



NPA Bulletin



- Progress on feral horse control in Kosciuszko National Park
- Vale Fiona Brand
- Native forest logging to end in Victoria
- New NPA committee elected

conservation education protection

September 2023 – Volume 60 – Number 3

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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.

Contact the NPA office for information and rates for advertisements.

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

Disclaimer:
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Front cover: *Orroral work party with Brian, Sonja, Paul, Steven, Kevin, Michaela, Marlene, Glenn (l to r)*. By Vicky Browne (see p.26)

Back cover: Top: *Hoar frost, Perisher Creek, July 2023*. By Mike Bremers

Bottom: *Snowshoeing down Perisher Valley, July 2023*. By Brian Slee

From the President

Greetings everyone

This is my first report since the AGM on 17 August. I am pleased to be continuing as president for another year. I also welcome four new committee members, Jenny Barnes, who will take on the role of treasurer, Marian Pearson, Steve Perry and Benn Schutte. There will be more about these new members in the next *Bulletin*.

We were sorry to farewell two committee members who have made an outstanding contribution to our work: Rod Griffiths, who served on the committee for more than 20 years and is a former president and convener of the Environment Subcommittee, and Jan Gatenby, who as treasurer, has done an excellent job managing our finances for the past 2 years. We were also sorry to lose Viv Schweizer, our minute taker, who has taken up a position with the ACT Strategic Bushfire Plan, and secretary Tor Wilson, because of study and work commitments.

The new committee is gearing up for an interesting year, including planning for celebrations, in consultation with ACT Parks, for the 40th anniversary of the gazettal of Namadgi as a national park in October 2024.

In putting together our annual report, it's been gratifying to reflect on our achievements over the past 12 months (see p. 6). Our various activities and high social media profile continue to attract new members. We had 120 new members join last year, and we're just about to achieve another milestone with 6,000 followers on Facebook and over 2,000 on Instagram.

Social media have become increasingly important to us for keeping members and followers informed of our activities, including our advocacy work. The social media team does a great job but could do with more support too. We also have some talented photographers among our members whose contributions to our social media pages and the *Bulletin* attract admiration both here and overseas.

It's been a year of change too. We moved our monthly general meetings to the Weston Creek

Uniting Church Hall. Attendance for guest speakers has varied widely, and we will continue to review how we can attract members to these meetings.

An upgrade of our office and IT systems means that the committee can now access emails and files remotely, and even when travelling. Maisie Walker Stelling, a previous NPA honours student at the ANU Fenner School, has done a great job coordinating our office activities and we're delighted she is taking on the job of secretary to the committee.



A significant change during the year was the adoption of a new logo, which has mostly been well received, and we are in the process of developing a new website. Refreshing our image is an important part of continuing to engage broadly across the community so we can continue to support the conservation and management of parks and reserves across the ACT and surrounding region.

Our strong relationship with the ACT Parks and Conservation Service (PCS) continues, and Parks has made it known how much it appreciates our contribution through our work parties and walks program. PCS is also very supportive of Don Fletcher's Rosenberg goanna project, which is attracting international attention. At the same time, we continue to exert pressure on the ACT Government to repair the Naas Valley road so that it is accessible to both fire trucks and goanna researchers.

As I write, the NSW Government has just announced a proposal to amend the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan to permit aerial culling of feral horses (see article below). NPA ACT and other conservation groups have campaigned for this for more than 5 years, so the announcement is encouraging and a reminder of the importance of our advocacy work. We were fortunate to have a presentation by ACT Parks earlier this year on aerial culling of Sambar Deer and pigs in Namadgi, which demonstrated how effective and humane aerial culling is for feral animals. We will be making a submission supporting this proposal.

And finally, a huge thank you to our volunteers who keep the wheels (or working boots) of NPA turning: our walks and work party leaders and coordinators; our publications and social media team; our office staff; our Art Week organisers; our goanna team; and all of you who participate in our activities and keep renewing your memberships. Your contributions and commitment enable NPA to continue to be an important conservation organisation in the ACT and beyond.

Rosemary Hollow

Aerial shooting of feral horses in Kosciuszko back on the agenda

The NSW Government is seeking community feedback on a proposed amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Plan to allow aerial shooting as an additional option to control wild horses.

The plan's goal is to reduce wild horse numbers to 3,000 by 2027 but currently does not permit aerial

Feral horses damaging an alpine wetland. Photo courtesy of NSW NPWS



shooting of horses. Aerial shooting of other pest animals is allowed.

NSW Environment Minister, Penny Sharpe, said NSW was not on track to meet its target. 'This is why we must consider the introduction of aerial shooting, carried out by skilled, highly trained shooters to the highest animal-welfare standards,' she said.

NPA ACT welcomes the NSW Government's decision and has, along with other conservation bodies, argued aerial culling is needed before the environmentally sensitive landscape of Kosciuszko is irreversibly damaged. Existing methods - trapping and rehoming, and ground shooting of horses - are not effective, as evidenced by the NSW Government's latest estimates of horse numbers in the park which have risen to at least 14,500 and may be as high as 23,500.

NPA ACT has had a long involvement with campaigns to reduce horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park. The first meeting of the group that was to become Reclaim Kosci was organised and hosted in Canberra by NPA ACT in 2018. This was shortly after NSW introduced the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act*, which prioritised the protection of feral horses over native species.

Plans were made at the meeting to directly lobby politicians as well as increase public awareness and convince people to lobby politicians. The meeting also led to petitions, conferences, publications and tours for politicians and influential decision-makers to alpine wetlands in the ACT and, for dramatic contrast, to the severely horse degraded wetlands of Kosciuszko National Park.

Success was achieved in the ACT in 2020 when a new plan of management for Namadgi National Park was passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly, with zero tolerance for feral horses.

Since 2018 NPA ACT has donated more than \$20,000 to support the efforts of Reclaim Kosci, and our support continues.

Welcoming the news of the proposed Kosciuszko horse plan amendment, former NPA ACT President Esther Gallant says 'the fight is not over, but at least the trajectory of the discussion seems to have changed'.

Members are encouraged to comment on the proposed amendment at <https://bit.ly/3ONxeCp> until 11 September 2023.

Craig Watson



Feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park. Photo by Craig Watson, Jan 2023

From the Environment Subcommittee

It is very pleasant to be able to start a quarterly Environment Subcommittee report with good news. The NPA ACT has worked vigorously over many years to reduce the threat posed by feral horses to Australia's sensitive alpine ecosystems. This has been a difficult struggle that has regularly seen political opportunism override scientific evidence of the environmental damage wrought by feral horses.

So it was with great relief to see a joint media release in June 2023 by the federal, Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victorian governments announcing the re-establishment of the Alps Ministerial Council. This body will meet annually to discuss the management of feral horses and other key pressures facing Australia's alpine reserves. It provides an opportunity for coordinated environmental remediation that is long overdue and will help focus efforts on reducing the rapidly increasing feral horse population in our alpine reserves. Thank you to all the NPA ACT members who have maintained the "rage" over so many years and to the leadership of groups like the Invasive Species Council, NPA NSW and the Victorian NPA.

It is also pleasing to see that the NSW government is looking to amend the Kosciuszko National Park Plan of Management to provide for

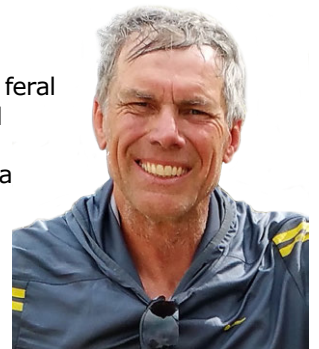
the use of aerial culling in the management of feral horse numbers. The previous government had specifically banned aerial culling of horses in Kosciuszko, robbing park staff of what can be a highly efficient and humane control method. Its proposed introduction will further align feral horse control with science-based management principles.

On the other hand, some environmental issues keep re-emerging. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, members of the NPA ACT sat on an advisory body to discuss the possibility of a mountain bike trail from Mount Stromlo to the Cotter Reserve and then on to Blue Range Hut. The proposed route to the Cotter Reserve was through Stony Creek Nature Park and the NPA ACT worked with local rangers to propose alternatives that did not compromise the environmental integrity of Stony Creek.

