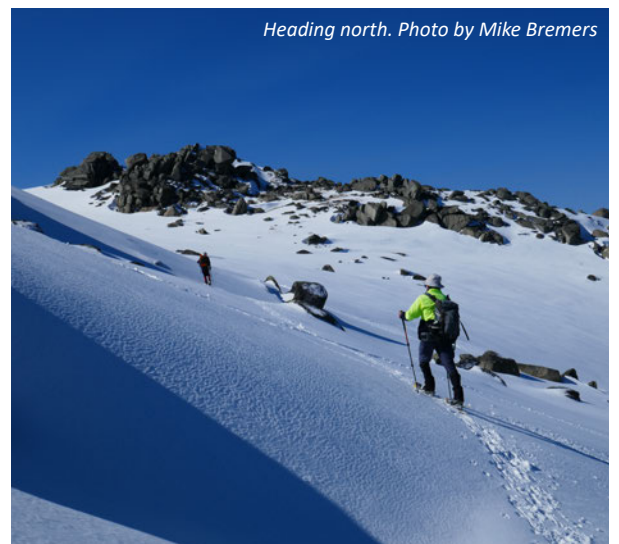
Fear of missing out is more powerful than social media angst when it comes to the High Country. You just get a hurry on if the forecast suggests snow could be almost gone by mid September, the worst season since 2006.

Max had proposed setting out from Dead Horse Gap so, over coffee in Jindabyne, we settled on a route similar to that taken in 2019 (*NPA Bulletin*, December 2019). Would there be snow? Well, there was none below Alpine Way but an almost complete coverage to the north-west, albeit slippery at first.

At 9:30 am we departed Dead Horse Gap (1,580 m) and it was onto snowshoes immediately, just to negotiate the ice. Conditions soon moderated as we contoured through skeletal Snow Gums up to the right of Peak 2040. A hollow provided shelter for morning tea and a view of Ramshead (2,190 m). Several skiers passed at a distance, one stopped to chat. We were beginning to encounter brilliant sheen, reflected from paper thin ice on the surface snow.

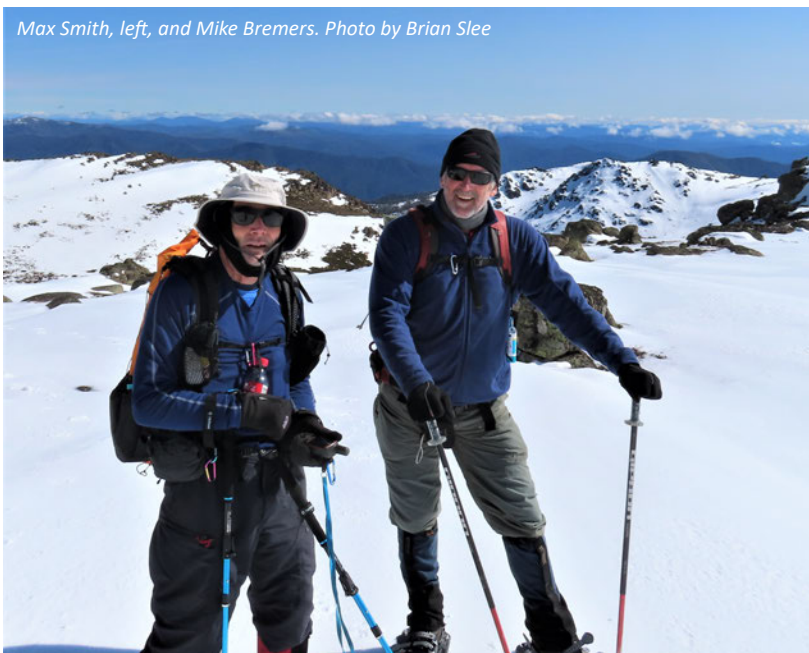
Mike led us onto the ridge which extends north, above Leatherbarrel Creek, for extraordinary views of the glowing peaks of Kosciuszko and Abbotts Ridge. Fog-filled valleys created contrasting rows of blue and

black hills to the west. Cold blasts, however, deterred us from lingering. Lunch was to be east of the saddle between Ramshead and Peak 2100; the wind chased us, but we eventually settled at 12:30 pm in a comfy spot overlooking Bogong Creek.



Heading north. Photo by Mike Bremers

Max Smith, left, and Mike Bremers. Photo by Brian Slee



The way ahead in 2019 was down and around, close to the top of the creek; I blanched when the guys became ambitious and instead headed north on a grand tour, up near the rocky peaks. It proved to be the best snow of the day, with delightful views of The Pilot, followed by a wonderful descent to Dead Horse Gap Track. Along the way we encountered an ANU Bogong Moth researcher who had interesting tales to tell.

Once on the track, it is a routine trip back to the Alpine Way. Mike went ahead, retrieved the car and had driven it back down to the (almost deserted) lower car park before Max and I arrived at 3 pm. We pretended ingratitude but were very appreciative. Distance: 10 km.

After having stopped at Nimmitabel Bakery in the morning, we reverted to Sundance on the way back. We travelled in Max's Outback, having departed Richardson at 6:30 am and returned at 6:05 pm. It was notable that Monaro Highway has restored its reputation as the killing ground for kangaroos: their carcasses were everywhere.

Brian Slee



*Approaching the west of the unnamed plateau. Photo by Jan Gatenby*

## Bushwalk report *Around Galbraiths Yard Gap*

**Date:** 23 July 2023

**Participants:** Philip Gatenby (leader), Melinda Brouwer, Sue Brown, Jan Gatenby, Stephen Marchant, Ana Vrancic and Robert Walters

**Weather:** Cool and mostly sunny

**Stats:** Distance 13 km, climb 425 m, time 7.5 hrs

Galbraiths Yard Gap in the Budawangs in Morton National Park is a saddle between the Sassafras Massif