It has come to the NPA ACT's attention, however, that the ACT Greens have announced that it has secured a commitment by the ACT Government to deliver the Stromlo to Cotter mountain bike flow trail. This again raises the possibility of it traversing Stony Creek Nature Reserve and compromising its environmental values. Stony Creek is an important point of connectivity between the Murrumbidgee and, via Bluetts Block, the Molonglo. The importance of this connectivity can only but increase if the ACT pushes to have residential development occur on Stony Creek's borders as part of the Western Edge development proposal. So, more lobbying to occur. Watch this space!

Rod Griffiths,

Environment Subcommittee Convener



Annual General Meeting report

Thirty NPA members braved the cold weather on 17 August to attend the AGM at the Weston Creek Uniting Church Hall. President Rosemary Hollow presented the annual report, including her own President's report and, on behalf of Jan Gatenby, the Treasurer's report. These reports are included in this issue of the *Bulletin* and are on the website.

Public Officer Jennifer Carter conducted the election for office bearers (see p.31).

Rosemary warmly welcomed the new committee members Jenny Barnes (who has taken on the role of Treasurer), Marian Pearson, Steve Perry and Benn Schutte. She thanked existing Committee

member Maisie Walker Stelling for taking on the role of Secretary. Rosemary also thanked retiring members Jan Gatenby, Viv Schweizer, Rod Griffiths and Tor Wilson, before presenting Rod and Tor with gift vouchers from the National Botanic Gardens giftshop. Jan and Viv were given vouchers and thanked at the latest committee meeting as they were unable to attend the AGM.

Rod Griffiths then announced the life membership awarded to Sabine Friedrich (see article below for details of Sabine's contributions to the NPA), followed by a presentation from Pete Cotsell from ACT Parks on programs and plans for Namadgi, Tidbinbilla and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor.

An excellent supper provided by members followed the meeting.

Rosemary Hollow



Snow gum. Photo by Mike Bremers

Sabine Friedrich made life member

Sabine has been made a life member of NPA ACT for her contributions over many years in graphic design, publications, photography and IT support.

With a background in computer science, Sabine has provided invaluable computer and software support to NPA, mastering various design packages and honing her skills in digital design, including for the *NPA Bulletin*.

Sabine served on the Management Committee between 2005 and 2012 and led NPA's Publications Subcommittee for several years. In that period, the subcommittee tackled and completed several important publications, including the proceedings of NPA symposia in 2006, 2008 and 2010 leading up to NPA's 50th anniversary; the 2010 NPA calendar with photos of the association's activities for the 50th anniversary; reprints of three field guides (trees, reptiles and frogs, and birds); and *Eyes or No Eyes – a tribute to Nancy T. Burbidge*.

Sabine scanned all the bird paintings by Nicolas Day as backup and for use by NPA, and also refined the scans from slides for the reprint of *Reptiles & Frogs of the ACT*. In addition, she designed all the notices,

invitations and pamphlets during this very active period. NPA has also profited from Sabine's skills as a photographer with her images being used widely on promotional material and in the *Bulletin*.

She assisted the previous *Bulletin* designer with the intricacies and problems of the design software then in use. While it is difficult to identify her biggest contribution, designing every *Bulletin* since March 2020, even when she was travelling, has to be up there.

Sabine's many design contributions for NPA ACT include certificates for life membership and cards for special occasions, such as retirement of presidents, and display paraphernalia, including a marquee, tablecloth and teardrop banners.

Sabine has worked with Chris Emery on designing and maintaining the website and keeping its software up to date.

In recommending Sabine's nomination, the life membership subcommittee noted comments by her nominees that described her as 'a hard-working, unassuming but inspirational member'.

NPA ACT Committee



Sabine without camera



Annual report 2022–23

After another eventful year, it's again time to acknowledge the efforts of, and thank, so many members whose work and support have contributed to some notable achievements.

An ongoing flow of donations, thanks to the generosity of many members when renewing their membership, and from bequests and supporters, keeps our activities and projects going. We depend on these contributions, and greatly appreciate them.

Management Committee

The Management Committee met monthly, including several occasions online, to oversee NPA activities and finances. Major projects included reviewing the designs for the new website and updating our office and IT activities

Monthly meetings

Various informative speakers covered a broad spectrum of topics at our monthly meeting. Speakers included a representative from ACT Parks, who gave us a fascinating insight into aerial culling of deer and pigs in Namadgi; Don Fletcher, who summarised the work and achievements of the ongoing and fascinating goanna research project; (see below) and our honours students from the ANU Fenner School, who talked about their NPA-supported research projects. And our gratitude to Annette Smith who continued to coordinate supper arrangements, which are such a central part of these occasions, providing an opportunity for members, new and old, to mingle, get to know each other, and catch up.

Walks, works parties and other activities

The annual outings report from Mike Bremers, with assistance from Brian Slee, highlighted some encouraging statistics:

There was a strong recovery in the number of scheduled outings and those participating after a fall-off in numbers, even before COVID-19. With 105 outings this year, we returned to 2016–17 levels. The recovery is due to the recruitment of new leaders. Although the number of leaders has remained steady, we are always looking for more leaders and will mentor and support those interested in taking on the role.

Day walks are increasingly popular, with participation this year the highest since detailed record-keeping started. There were 454 participants, an impressive result when compared with 161 in 2017–18. Short-notice day walks and work parties also continued to be popular. See the outings summary article on page 19 for more detail.

NPA's contribution to the combined clubs (Brindabella Bushwalking Club, Canberra Bushwalking Club and NPA) Wednesday walks program continued at a rate of three walks a quarter.

We also participated in the ACT Government Heritage Festival, with three walks in urban areas, including one at Mulligans Flat led by Indigenous facilitator Aaron Chatfield. These walks were popular and introduced the broader Canberra community to our activities.

Communications and publications

Communication and outreach play a crucial role in attracting new members and followers. Our regular publications – the monthly e-newsletter *Burning Issues* and quarterly *Bulletin* – are the result of many hours of volunteer contributions. The *Bulletin* team of editors Brian Slee, Philip Gatenby, Allan Sharp and Craig Watson; designer Sabine Friedrich; copyeditor Ed Highley; and proofreader Jim Lehane continue to produce a high-quality publication with much of the content and excellent photographs provided by NPA members.

As the new editor of *Burning Issues*, Marie Santsingh has streamlined our electronic mailouts of the newsletter using Mailchimp.

Cynthia Burton and Allan Sharp continue to coordinate the social media team comprising Jim Lehane, Tori Ter Kuile, Nick Wynne and Abby Hils. Thanks to their efforts, our social media following continues to grow and we now have nearly 6,000 Facebook followers.

Advocacy

Our advocacy work in support of the management of ACT parks and reserves and the surrounding region continues to be an important part of our work. Many of our members remain involved in the Reclaim Kosi campaign to reduce feral horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park. The Environment Subcommittee led by Rod Griffiths made 10 submissions to the ACT Government on issues ranging from historic huts in Namadgi, high country bogs, and reviews of the Namadgi Management Plan and to a Senate Inquiry on feral horses in the Australian Alps. Follow-up meetings were held with ACT Environment Minister Rebecca Vassarotti, and regular meeting were held with ACT Parks and Conservation to discuss issues such as the Naas Valley access road and NPA work programs.

NPA ACT is a member of the National Parks Australia Council (NPAC), which includes representatives of National Park Associations in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania, and the

Nature Conservation Society of South Australia. NPA ACT wrote a letter from NPAC to Minister Plibersek requesting the Australian Government include protected areas as a trigger under the reforms being considered for the national environmental law (EPBC Act). We also prepared a submission on behalf of NPAC to the Australian Government Parliamentary Committee on Commonwealth grants administration.

Goanna project

Supported by an ACT Government Environment grant, Don Fletcher continued to lead our citizen-science research project into the conservation biology of Rosenberg's Goanna (*Varanus rosenbergi*) in the ACT region. The plans to continue the project for the summer of 2022/23 in the Naas Valley were thwarted by the condition of the Naas Valley Road Fire Trail, which was impassable to all vehicles.

The project was relocated to the Mount Ainslie–Majura region for the summer, where volunteers checked cameras for 12 weeks, and reviewed footage from

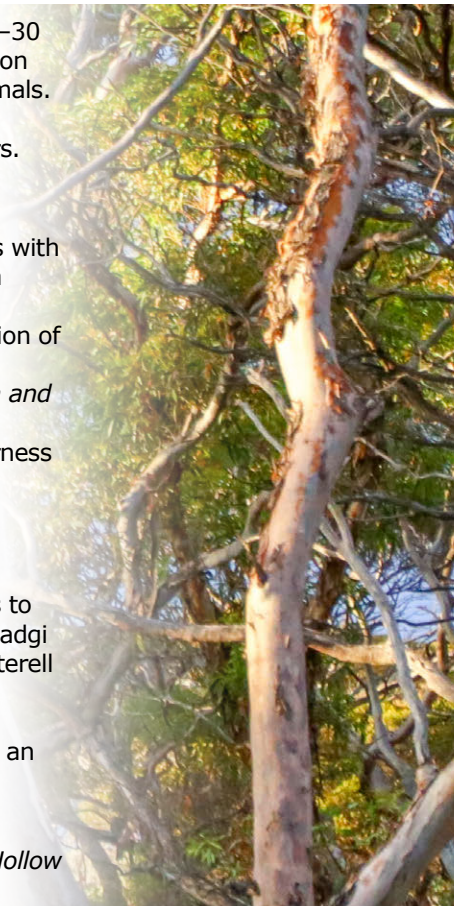
the cameras. Rather than an expected 20–30 goannas, the survey indicated the population size is likely to be a critically low 5–10 animals. Three males fitted with GPS trackers were named Rex, Rambo and Rum by volunteers.

The Sunday morning camera maintenance sessions also provided an opportunity to engage walkers in the areas with information about the NPA and the goanna program. The goanna team's other achievements for the year include publication of results in the international open-access journal *Herpetological Conservation and Biology* and inquiries from as far afield as Libya, Barbados and Java about the harness system they developed for attaching GPS trackers to the goannas.

Art Week

We are fortunate to have continued access to Gudenby Cottage for Art Week(s) in Namadgi National Park. Many thanks to Eleanor Cotterell who took over from Adrienne Nicholson organising Art Week and the follow-up exhibition at Namadgi Visitor Centre. Keep an eye out for the notice of the November Art Week this year.

Rosemary Hollow



Financial Report 2022–23

This financial year NPA's expenses exceeded income by \$11,800, following a surplus of \$18,504 in the previous year. However, we remain in a comfortable financial position, with net assets of \$92,321.

We received two Environment Grants from the ACT Government this year: \$34,820 for the Rosenberg's Goanna project and \$5,000 for a new project to update our website. The website project is being funded by, in addition to the grant, a large donation received in the previous financial year. We have also used the services of an IT

consultant to update our IT system, and have purchased new audiovisual equipment for use at meetings. The remaining stock of our Namadgi Book has been revalued, with the reduction in value being recorded as an expense of \$5,693.

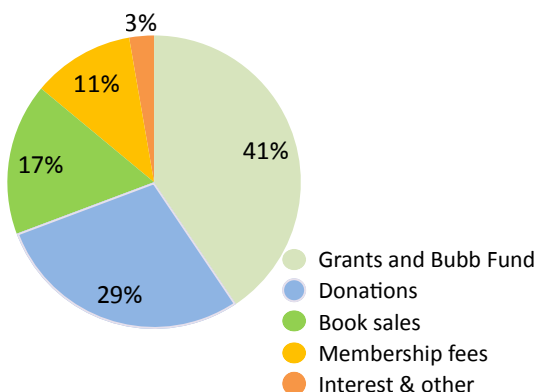
Generous donations from members have been vital in allowing us to continue to carry out our projects. Income from the sale of our field guides also remains a significant source of income.

The full audited financial reports are available on the website <https://www.npaact.org.au/index.php/pages/annual-financial-reports>.

Jan Gatenby, Treasurer

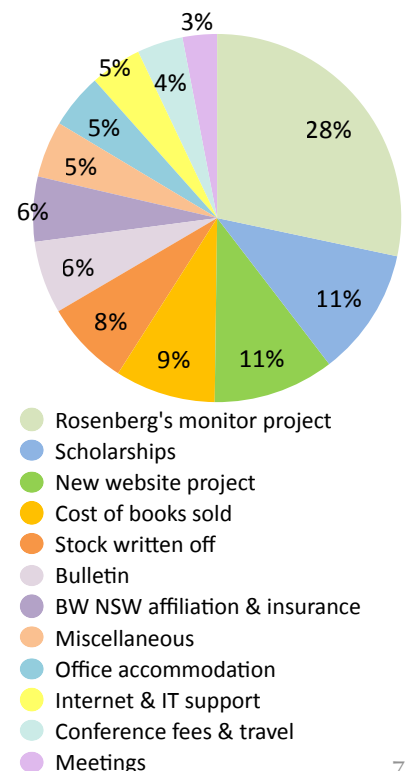
Income 2022–23

Grants and Bubb Fund	\$27,657
Donations	\$19,579
Book sales	\$11,405
Membership fees	\$7,675
Interest	\$1,488
Other	\$370
Total	\$68,174



Expenditure 2022–23

Rosenberg's monitor project	\$22,657
Scholarships	\$9,000
New website project	\$8,500
Cost of books sold	\$7,059
Stock written off	\$6,007
Bulletin	\$5,102
BW NSW affiliation & insurance	\$4,560
Miscellaneous	\$3,967
Office accommodation	\$3,860
Internet & IT support	\$3,616
Conference fees & travel	\$3,223
Meetings	\$2,423
Total	\$79,974



Kangaroo culling in the ACT

The ACT Government recently completed its 2023 cull of Eastern Grey Kangaroos in Canberra Nature Park (CNP) with just of over 1,000 kangaroos being killed. A formal program of annually culling of kangaroos has been conducted in the ACT since the late 2000s.

It was in 2009 that the ACT introduced its Kangaroo Management Plan to guide managing the environmental, economic and social impacts of Eastern Grey Kangaroos in the ACT.

The Kangaroo Management Plan raised considerable debate amongst NPA ACT members, particularly whether a kangaroo culling program should be supported. At the time the ACT was experiencing a severe long-term drought which was posing a significant threat to the viability of the ACT grasslands and the endangered species that inhabit this ecosystem. Overgrazing was seen to be a key pressure affecting this important ecosystem.

As such, the NPA ACT felt that it was essential to protect this nationally important ecosystem and its endangered species from the risk of overgrazing. Overall, it was felt that it was not tenable that an overabundant and common species, the Eastern Grey Kangaroo, was putting at risk less iconic or visible species that play an important role in the viability of the ecosystem as

a whole. It was a debate about the importance of threatened ecosystems as opposed to widespread non-threatened individual species.

In responding to the Kangaroo Management Plan, the NPA ACT stated that the plan needed to be adequately resourced with such funding not solely focused on the culling strategy but also on further research into alternative options for the management of the kangaroo population.

In addition, the NPA ACT's qualified support for the Kangaroo Management Plan was given with the following further provisos:

- the culling process must be based on scientific research and the management initiatives identified in the draft management plan
- that culling must be determined on a case-by-case basis and that it should not become normalised
- ongoing research must be conducted to identify more-effective long-term responses for both management of grasslands and the overpopulation of kangaroos.

Over the years, the NPA ACT has continued to monitor developments by the ACT Government environment area in response to kangaroo management, and has held regular conversations with the appropriate directorate. The NPA ACT has noted that the ACT Government has become more transparent with the aims of its culling process and that these aims, methodologies and plans are publicly available on their website. In particular, the NPA ACT continues to seek assurance that the original objectives are still the focus of the ACT Government through its meetings with the Directorate and through community forums such as the Biodiversity Community Forum.

Rod Griffiths

Aerial control program removes over 500 pest animals

In May this year ACT Parks and Conservation again used thermally assisted aerial culling to remove large vertebrate pests from the ACT reserve network.

The 2023 thermally assisted aerial culling (TAAC) program was conducted over 65 hours across 15 days in May. In total, 529 animals were culled, compared with 502 animals over a similar time period last May.

Of the animals culled this year, 46 per cent were deer, 43 per cent pigs and 11 per cent goats. No horses were seen during the 2023 program.