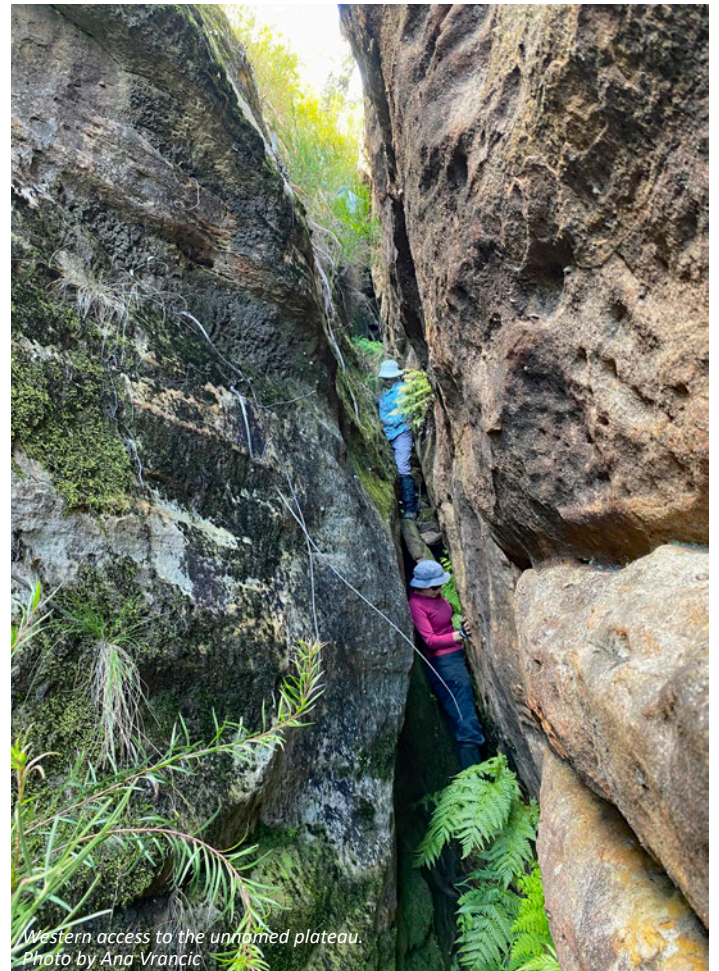
to the east and a smaller unnamed plateau to the west. This area is accessible from Nerriga.

Galbraiths Yard Gap used to be called Gilberts Gap but the name was changed in 2011, with the implication that Galbraiths Yard Gap was the original name. John (Jack) Galbraith settled in the Endrick Valley around 1906 where he established, among other things, a stockyard below the escarpment. I haven't been able to find out who Gilbert was.

The plan was to traverse, west to east, the unnamed plateau, the gap and a small part of the Sassafras Massif, then return



*Below cliffs, Sassafras Plateau.  
Photo by Robert Walters*



*Western access to the unnamed plateau.  
Photo by Ana Vrancic*



*Regrowth, Galbraiths Yard Gap. Photo by Jan Gatenby*

mostly on Red Ground Track. We parked at the usual place by a locked gate on Meangora Road. From the gate a dedicated footpath crosses a couple of kilometres of private property en route to Quiltys Crossing on the Endrick River where the national park is entered and Red Ground Track begins.

Soon after crossing the river, we left the comfort of the track and headed north through regenerating scrub dominated by Banksia and Hakea. After crossing a creek flowing under and around massive sandstone boulders the going became more difficult – a short sharp climb through thick scrub with numerous fallen tree trunks to clamber over. The climb ended at the base of the cliffs on the western side of the unnamed plateau.



*Dracophyllum sp. Photo by Jan Gatenby*



*Climbing onto Sassafras Plateau. Photo by Jan Gatenby*





We followed the cliff west then north-east to a slot which gives access to the plateau and was last used by me in 2018. It seemed to have become narrower and steeper, but after much groaning, heaving and squeezing, and passing packs we made it to the plateau. A display of wildflowers, especially *Grevillea*, was admired by all. Views, especially to the west, were stunning.

The regenerating scrub on the plateau was mostly open and easily negotiated. This seems a feature of the post-fire Budawangs with the vegetation regenerating more quickly and vigorously in the valleys, away from the sandstone tops.

A ramp at the plateau's eastern end took us to the gap where progress slowed considerably, caused by an abundance of *Acacia* saplings two metres high and 15 cm apart which seemed to occupy most of the saddle. Presumably Galbraith's long-gone yard was somewhere in the vicinity. After 15 minutes of pushing aside skinny wattles it was a relief to climb on to the western end of *Sassafras* and enjoy its more open scrub, which thinned with altitude gained. Again the views were impressive.

A break in the cliff line 500 m to our south, which has come to be known as Maxwells Ladder, gave access to the cliff's base which we then followed south-west for a further 500 m or so before turning south and dropping through thick scrub to our Red Ground Track and a straightforward return to our cars. The map below shows where we went.

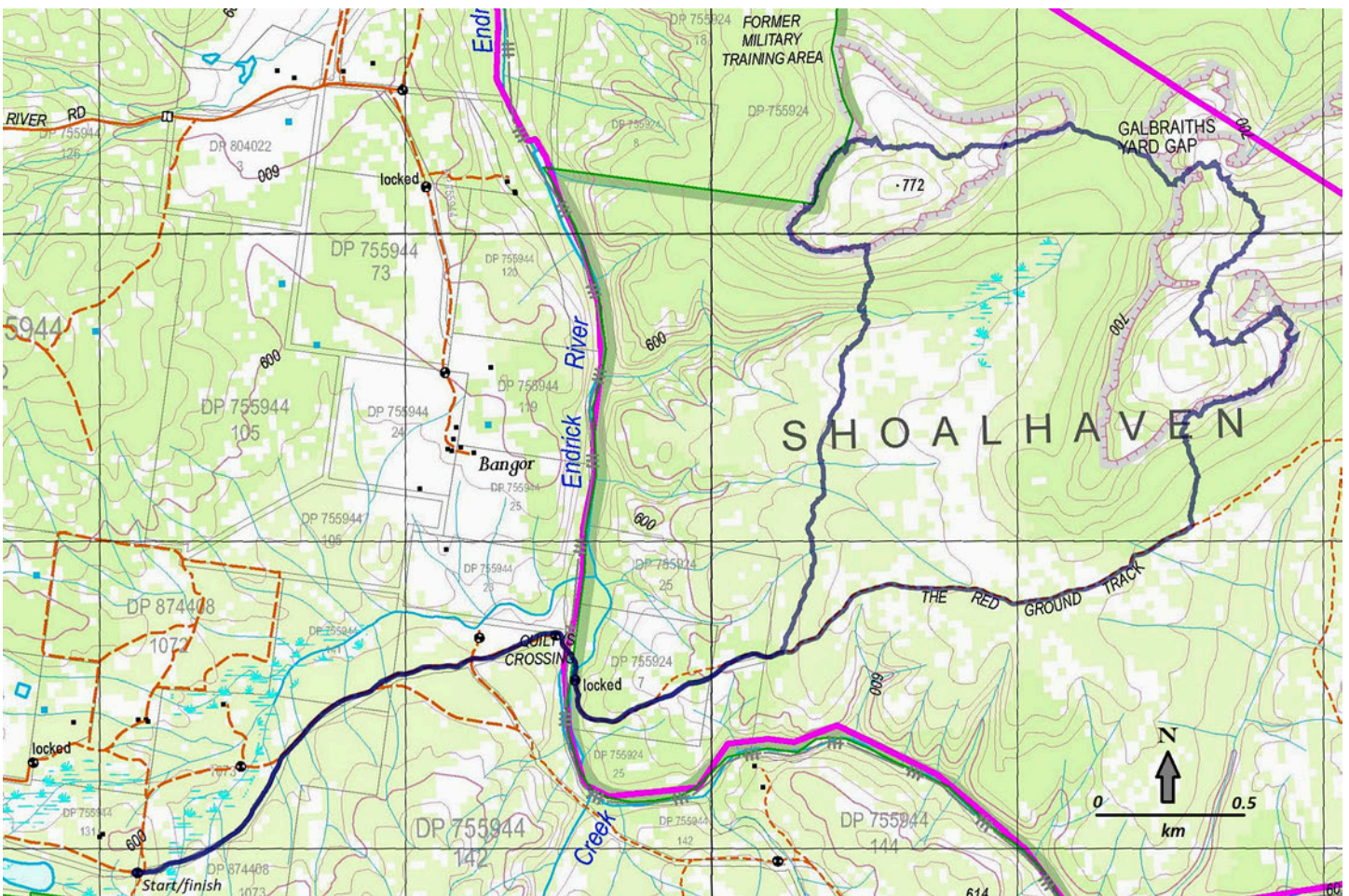
*Philip Gatenby*

Left top: *Endrick R crossing*. Photo by Robert Walters

Left: *Mossy outcrop*. Photo by Philip Gatenby

Map: *Where we went*

Source: *SIX Maps Topo Mosaic of New South Wales* at <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/#>





*Craig and Rosemary paddle through The Narrows near Barmah Lake. All photos by Mike Bremers*

## Gently down the Murray

*Long-distance kayaker Mike Bremers describes another Murray River adventure*

**Date:** 15–20 October 2023

**Participants:** Mike Bremers (leader), Craig Watson, Rosemary James, Joy Easter, Roy Harvey, June McKendry, John and Raylee Harvey

**Weather:** Cool and cloudy for the first two days then sunny with light winds for the remainder.

The 220 km section of the Murray River between Yarrowonga and Barmah, upstream of Echuca, is particularly attractive. Along the first two-thirds are many wide, sandy beaches on which to camp, while on the last third the river passes through the majestic Barmah Forest. Here the channel narrows, and the water level is close to the forest floor. For most of the trip we had a gentle current of 2–3 km/h.

Of the seven of us who started our trip just below Yarrowonga Weir, three completed the journey to Barmah. Three left and one joined the group at Tocumwal on day 3 as planned. Another two left soon after as a medical precaution,

On day 1 Roy Harvey rescued a fledgling cockatoo struggling in the water, and deposited it on a nearby bank. Its chances of survival looked bleak. The weather on day 2 was generally unpleasant, with light rain followed by strong, cold winds. However, the skies cleared for a sunny afternoon at our campsite where we could dry out and warm up. We were delighted to see a koala in a nearby tree but had to endure the growling and grunting of koalas over several nights.



*Several koalas were spotted during the trip*



*Perfect conditions on day 1*

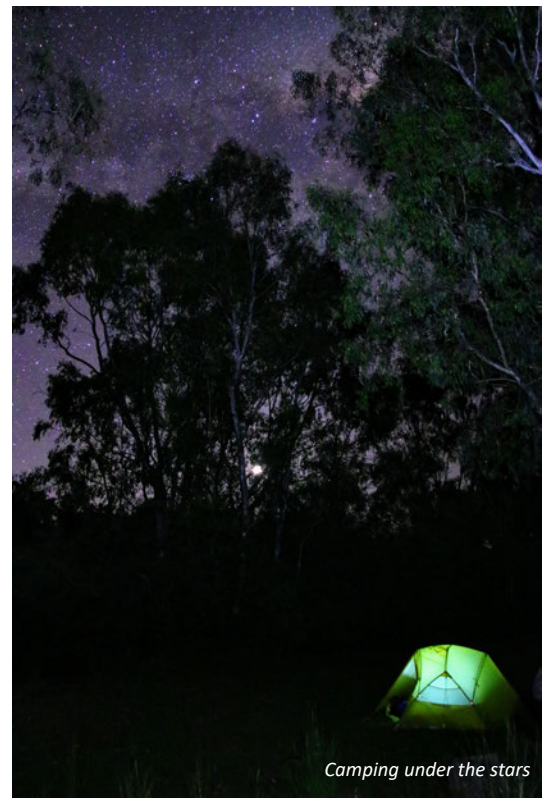
At lunchtime on day 3 we arrived in the pretty town of Tocumwal. The boat ramp is a stone's throw from the main street and was a convenient place to restock with fresh food. We camped downstream of town on a nice beach in perfect weather. These beaches are the result of erosion caused by gold mining and land clearing in the 1800s. It is feared that a sand slug slowly making its way downstream will cause problems with river flow once it reaches the Barmah Choke,<sup>1</sup> which is a natural constriction that limits the flow of water downstream.

On the final 3 days sandy beaches became rare and the water came close to the forest floor as we entered the Barmah Forest. The first record of a European travelling on this part of the river was Edward Curr who, in 1842, enlisted the aid of Tommy from the Bangerang Nation to guide him down the Murray for about 10 km in a canoe<sup>2</sup>. Within a generation, the life of the Bangerang people had changed forever with the arrival of sheep farmers, loggers, fishermen and the paddle steamer trade.

While this magnificent forest on both sides of the river is now conserved in the Barmah and Murray Valley national parks, we noted a lack of the old, gnarled trees that you might see along other parts of the river. No doubt this is due to past extensive logging.



*Joy and Craig enjoy a pleasant campsite*



*Camping under the stars*

On the final day we paddled past Barmah Lake. The conditions were similar to those Craig Watson and I encountered here last year,<sup>3</sup> where the campground was underwater because of significant rain across northern Victoria a few weeks earlier. The floodwaters were backed up by the Barmah Choke. Overall, it was a great trip enjoyed by all.

**References:**

1. *The Guardian*, 21 June 2023
2. *Murray-Darling Journeys*, Bremers, Angela and Bremers, Mike, 2017
3. *NPA Bulletin* March 2023

*Morning light in the forest*



# Tidbinbilla Open Day gets the thumbs up

Tidbinbilla held a successful open day on Sunday, 24 September – its first in four years since the 2019 – 20 bushfires and the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Perfect weather drew big crowds to the nature reserve where NPA ACT pitched its marquee among other stallholders who included ACT Parks and several conservation groups.

Our volunteers, Maisie Walker Stelling, Abby Hils, Margaret Roseby, Rosemary Hollow and husband Mark, and Allan Sharp, were kept busy fielding a steady stream of visitors to our stall.



Two of our newer and younger members, Abby Hils (left) and Maisie Walker Stelling, were kept busy on our stall.

## Fundraising a key issue at annual NPAC conference

*NPAC highlights strengths needed to meet conservation goals. Jennifer Carter reports*

National Parks Australia Council (NPAC) representatives of Australia's peak national parks community organisations met in Adelaide on 9–11 October to share ideas, challenges, and experiences of the past 12 months, and to identify issues for forward planning.

On the first day, host Kirsty Bevan, CEO of Nature Conservation Society of South Australia (NCSSA), shared her views on a key issue for conservation organisations – the importance of organising committees having diverse strengths, skills, interests and networks to contribute to the financial viability of the organisation, particularly through the capacity to fundraise. This was necessary to maintain support for policy development and advocacy, community engagement and education.