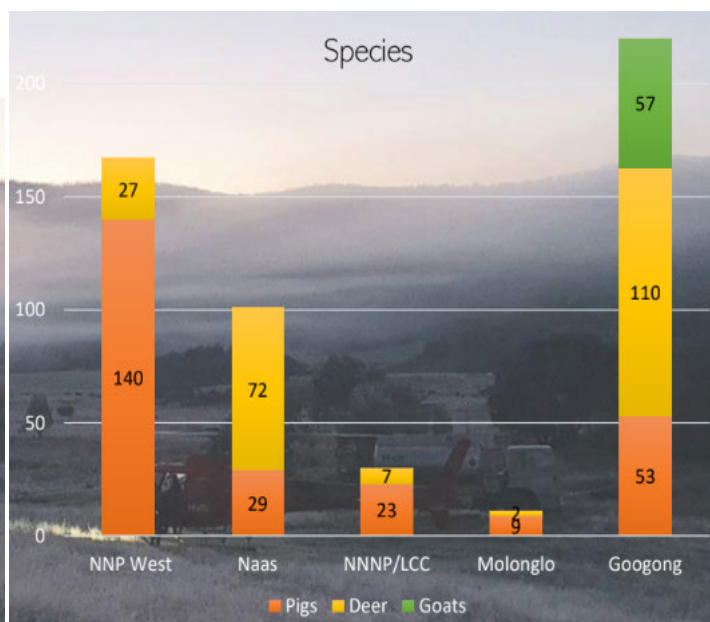
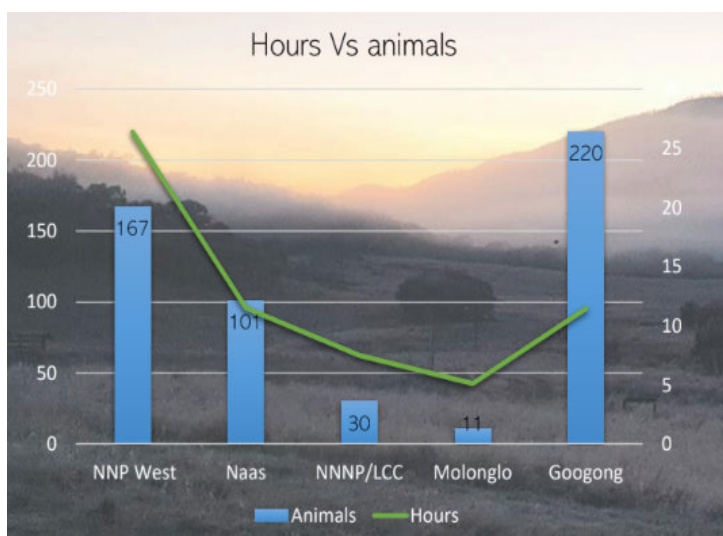
Areas where culling occurred were Northern Namadgi National Park (NNNP), the Lower Cotter Catchment (LCC), Western Namadgi National Park (NNP West), Molonglo and

Naas. Animal numbers and type are shown in the accompanying figures.

TAAC involves the use of thermal-imaging equipment carried by a helicopter to identify pest animals. The imager allows the control team to target animals even if they are not visible under thick foliage. The technique is an efficient and humane way to remove vertebrate pests.

Parks and Conservation plans to run another TAAC program in May 2024.

Information provided by Louisa Roberts, ACT Parks and Conservation



Closing a chapter after a life in conservation

Recently retired manager of Namadgi National Park, Brett McNamara, reflects on a career of challenging change spanning nearly 40 years

The year was 1984. As a youthful, energetic 19-year-old escaping yet another Canberra winter, and with a spirit for adventure, I ventured north to the tropics of the Northern Territory. A ranger traineeship was soon on offer – and the rest, as they say, is history.

Looking back, my time in the Territory was akin to an adventure story – from catching wary crocodiles and hanging out of helicopters ready to shoot feral pests, to living with remote Arnhem Land communities and participating in and witnessing unique cultural ceremonies.

In Central Australia, I witnessed a ceremony which has echoed through time: preparing a grave for an Indigenous ranger in the red sands of Uluru. At the time, such an occasion was lost on a young ranger. Later in life, I came to fully appreciate and comprehend this moment.

Throughout my career I was fortunate to cross paths with inspirational and remarkable people whose passion for the environment shaped me as a park manager. Early in my career an old chief ranger observed that 'park management is just people management'. When you reflect, nature has been managing the environment for eons. As park managers we manage the impact.

Ultimately, rangers manage the touch that this human hand has had on our environment: by spraying weeds and controlling pests, and by managing the threat of wildfire on communities. We provide visitor facilities, toilets, campgrounds and walking tracks as a necessary means to manage 'people' within this ancient landscape.



Brett McNamara, Regional Manager, National Parks and Catchments, Territory and Municipal Services, ACT.

With both my children taking their first steps at Bendora Dam in the heart of the Brindabella Range, my passion for and devotion to the majestic mountains framing the Bush Capital grew. Weekends on ski patrol. Leading ranger-guided walks to the summit of Mount Gingera and to the historic Mount Franklin Chalet and beyond. Gleaning a unique insight from Professor Lindsay Pryor as we sat inside a quaint mountain hut named in his honour. Reflecting with Dr Josephine Flood upon her seminal work in the shadow of ancient rock art site in the Gudgenby Valley. And sitting with NPA ACT founding member Fiona

Brand on the veranda of Ready Cut Cottage, recounting an environmental campaign to declare a 'national park for the national capital'.

Each experience ingrained a deep sense of custodianship for the natural and cultural values of Namadgi National Park.

An overarching goal of a park manager is to pass the estate on to the next generation of custodians in a better condition than when you began your own career. Having experienced not one, but two conflagrations in one career, it's difficult to lay claim to doing that.

Climate change-induced frequency and intensity of both wildfire and repeated planned fire have altered the subtle ecological dynamics of the mountains. With this environmental change, the presence of heavy-hoofed herbivores looms large. When I began my career there were no feral deer in Namadgi. Implementing an advanced helicopter-based thermal imaging program – cutting-edge technology that is a far cry from my days of flying around Arnhem Land – will bring about a level of control, but not eradication.

There are many career highlights, and a sense of achievement in making a small contribution to the natural and cultural conservation of Namadgi – from discovering an ancient indigenous digging stick in the heart of the mountains, to the post-2003 firestorm rebuild of the Mount Franklin Interpretive shelter, to realising the vision of the Mouat Tree in telling the

tale of the ACT border, to coining the phrase 'the life of a raindrop' to conjure an image and create a political and emotional response to the intrinsic qualities underpinning our water catchment.

But perhaps the greatest achievements are associated with working with our community: championing the cause for heavy-hoofed feral animal control with NPA; advocating for greater Indigenous involvement through the Namadgi Joint Board of Management; reaching across state borders and working as one with the Australian Alps Liaison Committee; providing local knowledge; gaining insights into police search and rescue; and reuniting lost park visitors with their families.

Working alongside courageous Rural Fire Service volunteers and Parks firefighters as a fire-ground leader, my greatest sense of accomplishment was that every firefighter who started their shift with me went home to their family.

Having experienced many firestorms, locally, nationally and internationally, I can see that their nature and ferocity have been driven off the scale by climate change.

Watching my own family home burn to the ground ... and hearing the ear-piercing roar of fire consuming a home full of possessions is an experience that I'll take to my grave.

Climate change will, I believe, be the greatest challenge for those who will walk in my footsteps. But with greater community awareness, advocacy and political leadership, I trust that change for good is on the horizon. It needs to be.

They say that there's no such thing as a climate-change sceptic at the end of a fire hose. With an extensive firefighting career, the irony of contracting a firefighter cancer through prolonged exposure to carcinogenic smoke wasn't lost on me.

The collective efforts of lobbying political leaders to amend legislation that was designed to assist those in their hour of medical need provided solace and satisfaction that those who may be unfortunate enough to navigate a similar cancer pathway to mine will now have it a little easier. Advocating and achieving this legislative change is perhaps my greatest career achievement.

With successful surgery behind me, life's next chapter is calling. I have retired to our family's acreage on the banks of the Richmond River, in the charming Northern Rivers village of Kyogle. I spend my days tending to tree-planting projects, mastering a zero-turn lawn mower and enjoying a coffee on the balcony with stunning views of the Border Ranges National Park. Life is good. In fact, it's very good.

Brett McNamara worked for ACT Parks & Conservation Service as a ranger and manager of Namadgi National Park from 1992 to 2023. He retired in May.

Vale Fiona Brand OAM (1934–2023) Life Member of NPA ACT

For 62 years, Fiona supported NPA ACT to the extent of her ability whether that was persistent lobbying of politicians and exploring the mountains of Namadgi or sitting quietly in the front row at meetings encouraging the current generation of leaders. We will miss her!