Common areas of interest discussed included furthering a national-level approach to NPAs, maintaining and developing the volunteer base, funding activities and staff support, and potential issues between climate response infrastructure (such as wind and solar farms) and nature conservation. Logging of native forests continues to cause concern despite various levels of protective legislation across the country.

During the 2022 UN biodiversity conference, COP15, countries agreed to aim to protect at least 30 per cent of the planet's land and water by 2030 – the '30 by 30' target. Australia joined over 100 countries that have signed on to the target. An agreed outcome from the environment ministers' meeting in June was the preparation by 2024 of a national roadmap to meet this target.

A major discussion topic was the progress in each jurisdiction of the '30 by 30' proposition. About 22 per cent of Australia's land mass is protected under our national reserve system and 46 per cent of its oceans. Although approximately 55 per cent of ACT land is already protected, NPA ACT can support other jurisdictions to reach the national 30 by 30 target.

NPA Queensland has been preparing draft guidelines on mountain bike use in conservation parks for consideration and review by NPAC. Representatives from the SA Department for Environment and Water discussed with NPAC their recently published Statewide Trails Strategy 2023–2033. It will provide interesting insights for the national guidelines being drafted.

A field trip on day two introduced NPAC to nature protection in South Australia through various park declarations, upgrades, and expansions on Adelaide's fringes.

NPAC's annual general meeting followed on 12 October. Chair Dr Bruce McGregor (VIC) noted among other things the changing role of management plans, which are becoming more akin to broad strategies than prescriptions for management, and that NPAC would monitor the implications of this trend. Dr McGregor also proposed that NPAC should look to prepare a forward strategy for updating national policies.

The meeting confirmed NPA ACT president Rosemary Hollow's nomination to the NPAC executive, and Jennifer Carter as NPAC's public officer.

*Jennifer Carter is NPA ACT's public officer and representative on NPAC*

## Work party reports

### Work party achievements going unsung

*We need to do more to promote the contribution our work parties make to the environment, says Hugh Coppel*

Work parties are one of the NPA's key activities, and the impact they have in our parks cannot be understated.

The importance of this work was recently emphasised at the ACT Environmental Volunteers conference, co-hosted by Landcare ACT and the ACT Government, where attendees were told that volunteers contribute millions of dollars (primarily in their time) to the environment in the ACT. Given how valuable environmental volunteers are in the ACT, Mike Bremers and I convened a small meeting with some long-serving NPA work party participants to see how the NPA committee can best support work parties.

Attendees of the meeting were thankful of the efforts of Work Party Coordinator Martin Chalk in organising work parties. His dedication to hands-on conservation work has truly been an asset to the NPA.

Working alongside Martin and the other long-time work party participants in Namadgi would certainly provide new NPA members with a deeper appreciation of the environment around Canberra, and finding ways to spread this message was a key takeaway from the meeting for me.

While everyone felt there is good coverage of work parties by the *Bulletin* and on social media, it was raised that the monthly general meetings could also serve as an opportunity to inform members of recent and upcoming activities. This is something the committee will endeavour to do at upcoming general meetings.

It was felt that more could be done to promote work parties on the NPA website, such as providing more precise detail on the location of work parties than just 'Namadgi National Park' or other conservation areas in the ACT region. The website could explain what an attendee may expect from a work party, the need to register with ParkCare, and other relevant information about catering, equipment, and physical requirements. And it needs to highlight the impact that the NPA has had through its work party activities.



*Building an enclosure at Dananbilla Nature Reserve, NSW. Photo by Brian Slee*

As part of our new website update, I have offered to help provide more details about work parties such as past activities with pictures and maps, expectations, future work plans, and other information that may encourage people to join NPA work parties. If you would like to contribute to this effort, please contact me at [hugh@npaact.org.au](mailto:hugh@npaact.org.au).

With this increased effort to raise the awareness of our work parties, we hope to see new members participating more frequently in the future. We are also discussing opportunities to combine work party activities with bushwalks, as well as looking at partnerships with other organisations. So stay tuned for more.

*Hugh Coppel is a member of the NPA committee and a regular participant in work parties*

## NPA work party summary – August to October 2023

| Month     | Activity  | Agency | Participants |
|-----------|---|--------|--------------|
| August    | Orroral fence removal: a total of 1380 m of barbed wire removed from two lengths of fence to the east and south east of the Orroral Homestead and four lengths to the northwest. A survey of a 1400 m fence at the southern end of the valley was also conducted. <b>More to do.</b>                              | PCS    | 9            |
| September | Moores Hill woody weed control. One area was addressed, that being the southern side of the hill overlooking the camp ground. A total of 444 plants were cut/dabbed: 341 <i>A. baileyana</i> , 51 Mahonia, 32 briar rose, 6 blackberry, 4 <i>Pyracantha</i> , 4 pine tree, 4 blue gum, 1 apple and 1 Cotoneaster. | PCS    | 3            |
| October   | Broom control Brayshaws area: 2030 broom plants removed from 11 sites. Signs of grazing by macropod/deer. Two broom plants were in flower. Ten briar rose also treated. Still more broom and briar to be dealt with.  | PCS    | 6            |

*Martin Chalk*

## Book report

### *Wild Heart of Tasmania: a living history of Lake Malbena and the Western Lakes*

by Greg French, Affirm Press, Melbourne, 2023, 448 pp.

As one of the many lakes in the Central Plateau, part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Lake Malbena has long been popular with fly fishers who walk in on tracks to savour the delights and seclusion of world-class fly fishing surrounded by distinctive Tasmanian bush. Bushwalkers and fly fishers all thought the area was protected because it was part of the World Heritage Area.

This all changed in 2018 when a proposal for helicopter-accessed tourist accommodation at Lake Malbena was made public. As Greg French documents, despite the proposal being denied approval by the Central Highlands Council, and the federal Environment Minister under the *Environment Protection and Biosecurity Conservation (EPBC) Act* in November 2022, the proponent is still seeking a review and federal approval under the Act.

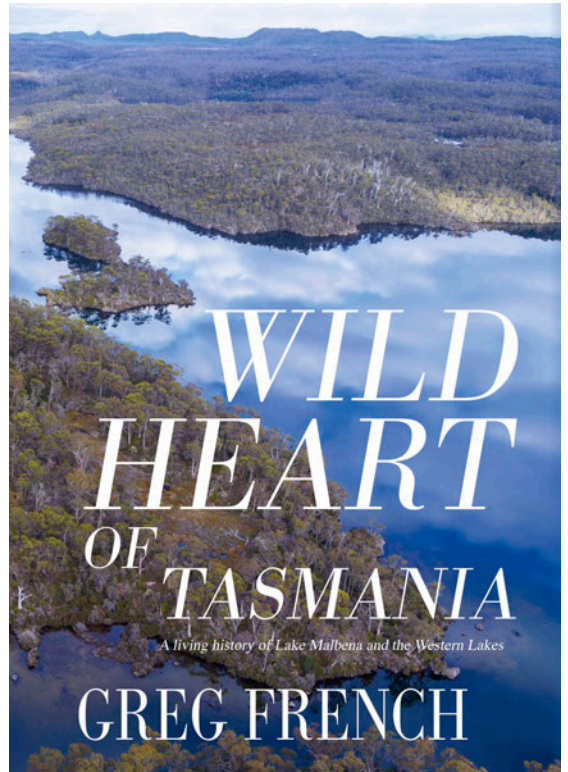
It was this proposal that prompted Greg French to write about his much-loved fishing area, Tasmania's Western Lakes. Describing himself as 'addicted to wilderness trout fishing' French is a popular fishing writer and guide whose books include *Trout Waters of Tasmania* and *The Last Wild Trout*.

French's book is about love and loss, grief and hope, of the land, the lakes, wilderness and people. He writes about his life as a park ranger, working in fisheries management, as a guide and, more recently, his advocacy work trying to prevent commercial development in the Western Lakes area.

He begins poignantly with a family walk with his ailing wife to the much-loved Lake Ina. He shares the history of fishermen, walkers, and

early farmers, notes the Aboriginal carvings in the area, and includes the stories of so many who became attached to the landscape, the lakes, the wilderness. He despairs at the lack of consultation by the Parks and Wildlife Service with fly fishers and bushwalkers on track management proposals of the area. He documents how Lake Malbena became another chapter in the history of environment protest in Tasmania. Interspersed with his stories are factual histories of huts, tracks, people and names of the area.

I've walked in the Central Plateau from the Never Never, camped at Lakes Meston and Adelaide, and explored the Mountains of Jupiter. Evocative names and landscapes, among endemic Tasmania trees, the Myrtles, Leatherwood, the King Billy and Pencil pines. We delayed one summer trip due to heavy snow and high river crossings, and over a week later came out at Lees Paddocks in sunshine.



Based at Lake St Clair on the edge of the Western Lakes during my time working for the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, it was easy to understand why people became attached to these landscapes and valued them when they were accessible only by walking tracks.

French's book is a reminder of the importance of advocacy to protect our national parks, as this status does not always mean that the natural values and wilderness will be protected. It is highly readable, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in the natural and cultural history of this area. French's book is also a reminder of how important it is for the social histories of our parks and reserves, of our walks, fishing and recreation activities to be written and shared online and in print, so the history and memory of how we loved and used these areas is available for future generations and park managers.

Rosemary Hollow

Malbena Hut. Photo by Bob Graham



## Artistic inspiration all around

### Art Week, 5–12 November 2023

*Awesome sunset. All Art Week photos by Eleanor Cotterell unless indicated otherwise*

**Participants:** Adrienne Nicholson, Dagmara Kelly, Eleanor Cotterell, Hazel Rath and Esther Gallant. Day visitors: Di, Garry and Peter (Monday); Kate Smith (Tuesday and Friday).

As always, NPA Art Week was a wonderful experience. Despite the changeable weather – dark, moody stormy skies, rain and bright sunshine – there were plenty of opportunities to be out and about photographing and sketching, or sitting on the verandah sketching, painting or basketmaking. When the weather was inclement, we got busy inside.

A couple of evenings of amazing skies had us often wondering which way to turn to take the photo or just stand in awe. The front verandah provided its usual delightful resting place, watching kangaroos and birds. The raven young were persistently begging to be fed, the Welcome Swallows were fascinating to watch building their nests, the Wedge-tailed Eagles could be seen soaring above the valley. Over 30 species of birds were observed or heard.

The Cunningham's Skink also visited. There was, as usual, endless artistic inspiration around us and we are privileged to have had such an experience. The Art Week Exhibition is now up at the Namadji Visitor Centre.

*Adrienne Nicholson and Eleanor Cotterell*



*Wattle seeds*



*Kangaroo with joey*



*Cunningham's Skink*



*Gudgenby Valley during NPA Art Week in November 2023*







Hazel Rath



Dagmara Kelly beginning a basket. Photo by Adrienne Nicholson



Adrienne basketweaving



Gudgenby River

*It's not their fault they smell of  
man,  
of stranger's hands and other  
lands.  
Abandoned, neglected in the  
wild,  
the colonial gift of the  
thoughtless child.*

*It's not their fault they smell of  
man.  
Hapless pawns in a ruthless  
stand.  
The farm is home, fence and  
sty,  
but we surrender under endless skies.*

## **The Smell of Man**

# PARKWATCH

## 'Big win' for koalas and environment

Logging has been stopped in parts of the proposed Great Koala National Park on the NSW Mid North Coast while the state government determines the impact on koalas and timber industry jobs. The halt covers 106 koala 'hubs' across more than 8,400 hectares of forest within the proposed national park, which is being gazetted in the region.

NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe said in September consultation on the next steps in establishing the park would begin immediately.

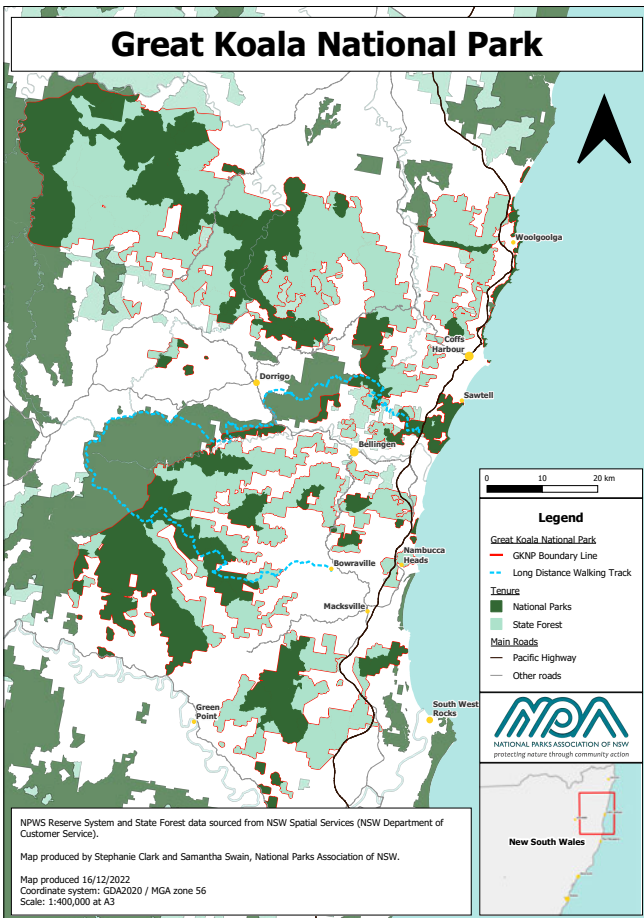
Environmentalists hailed the move as a big win for koalas and the environment movement.