As a young schoolteacher, she was dedicated to protecting the natural environment and encouraging her students to do so as well. In 1960 she was one of the three NPA members joining the Canberra Alpine Club on a climb of Mount Kelly. This gave them an overview of the area to be proposed as a national park. To gain a better appreciation of the potential national park area, she and two others later chartered a small plane for an aerial view of the area.

She later described the climb and view: *We walked through the most beautiful areas, it looked untouched. The streams were clear, no erosion and it just was beautiful bushland. When you climbed to the top of Mount Kelly well, it's just that 360° view of mountain range after mountain range to Jagungal. We just felt, well yes, this should be the national park.* (NPA Oral History, commissioned to Matthew Higgins).

For 25 years, Fiona served on the Management Committee in various roles (Secretary, *Bulletin* editor, Vice President and several others) and helped with the preparation of proposals to be submitted to various politicians again and again until the park was finally gazetted in 1984. She subsequently served on various ACT Government environment and outdoor recreation committees.

Many *Bulletins* contain her articles or photos and, more recently, poems. She led bushwalks, car camps and pack walks. Her favourite type of pack walk was an hour's walk to a campsite where swimming and nature study were possible and perhaps berries to pick. And she also continued to climb mountains including a second pack walk

up Mount Kelly in October 1985 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of NPA ACT and the recent establishment of Namadgi National Park.

Fiona became a champion of heritage preservation (both Indigenous and European) and successfully proposed that preservation of cultural heritage should be added to the aims in the

NPA ACT Constitution. She was a regular on work parties with NPA and the Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group (GBRG) on both historic building preservation and landscape restoration. And she watched what park management was doing to preserve Indigenous heritage and complained vigorously when she did not approve. They seem to have usually paid attention.

Over the years she wrote many articles for the *Bulletin* about issues relating to Namadgi and the local environment more generally, illustrated with her photos. She also wrote about her travels, often with NPA Life Member Reg Alder, to many other parts of Australia and throughout the world including Everest Base Camp. Fiona also wrote several book reviews, particularly of nature-themed books for children.



Fiona Brand in 1980s. Photo by Rea Alder

Her work and dedication were honoured by Life Membership to NPA ACT in 1982; and in 1995 she was awarded OAM on the Queen's Birthday Honours List for 'service to conservation and the environment through the National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory.'

Fiona was a very active member of the GBRG, formed by NPA ACT members and others to revegetate the former pine plantation areas of the Gudgenby Valley. When she could no longer do the heavy work, she would go along for the camaraderie and opportunity to enjoy the bush while quietly sitting nearby. In recognition of her long-term commitment, Fiona was declared an Honorary Member of GBRG in 2020. Her continued attendance at both GBRG and NPA work parties was facilitated by Sonja Lenz and Kevin McCue who generously provided transport to work parties and other NPA ACT events when she could no longer drive herself.



Fiona was, in 1985, part of a group camped near Big Creamy Flats and climbed both Mount Namadgi and Mount Kelly. They carried up 2 bottles of champagne for the celebration and Fiona brought meringues to share as they were light. Back row L to R: Vern Routley, Reg Alder, Philip Gatenby, Di Thompson, Neville Esau (leader), Frank Clements; front row: Antonia Lehn, Jack Smart, Beverley Hammond, Fiona Brand. Photo by Jan Gatenby

In recent years Fiona loved Art Week for the opportunity to stay at Gudgenby Cottage in Namadgi with a small group of members. There, art was produced, convivial meals were enjoyed and nature was observed from the veranda. Her joy in this event is clear in the poems she wrote while there.

Excerpts from Fiona's Art Week poems published in the *NPA ACT Bulletin*:

Gudgenby Cottage, Spring 2016

*The flames sing
In the black firebox,
The log turns white and red
As ash and coals accumulate
The heat warms the residents
On this cloudy cold morning.*

*Hazel sits at the desk
Painting orchids for the exhibition
And Fiona writes a poem.*

Frosty morning at Gudgenby Cottage

*The melting water droplets on the wire fence
Shine in the sunlight as the earth warms
And the kangaroos lie down to bask in the warmth
As do we humans sitting on the cottage veranda.*

Extract from a "Thank You Fiona" article by Life Members Sybil and Robert Story published in the *NPA ACT Bulletin* Dec 1986:

This is to convey our appreciation to Fiona as she steps down from the managing Committee she has served on for twenty-five years. She has also taken on additional duties on sub-committees, as editor, and as hostess at the Committee meetings, where for many years she supplied the shelter and sustenance that were always welcome and sometimes badly needed. We look forward to her continuing support making new members welcome, pointing out how right something is (or how wrong), and being available whenever a bit of cheerful willing help is needed. Thank you, Fiona.



Fiona enjoying the new bench and the bush while waiting for the walking party to return from the opening walk of the new Stockyard Spur Trail.



Fiona and Hazel Rath enjoying morning coffee on the chilly cottage veranda at Art Week, Sept 2014. Photo by Esther Gallant

Almost 30 years on, we acknowledge her continued commitment and her life well lived. She was determined to achieve positive outcomes for the environment and the community. The results of her work benefit us and those to come. For that we are grateful and honour her.

Esther Gallant



Scabby Range from Stockyard Spur. Photo by Philip Gatenby

NPA ACT celebrates Victorian logging victory

NPA ACT members were among those who celebrated the surprise decision by the Victorian Government in May to end native logging in the state from December. Allan Sharp reports

A decades-long campaign to stop the logging of native forests in Victoria ended in May when the state government announced it would end the practice this December, 6 years earlier than previously planned, because it was no longer economically or environmentally viable.

The long and sometimes bitter campaign culminating in a landmark decision by the Victorian Supreme Court last November that the state-owned logging agency, VicForests, had broken the law by failing to protect endangered species, involved a broad spectrum of conservationists, scientists and lawyers – and several members of NPA ACT, who played a small but appreciated part.

For some years, the East Gippsland Environment group (EEG) – the longest running community forest group working for the protection of Victoria's last and largest area of ancient forest – held annual Easter ecology camps 'to bring forest and nature enthusiasts together to raise awareness and funds and discuss and learn about the various forest types in East Gippsland and the issues that surround them'.

NPA ACT members attended several camps until they ceased after 2018 because they were becoming too big and difficult to organise in such a remote area.

Judy and Dave Kelly attended one of the Forests Forever Easter Ecology Camps, at Errinundra Plateau in East Gippsland, hosted by EEG with the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), and Goongerah Environment Centre, and wrote about the experience in the *NPA Bulletin* Sept. 2015. The campers, they said, were as diverse as the forest and were a mix of all ages and backgrounds.

Another member, Di Thompson, was so taken with Judy and Dave's article that she added the Easter camps to NPA ACT's outings program. In Easter 2016, a group of nine NPA ACT members, including Di, 'set forth to experience the East Gippsland forests in Errinundra National

The campers were as diverse as the forest and were a mix of all ages and backgrounds.

Park and in the surrounding state forests'.

The camp organisers, the Goongerah Environment Centre and VNPA, were delighted with the big contingent from the NPA ACT,' said Di, who described her experience in the *NPA Bulletin* June 2016.

'We loved what we saw but were horrified to see the destruction of so many large coupes of high-quality hardwood trees for the purposes of turning them into plantation timber plots,' she recalled.

In 2018, Di organised another NPA ACT car camp. Esther Gallant, who was then president, and other NPA committee members 'put some real effort into the universities' to promote NPA's generous sponsorship of students undertaking environmental studies'.

'The idea of encouraging ACT students to take part in a 3-night environmental camp, guided by NPA members, was to introduce them

to how VNPA and EEG engaged students and young people, as well as scientists and lawyers who put together evidence for court cases against VicForests for repeated breaches – and winning them!' Di said. Consequently, two NPA-sponsored University of Canberra environmental science students, Max Mallett

Native forest at Goolengook, East Gippsland. Photo by VNPA



Native forest logging. Photos by Di Thompson

and Erin Fischer, took part in what was to be the last camp, in 2018, and wrote about it in the *NPA Bulletin* June 2018, describing the experience as an 'eye-opener'.

Both recently recalled their experience at the camp.

'The on-ground experience established a sense of realism to the environmental problems we were learning about during our undergraduate studies', said Max, who is now a PhD candidate at the Australian Rivers Institute at Griffith University, studying the effects of hydro-ecological disturbances on fish health in the Murray-Darling Basin.