The NSW government has fulfilled an election commitment to fund a national park south-west of Sydney to bolster protections for one of the state's last healthy koala colonies under threat from urban sprawl. The government will spend \$80 million on koala protections, including \$43 million from the latest budget, to establish the Georges River Koala National Park.

The national park will cover 1,830 hectares along the Georges River, including 1,000 hectares of public land.

ABC News <https://bit.ly/463UTVd>  
and <https://bit.ly/453SF71>

Map of koala park. Map supplied



## Eureka prize for waterbird survey team

Prof Richard Kingsford and his waterbirds aerial survey team have been awarded a prestigious Eureka prize for their efforts that have influenced the conservation of

the Murray-Darling basin and helped create three new national parks.

Each year, the survey flies about 38,000km – almost the equivalent of a full circumnavigation of the globe – recording more than 50 groups of birds at a height of a little over 50 m. Since the surveys started in 1983, Kingsford says they have seen declines of up to 70 per cent in bird numbers, particularly over the Murray-Darling basin.



Data from the surveys has been crucial in finding and prioritising wetlands and rivers for conservation, and for targeting environmental water releases.

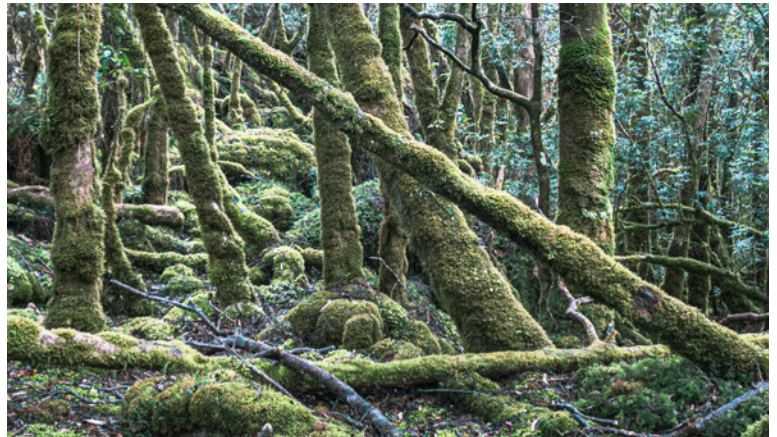
*The Guardian* <https://bit.ly/3LY3FMB>  
Prof. Richard Kingsford. Photo by University of NSW

## Conservationists welcome Tasmanian wilderness statement

The Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA) and other conservation groups have welcomed the new Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee approved the Statement, by the Australian Government at its 45th session in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in September.

Outstanding Universal Value refers to the cultural and natural values of places that determine their World Heritage status. TNPA president Nicholas Sawyer called on both state and federal governments to ensure that no further degradation of this wilderness character is permitted.

TNPA <https://bit.ly/48HowNU>



Tasmanian rain forest

## Bush Heritage seeks special status for more Qld reserves

Bush Heritage Australia is seeking Special Wildlife Reserve status for five more of its Queensland reserves. In 2020, Queensland's first Special Wildlife Reserve was declared at Bush Heritage's Pullen Pullen Reserve on Maiawali Country to recognise the significance of the reserve's Night Parrot population.

Special Wildlife Reserves are a relatively new conservation status in Queensland that see private land granted the same level of statutory protection as national parks, when they protect areas of exceptional natural and cultural value.

One of the reserves Bush Heritage seeks to protect is at Carnarvon, Bidjara Country, in the Brigalow Belt. With its higher altitude and particularly high rainfall, Carnarvon is significant in its resilience to climate change.

Bush Tracks <https://bit.ly/3tO5QMB>

## WA enlarges conservation estate

More than a quarter of a million hectares have been added to WA's conservation estate with the expansion of Kennedy Range National Park and the newly created Pimbee National Park.

The establishment of the reserves is a significant step in the WA Government's Plan for Our Parks initiative. The 270,000 hectares created is 5.4 per cent of the 5-million-hectare target.

The parks will be named in consultation with the Yinggarda Traditional Owners and jointly managed and jointly vested by the Yinggarda Aboriginal Corporation and State Government.

WA Government <https://bit.ly/3PUaeRI>

## VNPA tribute to 'defender of nature'

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) has paid tribute to long-time parks protection advocate Phil Ingamells, who died suddenly on 25 August.

'Phil was a legend in conservation circles and a tireless campaigner for parks and nature. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude for his work. Nature in Victoria is better for his efforts, and we are all the wiser.

'Phil played a critical role in protecting Victoria's natural places and national parks. With his rare skill for clearly explaining complicated (and often dry) policy conundrums, his pieces in Park Watch transported us to the heart of Victoria's natural places.'



Park Watch <https://bit.ly/3RQkL2N>  
Phil Ingamells. Photo by VNPA

## New national park 'bigger than London'

A new national park 'larger than the size of London' has been created in the Kimberley, marking the halfway milestone of the WA Government's Plan for Our Parks initiative.

Bunuba National Park covers more than 220,000 hectares, extending the existing Danggu Geikie Gorge National Park along the Fitzroy River, north to Dimond Gorge. The addition means 2.5 million hectares has now been added to WA's conservation estate under the Plan for Our Parks initiative.

Five million hectares of national and marine parks and reserves are being created, increasing the State's conservation estate by 20 per cent. This is on target for completion next year.

WA Government <https://bit.ly/494nmME>

## Traditional owners celebrate park renaming

After years of lobbying the state government, traditional custodians gathered on 11 November to celebrate the removal of the name of Scottish slave trader Ben Boyd from a national park on the NSW far-south coast.

Thaia traditional owners and South Sea Islander elders spoke at a ceremony to mark the renaming of Ben Boyd National Park as Beowa National Park in honour of the orca, which has strong links to the Thaia people.

In 2021, 50 years after Ben Boyd National Park was created, then Liberal environment minister Matt Kean agreed to change the park's name, after historian Mark Dunn proved Boyd had been involved in creating an Australian slave trade. The ceremony was an important moment for traditional owners, and for the relatives of South Sea Islander people who were brought to Australia as slaves in the 1800s.

ABC News <https://bit.ly/40H1ROb>

## TNPA opposes Freycinet camp proposal

The Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA) has opposed a development application to reinstate commercial standing camps at Bluestone Bay and Cooks Corner in Freycinet National Park at sites which have been unused for almost 20 years.

TNPA said it opposed this application, lodged with Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, for several reasons, including the apparent failure of the Parks and Wildlife Service to address the requirements of the *Freycinet National Park Management Plan 2000*.