'I wasn't aware of the extent to which logging was being undertaken in these old-growth forests,' he said. 'It also reinforced a sense of distrust that best-practice methods were really being employed during the selection of areas of forest to be logged'.

Erin, who is now a VNPA member and works for the Sovereign Hills Museums Association coordinating curriculum-aligned education programs, said she found the camp 'super enjoyable and interesting'.

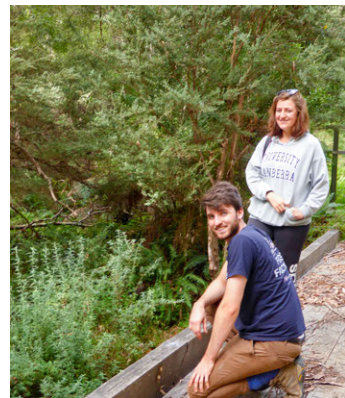
'It was extraordinary to be immersed in an active environmental warzone and I really valued the words from each expert we listened to,' she said.

'In the years since, the Errinundra and Snowy region has been one of my favourite places to return to, and old growth, native forest logging is an environmental challenge that continues to pique my interest.'

With the Victorian decision, eyes are now turning to end native forest logging in the remaining states.

Western Australia is ending it from January 2024 and there are now calls on the Albanese government, from The Greens, independent federal MPs and conservation groups, to end native forest logging nationally.

Erin and Max at Errinundra in 2018



Mapping and controlling invasive weeds

Steve Taylor from the ACT Government's Parks & Conservation and Resilient Landscapes Branch has received a national award from the Invasive Species Council for championing a new way of mapping invasive plants across the ACT. Craig Watson reports on Steve's work.

The Invasive Species Council is an independent conservation advocacy group whose focus is to safeguard Australia from invasive species. The Council gives annual awards – the Froggatt awards (see brown box below) – to those who have made a major contribution to protecting Australia's native plants and animals, ecosystems and people from new invasive species.

One of two 2022 award winners, Steve Taylor, who is the invasive species manager at ACT Parks and Conservation, realised back in 2009 that a key reason invasive plant control projects failed was because mapping of infestations was, at best, ad hoc, which led to a lack of critical follow-up control.

'We also needed a way to map new incursions of highly invasive plants so there is early detection, rapid response and seamless coordination to control them,' said Steve.

'When (GIS software company) Esri released, in 2014, Fields Maps, a field mapping smartphone app that allows easy map sharing we realised we could solve the problem.

'All public land managers in the ACT now map on the same app, and that includes rangers, invasive species officers, biosecurity officers, volunteers and contractors'.

The app has enhanced biosecurity response by providing real-time mapping to track spread and ensure follow-up control is not overlooked. The Mexican Feather Grass, Fireweed and Coolatai Grass incursions into the ACT are good examples where the Field Maps app was the key to successful response.

Control of Serrated Tussock at Jerrabomberra Grasslands Nature Reserve

Serrated Tussock is from South America but readily invades native grasslands and pasture in SE Australia. It decreases biodiversity by smothering other grasses and wildflowers.

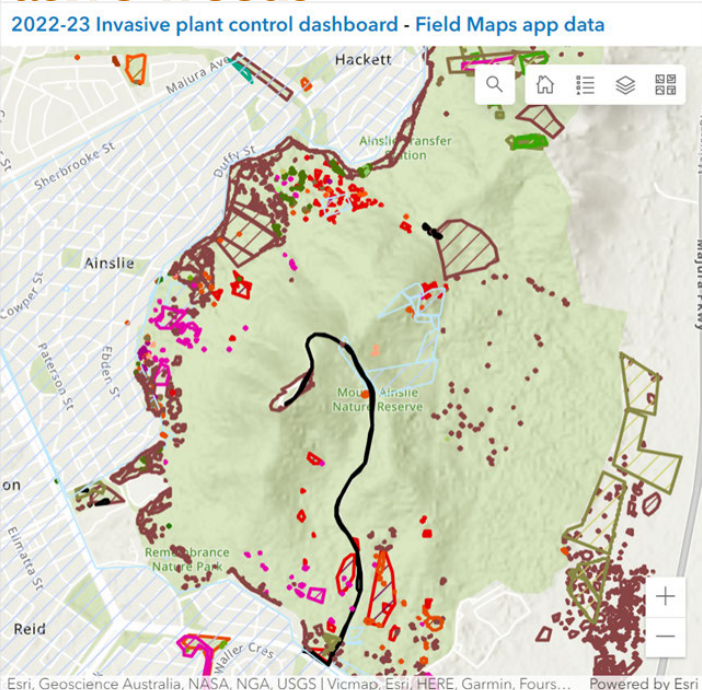
Steve says Serrated Tussock can double its infestation size in as little as 3 years and spread kilometres on the wind.

'We've used the mapping to track and guide the removal of nearly all the Serrated Tussock at Jerrabomberra Grasslands Nature Reserve.'

Future priorities

Weed control work is never ending, particularly during seasons of above average rainfall. Steve's team will continue to work with CSIRO to analyse the mapping to determine effectiveness of their management of different invasive plant species. He also plans to working with ecological economists to determine:

- cost effectiveness of immediate or delayed action when a new incursion is located
- optimal expenditure on surveillance for new incursions
- when to switch from eradication to containment
- when to switch from containment to slowing the spread and asset protection
- calculating a benefit-cost ratio for the invasive plants program.



Map: A Field Map of weed control work on Mount Ainslie Nature Reserve. There are over 40 species of weeds recorded here, each colour is a different species, e.g. brown is Serrated Tussock and Chilean Needle Grass, olive is St. John's Wort, pink is blackberry and red Cootamundra Wattle



Serrated tussock control at Jerrabomberra Grasslands. The infestation in 2005 (top photo) was spot sprayed for many years to reduce tussock and allow native grasses to regenerate. Bottom photos are the same site in 2020 showing native grasses dominating. All photos supplied by Steve Taylor

The Froggatt Awards are named in honour of Australian entomologist Walter Froggatt, who, when the Cane Toad was released into Australia in the 1930s to control beetle infestations in the sugar cane industry, was a lone voice, lobbying the federal government to exercise caution.

At the time Froggatt wrote that 'this great toad, immune from enemies, omnivorous in its habits, and breeding all year round, may become as great a pest as the rabbit or cactus'.

His lobbying efforts were initially successful, but overturned in 1936, and Cane Toads were released throughout the sugar cane regions of Queensland. The rest is history.

An allied organisation – the ACT National Trust

The first National Trust was founded in the United Kingdom in 1895, covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Heritage organisations similar to the Trust exist in many countries, particularly those with British heritage, such as Canada, Fiji and New Zealand.

The first Trust in Australia was established in New South Wales in 1945 to raise community consciousness of the widespread destruction of the built and natural heritage in Sydney. The other States established National Trust offices progressively throughout the 1950s and 60s. The Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory Trusts were established in the mid-1970s.

Each State and Territory National Trust is fully autonomous and they are established as separate legal entities. They come together as a group as the Australian Council of National Trusts to consider national issues and work with the Australian Government.

In Australia, the National Trusts are among the nation's leading conservation organisations, and one of very few groups concerned with all aspects of heritage: natural and cultural, tangible and intangible.

The ACT National Trust, originally a local committee of the NSW National Trust, was created as a separate entity in 1975. It is a not-for-profit organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Non-for-Profits Commission.

The ACT Trust is administered by a Council and four Council subcommittees: Heritage, Tours and Events, Corporate Affairs and Communications.

The National Trust in the ACT is different to the other National Trusts in Australia in that we do not own any property. This is a blessing and a curse. Maintaining heritage properties is not for the faint-hearted due to the costs and practical ongoing issues associated with continuing preservation and maintenance requirements of ageing and typically fragile buildings.

On the other hand, access to properties does provide permanent venues for Trust activities and volunteers, and income generation. The ACT Trust is fortunate to have excellent relations with ACT Historic Places and other agencies responsible for heritage places in the Territory.

The Vision of the ACT National Trust is to be an independent and expert community leader in the conservation of our cultural and natural heritage. Our purpose is to foster public knowledge about, and promote the conservation of, places and objects that are significant.

We advocate for identification, conservation and, where appropriate, heritage listing, of heritage places and objects. We place much store in liaising with the ACT and Commonwealth governments and agencies on heritage matters, including legislative reform and funding for heritage promotion and assets.