TNPA says the Cooks Corner proposal also breaches one of the major constraints on development in the *2019 Freycinet Peninsula Master Plan* which calls for 'no further built tourism infrastructure [south of the Hazards]'

Tasmanian National Parks Association  
<https://bit.ly/40jEE4n>

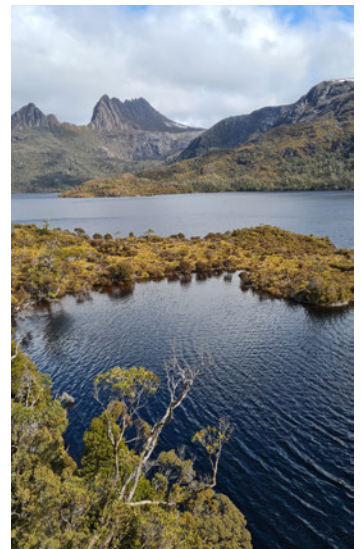
Freycinet beach



## Cradle Mountain bus fee provokes backlash

A plan to hit visitors wanting to explore one of Tasmania's premier tourist locations with an extra fee has prompted a public backlash. From 15 November, Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service began charging an extra \$15 fee to those with an annual parks pass or holiday pass to catch the Cradle Mountain shuttle bus that takes visitors from the information centre to Dove Lake.

The free bus service was introduced about 20 years ago to help ferry the increasing numbers of visitors and to protect the area by limiting the number of vehicles accessing the park.



Cradle Mountain. Photo by Nico Smit on Unsplash

ABC News <https://bit.ly/4718CMQ>

## Plea to cat owners

Cat owners who live close to the Dhillba Guranda-Innes National Park on the York Peninsula, SA, have been asked to be responsible with their cats after one was spotted on camera roaming in the park with native prey in its mouth.

Brush-tailed bettongs, once extinct locally, were recently reintroduced into the park. Ecologist Derek Sandow, from the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board, urged local cat owners to keep predatory pets secure in the Yorke Peninsula area. 'Pet cats allowed to roam kill 390 million mammals, birds and reptiles every year,' he said.

ABC News <https://bit.ly/3rRx17q>

## Shooters and conservationists reach peaceful co-existence

A volunteer group of conservationists and the NSW Rifle Association have reached an amicable accommodation over the use of a coastal national park in Sydney with spectacular ocean views, despite restricted use because of activities by the rifle association. The western section of Malabar headland, just south of Maroubra beach, was made a national park in 2012.

The gates to the track are locked every Saturday and three out of five Sundays when the rifle range is in use. But Friends of Malabar Headland say that if the range was not there, there wouldn't be a national park at all, because the range deterred developers.

*The Guardian* <https://bit.ly/46nCy5>

## Man fined for encroaching on habitat of endangered wallaby

A Proserpine man has been fined \$14,000 for building a dam that encroached upon a national park that is the habitat of an endangered wallaby found solely in Queensland's Whitsundays region.

Warren George Spicer, 81, used earthmoving equipment to dig out a dam that encroached by 2,000 square metres inside Dryander National Park, north of Proserpine. Mr Spicer's property borders the park.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service said the discovery was prompted by a tip-off from the public.

*ABC News* <https://bit.ly/45t6AE1>

## Transformation of iconic WA park continues

Work is underway to transform the iconic John Forrest National Park in the Perth Hills.

The WA Government allocated \$6.3 million in the recent state budget in addition to an \$8.4 million election commitment and \$2.5 million from the WA Recovery Plan. The new work will include a new day use area, landscaped gardens and pathways that will eventually lead to a new café and function space. The WA Government has now committed more than \$17 million to the park's transformation.

*WA Government* <https://bit.ly/3FcsWPd>

## Leave that stick where it is!

Rangers at Carnarvon National Park, Qld, are urging hikers to stop taking sticks from walking trails. There's been an increase in the number of sticks being taken from the national park and tour guides it can be an 'ecological nightmare' when sticks are removed in high volume.

'The removal of just one stick can impact these animals in lots of different ways,' Carnarvon national park ranger in charge, Lindie Pasma, said. 'For echidnas, they're rummaging around the undergrowth looking for food ... so you're taking away the sticks with all the insects in it. That's then having an impact on the echidnas and the birds and all the other things using that environment.'

*ABC News* <https://tinyurl.com/5cv2h3e4>

## Popular headland given top protection

A popular headland rich in natural and cultural values south of Perth has today been given 'A' Class protection by the WA Government. Cape Peron, located in Rockingham Lakes Regional Park, is known for its protected beaches, limestone cliffs and panoramic views.

Cape Peron was identified as a Planning Investigation Area in 2018 after a proposal for a marina development at Mangles Bay was withdrawn. A working group of stakeholders, supported by a community reference group, was established to determine the future use of the area.

*WA Government* <https://bit.ly/3s1goY4>



*Cape Peron, Rockingham Lakes. Photo by Bronwyn Wells*

## Bushfire-damaged cultural area finally reopens

Biamanga Cultural Area, located between Bega and Narooma on the NSW south coast finally reopened to the public last month, nearly 4 years on from the Black



*Biamanga Cultural area. Photo by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service*

Summer bushfires. More than 85 per cent of the Biamanga National Park burnt in the 2019-20 bushfires, including the cultural area that features waters sacred to Yuin men.

The reopening of the Biamanga Cultural Area has been highly anticipated among local Indigenous people and visitors. The Biamanga Board of Management and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service have been rebuilding walking paths, toilets, signage, picnic areas and a car park at the cultural area of the past three years.

The site was considered dangerous after the Black Summer fires due to the risk of falling trees, which delayed immediate repairs.

*ABC News* <https://bit.ly/3QDFTLY>

## Work progressing of Kosci summit walk

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is progressing with upgrades at the Mount Kosciuszko Summit walk in Kosciuszko National Park, to repair flood damage, make the track more resilient to future weather events and improve accessibility to the popular summit.

To enable the completion of the works, visitors can expect delays and diversions on the walk and at the Mount Kosciuszko summit until mid-April 2024. The upgrades will be delivered in stages outside peak visitation times.

For more information see [fact sheet](#) and contact [NPWS Alpine-Queanbeyan office](#).

*NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service*

*Compiled by Allan Sharp*

# NPA bulletin board

*NPA ACT welcomes  
the following new members:*

Iain Gould  
Lisa Syrette  
Andrea Laracy  
Michael Clisby  
Mitchell Kelly  
Michelle McLean  
Rosina Wainwright  
Jon Lawrence  
Joy Easter

*We look forward to seeing you  
at NPA activities*

## Volunteer bank

We're looking to establish a list of volunteers we can call on to help out on our stand at events such as the Tidbinbilla Open Day. It involves helping set up and packing up our marquee and other display materials and taking a turn on the stand to talk to people about our activities. These are great opportunities to get our name out there and for recruiting potential new members, but they can only work if enough of you are willing to give a little of your time occasionally to help. If you are new to NPA, don't let that deter you – a more experienced member will always be on hand to help.

Please contact Allan at [allan@npaact.org.au](mailto:allan@npaact.org.au) if you would like to help or know more.

## Second edition of Centenary Trail guide published

The second edition of *Walking and Cycling Canberra's Centenary Trail*, written by Martin Fisk, has been published as part of the Woodslane Walking Guides series.

The Centenary Trail opened in 2013 and traverses 145 km around the perimeter of Canberra, beginning at Parliament House and taking in ACT landmarks such as Black Mountain, the Arboretum, Stromlo Forest Park, and sections of the Murrumbidgee River.

The trail can be walked in 5 days and joined from almost anywhere. There are camping spots along the way and, in places, cafes and lakes. While most of the trail is in the bush, it remains close to urban Canberra.

*Walking and Cycling Canberra's Centenary Trail* has more than 150 full-colour photographs, detailed descriptions and maps for every section, and includes a summary table of routes, indicating distances, facilities and highlights.

The book is available in most bookstores and online at <https://bit.ly/3tqjnK9>.

## GBRG Christmas party at Gudgenby Cottage

**Saturday 9 December after a morning work party**

Please see the outings program, but check the website closer to the date for possible changes.



## NPA Christmas party

**Sunday 10 December at Jerrabomberra Wetlands**

**11:30 am to 3 pm**

Bring friends and family, food and drink to share, and tables and chairs. Festivities begin at 11:30 am.

President Rosemary will lead a leisurely 50 min walk around Kellys Loop track and bird hides and will discuss the Aboriginal and European use of the area and future plans.

Meet Rosemary at the Education Centre **10:30 am**.

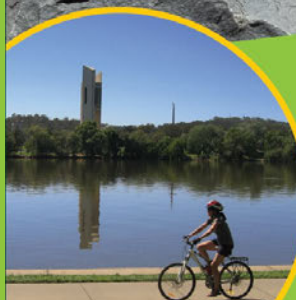
**Address:** 2 Dairy Flat Road, Fyshwick.

Parking available next to the Education Centre and in the carpark off Dairy Flat Road.

## WOODSLANE WALKING GUIDES

# Walking & Cycling CANBERRA'S CENTENARY TRAIL

2nd edition



- ★ Enjoy the whole circuit as a thru-hike or cycle or as a series of half or full-day routes
- ★ Learn about local history, culture and the environment
- ★ Find out about the many local activities and attractions – lots of things for the whole family
- ★ Includes colour maps, photos and detailed walk/cycle notes

The Australian capital's iconic track in 16 day routes

# General meetings

*conservation education protection*

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

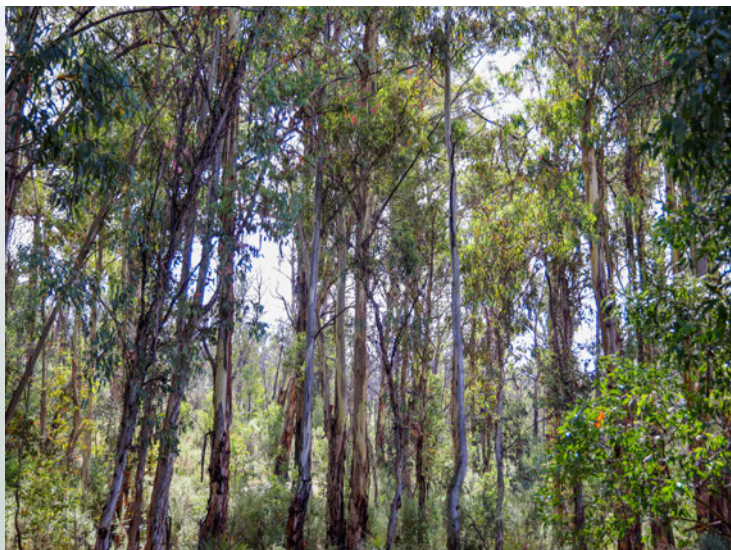
## Thursday 15 February

### Key values of Namadgi National Park: informing the new Reserve Management Plan

**Karen Ikin and Brian Prince**

*Parks Planning and Policy,  
ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS)*

PCS is working on a new Reserve Management Plan for Namadgi National Park. The first stage involves identifying Namadgi's key values and subsequently the threats to them, and their current and desired future condition. Karen and Brian are seeking NPA's assistance to review the draft set of key values as part of drafting of the new plan.



| More for your calendar                         | December                 | January | February                 | March                    |
|--|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Committee meetings</b> (5:30 pm to 7:00 pm) | Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> | –       | Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> | Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> |

## National Parks Association of the ACT Incorporated (Inaugurated 1960)

### Aims and objectives of the Association

- Promotion of national parks and of measures for the protection of fauna and flora, scenery, natural features and cultural heritage in the Australian Capital Territory and elsewhere, and the reservation of specific areas.
- Interest in the provision of appropriate outdoor recreation areas.
- Stimulation of interest in, and appreciation and enjoyment of, such natural phenomena and cultural heritage by organised field outings, meetings or any other means.
- Cooperation with organisations and persons having similar interests and objectives.
- Promotion of, and education for, conservation, and the planning of landuse to achieve conservation.

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

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

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

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

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

### Office-bearers

President Rosemary Hollow  
Vice President <vacant>  
Secretary Maisie Walker Stelling  
Treasurer Jenny Barnes

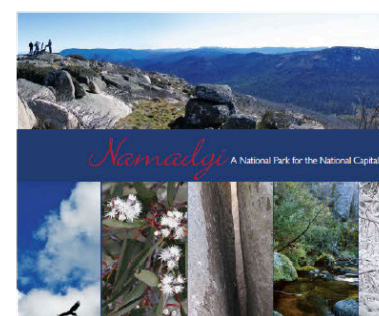
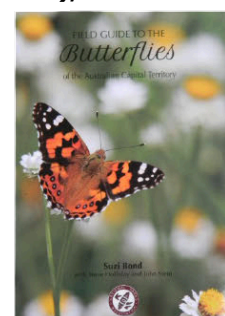
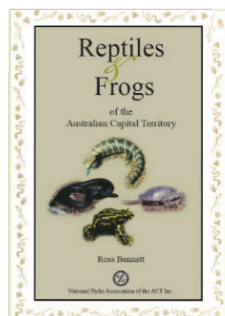
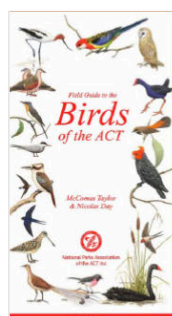
### Committee members

Immediate Past President Esther Gallant  
Public Officer Jennifer Carter  
Mike Bremers  
Hugh Coppell  
Alison Russell-French  
Marian Pearson  
Steve Perry  
Ben Schutte  
Allan Sharp

### Conveners

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Cultural Subcommittee Rosemary Hollow  
Environment Subcommittee <vacant>  
Outings Subcommittee Mike Bremers  
Publications Subcommittee Kevin McCue  
Promotion & Outreach Subcommittee Allan Sharp  
Work Party Co-ordinator Martin Chalk

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





For information on NPA ACT activities, please visit our  
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