The Trust manages and is seeking ways to make more readily available to researchers our large collection of heritage classification files (before 2004, classification of heritage in the ACT was undertaken by the Trust, rather than the ACT Heritage Council as is the case now).

The Trust also organises many events during the annual ACT Heritage Festival and conducts the annual ACT Heritage Awards. With several other kindred organisations, we organise the annual ACT & Region Heritage



Gary Kent presenting National Trust ACT Heritage Award to Jamie Pittock from Friends of Grasslands on 15 April 2023 at Gurubana Dhaura in Yarralumla

Symposium. This year's symposium will be held on Saturday 14 October, with the theme Planning for Heritage.

To promote heritage awareness for students in schools and tertiary institutions we support students' heritage projects through the placement of interns and our annual University of Canberra Heritage Prize.

Recent and current issues on which the Trust has been working include Light Rail Stage 2, Canberra Brickworks redevelopment, Kingston Arts Precinct, heritage listing of Canberra and the proposed car park next to the John Gorton Building. We made a comprehensive submission to the ACT parliamentary inquiry into the ACT heritage arrangements.

The Trust is a membership-based organisation, and members' fees provide a substantial portion of our annual income. We also receive significant annual funding in a grant for the period 2020–2024.

More information is available from the Trust's website: www.nationaltrust.org.au/act.

*Gary Kent, President
National Trust of Australia (ACT),
(Gary was guest speaker at NPA's
June 2023 meeting)*



Maisie Walker Stelling joins NPA Office staff

We have a new face in the NPA Office. Maisie Walker Stelling has recently joined the NPA, answering your enquiries and working with our membership database.

Maisie grew up in North-Eastern Victoria, and moved to Canberra to attend uni at the ANU. Getting people excited about nature and science is Maisie's jam, and when she moved from the country to the 'big city', she saw how important organisations like the NPA are in encouraging people to spend time in nature. Following the AGM, Maisie is also now taking on the role of NPA Secretary. Thanks Maisie.

If you are interested in helping out in the office, or other NPA activities like leading walks, work parties, or even helping out at our general meetings, please feel free to reach out to the office at admin@npaact.org.au.

Maisie meeting a quoll. Photo supplied by Maisie Walker Stelling

NPA outings program

Bushwalk grading guide *September – December 2023*



Distance grading (per day)

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

Terrain grading

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

Check-in/Emergency contact:

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

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 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 September – December 2023 (page 2 of 4)

2 September Saturday walk 	Kowen Escarpment and Molonglo Gorge Meet at Spotlight car park, Queanbeyan, for 8 am departure. Walk initially through Kowen Escarpment with its dry woodlands. We will be following trails or forest roads the whole day with a couple of climbs and descents in Kowen and then working our way through pine forest to Blue Tiles picnic area. After lunch we will enter the Molonglo Gorge with great views of river following track back to car park. Approx. 17 km with 450 m of climb. Register with leader, preferably by email, by 1 September.	Map: Bungendore 1:25,000 Grading: 3A Leader: Rod Griffiths Contact: 0410 875 731 or rod.blackdog@gmail.com
3 September Sunday morning walk 	Exploring Parliament House surrounds Meet at 9 am on left hand side of front forecourt of Parliament House. Remnant vegetation, historic remains and roses: exploring surrounds of Parliament House. 3–4 hours, 8 km. Optional lunch at conclusion. Register with leader, preferably by email, for walk and optional lunch by 1 September.	Leader: Rosemary Hollow Contact: 0413 977 708 or rosemary@npaact.org.au
9 September Saturday work party	Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds at site to be determined in the Gudgenby Valley. Car-pooling available for journey and tools will be provided. Contact leader for registration arrangements.	Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au
10 September Sunday morning walk	Australian National University sculptures Meet at 9 am outside Street Theatre in Childers Street. Leisurely stroll through ANU grounds to view sculptures and landscapes, on different route to February walk. Easy 3 hours with optional lunch at conclusion. Contact leader, preferably by email, to register for walk and optional lunch by 8 September.	Leader: Rosemary Hollow Contact: 0413 977 708 or rosemary@npaact.org.au
17 September Sunday walk 	Gigerline Nature Reserve Meet 9 am at Calwell Club car park (cnr Johnson Drive and Were Street). From Angle Crossing Road we enter Gigerline Nature Reserve on eastern side of Murrumbidgee. Walk along fire trail before turning off-track through open woodland and over prominent hill. Continue north towards Guises Creek then head down towards Murrumbidgee for lunch. Return up steep ridgeline, back alongside the prominent hill. Undulating, steep at times, mostly off-track. 8 km with 330 m ascent.	Map: Williamsdale 1:25,000 Grading: 1A/B/C Drive: 40 km, \$18 per car Leader: Phillip Starr Contact: 0419 281 096 or phillipstarr1945@gmail.com
23 September Saturday work party	Moore's Hill weed control Meet at Dillon Close, Weston at 8:15 am. Moore's Hill is close to Cotter Camp Ground and is site of a range of woody weeds. Bring gloves, all other tools will be provided. Book with the leader by 21 September.	Drive: 32 km, \$14 per car Leader: Brian Slee Contact: 6281 0719 or brianslee@iprimus.com.au
27 September Wednesday walks	Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity <i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i>	Medium/hard walk Leader: Greg Buckman Contact: 0481 260 666 or gregbuckman@iinet.net.au Easy/medium walk Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907
30 September Saturday walk 	Rogers Rocks and old growth forest Meandering route entirely within unburnt Tallaganda forest plus two granite outcrops with tree-filtered views. First half of walk is off-track through semi-open forest and second half is on informal footpad. Moderate pace. 8 km in around 5 hours, main climbs 70 m, 200 m (on track) and 70 m. Depart Queanbeyan: last 15 minutes of drive requires AWD/4WD – book by email and, if willing to drive, advise car type and # of passengers.	Map: Bombay 1:25,000 Grading: 1C Drive: \$34 per car Leader: Linda Groom Contact: 0474 507 259 or lbroom@gmail.com
2 October Monday holiday morning walk 	Red Rocks Gorge and 'The Chasm' Starting from Tuggeranong Pool, walk along the Murrumbidgee from Tuggeranong Creek confluence to Red Rocks Gorge. We will be off-track, close to river for about 2 km to get spectacular views of the rapids. Not difficult but expect rock scrambling and some prickly bushes. Return via Centenary Trail. About 10 km with total climb of 200 m. Register with leader by 5 pm, 1 October.	Map: Tuggeranong 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/C/E Leader: Mike Bremers Contact: mcbremers@gmail.com

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

<p>8 October Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Queanbeyan River – Burra Creek confluence Meet 8 am at Spotlight car park, Queanbeyan. Lovely walk with scenic views over Queanbeyan River where it enters Googong Dam. Starting at London Bridge car park we cross Burra Creek, walk past London bridge homestead before heading into Burra Creek Nature Reserve. Heading back to Googong foreshores we follow a peninsula to confluence of Burra Creek and Queanbeyan River. Return via London Bridge. Note rock hopping across Burra Creek and jumping of two gates, 370 m ascent. Book with leader by 6 October via email. Limit of 10.</p>	<p>Map: Captains Flat 1:25,000 Grading: 2A Drive: 22 km, \$20 per car Leader: Marlene Contact: marleneeggert@bigpond.com</p>
<p>14 October Saturday work party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds at site to be determined in Gudgenby Valley. Car-pooling available for journey and tools will be provided. Contact leader for registration arrangements.</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>
<p>14–22 October Kayak trip</p> 	<p>Murray River kayaking Paddle Murray River on gentle current from Yarrawonga to Barmah. Beautiful paddling with camping on sandy beaches and in Red Gum forest. Participants should have own kayak or canoe which can carry their gear for up to seven nights and be able to paddle 30 km a day. Car shuffle required. Paddling distance 220 km. Contact leader by 7 October. Limit of 8.</p>	<p>Maps: Tocumwal, Strathmerton, Mathoura, Moama 1:50,000 Grading: Flatwater Drive: 1,200 km, cost TBA Leader: Mike Bremers Contact: 0428 923 408 or mcbremers@gmail.com</p>
<p>22 October Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Wildbark Take light rail from city to Mapleton Avenue, Harrison. Follow Gungaharra Creek through Joey Park to Wildbark visitor centre, Throsby, for coffee. Walk in Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve before returning to Wildbark for brunch. Take light rail back to city from Nullarbor Avenue. Easy walk. Register with leader by 20 October.</p>	<p>Map: UBD Canberra street directory maps 29, 30 Grading: 1A/B Leader: Brian Slee Contact: brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>22–26 October Pack walk</p> 	<p>Budawangs Walk includes Folly Point, Watsons Pass, Island Mountain and Quiltys Mountain. While some of it is on track (which may be overgrown in places), rock scrambling and finding routes through cliff lines will be involved, and thick scrub may be encountered. For experienced off-track walkers. More details available closer to date. Limit of 8. Contact leader, preferably by email, by 19 October.</p>	<p>Map: Endrick 1:25,000 Grading: 3A/C/E Drive: 216 km, \$100 per car Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or philip.gatenby@gmail.com</p>
<p>28 October Saturday work party</p>	<p>Broom control – Brayshaws Hut area Meet at Kambah Village shops at 8 am. Our last work party in this area was October 2019. Task will involve searching for and removing broom plants (mostly very small). All tools and equipment provided, just bring an appetite for searching and weeding. Book with leader by 26 October.</p>	<p>Drive: 130 km, \$60 per car Leader: Michaela Popham Contact: 0413 537 333</p>
<p>29 October Sunday walk</p>	<p>Search for 'old' Fishlock Yards 'New' Fishlock Yards is in upper Orroral Valley. Historical documents place original Yards possibly further up valley but more likely somewhere beside Cotter Hut Road. Walk Orroral Valley Circuit – grassland going up valley with views to granite tors on both ridges; wet feet crossing Sawpit Creek; hard surfaced Smokers Trail and Cotter Hut Road. Around 20 km and 400 m climb. Register with leader by 27 October.</p>	<p>Map: Corin Dam 1:25,000 Grading: 3/A/C Drive: 70 km, \$32 per car Leader: John Evans Contact: 0417 436 877 or jevansact@gmail.com</p>
<p>4 November Saturday walk</p> 	<p>Corang Lagoon Walk follows developing route from the north to Corang Lagoon since access to southern side of Corang River at lagoon was closed. A combination of fire trail, light scrub and a bit of rock scrambling is involved. 20 km, height gain of 350 m and several water crossings, which takes over 8 hours. Early start essential and limit of 8. Book with leader by 2 November, preferably by email.</p>	<p>Map: Corang 1:25,000 Grading: 3A/C/E Drive: 216 km, \$100 per car Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or philip.gatenby@gmail.com</p>
<p>11 November Saturday work party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. Control (cutting and dabbing) of woody weeds at site to be determined in Gudgenby Valley. Car pooling available for journey and tools will be provided. Contact leader for registration</p>	<p>Leader: Doug Brown Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>

NPA outings program September – December 2023 (page 4 of 4)

<p>12 November Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Compo Canyon Meet at Queanbeyan Swimming Pool car park for 8:30 am departure. Walk from London Bridge car park at southern end of Googong Dam. Cross London Bridge, wade across Queanbeyan River near Curley Falls to access Compo Canyon on side creek. Return to cars along fire trails, crossing river at Galignite Crossing. Footwear and walking pole for crossing rivers advisable.</p>	<p>Map: Captains Flat 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/C/E Drive: 55 km, \$25 per car Leader: Mike S Contact: 0412 179 907</p>
<p>19 November Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Googong Dam to Cumbeun Nature Reserve Start at Downstream Picnic Area in Googong reserve. Climb on Bradleys Creek Walk to reserve border, then follow Valley Creek to Deep Creek. Return to dam via Cumbeun Nature Reserve off-track. Undulating walk, medium difficulty, 14 km, 600 m total ascent. Self-drive to meeting point. Register with leader by 17 November via email for start time and meeting arrangements. Limit of 10.</p>	<p>Map: Hoskinstown 1:25,000 Grading: 2A/B/C Leader: Marlene Contact: marleneeggert@bigpond.com</p>
<p>22 November Wednesday walks</p>	<p>Joint NPA / BBC / CBC activity <i>Details are emailed to those on the Wednesday Walks email list. Otherwise contact leader.</i></p>	<p>Medium/hard walk Leader: Philip Gatenby Contact: 0401 415 446 or philip.gatenby@gmail.com Easy/medium walk Leader: Steven Forst Contact: 0428 195 236 or steven.forst23@gmail.com</p>
<p>25 November Saturday work party</p>	<p>Fence removal – Orroral Valley Meet at Kambah Village shops at 7:30 am (to beat the heat). This is the second work party to remove barbed wire from fences in Orroral Valley. Location of fences will be determined closer to event. All tools provided, just bring gloves. Book with leader by 23 November.</p>	<p>Drive: 70 km, \$32 per car Leader: Martin Chalk Contact: 0411 161 056</p>
<p>26 November Sunday walk</p> 	<p>Murrumbidgee Corridor and Bullen Range From Kambah Pool walk downstream 4.5 km, cross Murrumbidgee and climb steeply to Bullen Range. Go south along ridge fire trail for about 6 km then descend on spur that ends with a knife edge overlooking Kambah Pool where Murrumbidgee is again forded. Mix of track, fire trail and mostly open forest. A short rock scramble. About 15 km and 500 m climb. Self-drive to meeting point. Register with leader by 24 November via email for start time and meeting arrangements. There will be a different walk in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor if river level is too high.</p>	<p>Maps: Tuggeranong, Tidbinbilla 1:25,000 Grading: 3A/B/D/E Leader: Trevor Lewis Contact: 0435 714 430 or tglyndwrlewis@gmail.com</p>
<p>3 December Sunday morning walk</p> 	<p>Taylor Conservation Area 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>Map: UBD Canberra street directory maps 18, 19 Grading: 1A/B/C/F Leader: Brian Slee Contact: brianslee@iprimus.com.au</p>
<p>9 December Saturday work party and Christmas party</p>	<p>Gudgenby Bush Regeneration Group Meet at Namadgi Visitor Centre at 9 am. 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 Contact: 6247 0239 or kambalda@tpg.com.au</p>
<p>10 December Sunday Christmas party</p> 	<p>NPA Christmas party Bring friends, family and food and drinks to share at Jerrabomberra Wetlands from 11:30 am to 3 pm. More details closer to the date.</p> 	<p>Leader: Rosemary Hollow Contact: 0413 977 708 or rosemary@npaact.org.au</p> 

Outings program strengthens

The 2022–23 year was again a good one for the NPA outings program. Just 5 years ago the program was barely sustainable with declining interest among members and others, while the number of participants over the past year was almost triple that of 5 years ago. Much of this can be attributed to an increase in membership. From a low point in 2019, membership numbers have increased significantly, from 265 to approaching 500, which is likely due to our increased presence on social media. There has been a corresponding increase in the number of outings participants over that period, from 385 to 639.

So, a big thankyou to all who have contributed to the outings program over the past year. These good results can only be achieved by members volunteering to lead outings. One of the strengths of the NPA outings program is the variety of experiences that it has on offer, from guided nature and cultural heritage walks, to a range of easy suburban walks, to hard off-track national park walks and snowshoe walks. An added attraction are the regular work parties in various locations.

Here is a summary of attendances at the past year's NPA outings. Thanks are due to Brian Slee for collecting and presenting the data.

There are now five consecutive years, beginning 2017–18, for which complete data have been collected.

- The number of scheduled outings for the year 2022–23 has, at 105, returned to the levels in the years 2013–14 to 2016–17 which varied between 102 and 111 per year.
- The number of participants in day walks has stabilised at an average of 9 per day over the past 3 years. This is an improvement from a situation where the program was barely sustainable in 2017–18 with an average of 5 participants per walk. The total number of participants on day walks was 454 (the highest since detailed records started in 2017) and as compared with only 161 in both 2017–18 and 2018–19 and 144 in the bushfire and COVID-affected 2019–20.
- The number of pack walks, however, has remained low, continuing a recent trend. There were six pack walks scheduled, of which four were cancelled.
- The work party program fielded eight pre-planned work parties and six short notice additions in 2022–23. The average attendance per work party remained steady at eight.
- The number of leaders (25) is roughly steady and comparable with 25 in 2020–21 to 28 in 2021–22.
- NPA's contribution to the combined club Wednesday walk program has continued at a rate of six walks (both easy and hard) every 6 months. These are led by three of our stalwarts.
- As in recent years, our main priority is to attract new leaders for walks. This is important as many of our outings are led by a relatively small number of aging stalwarts. If you are interested in becoming a leader for outings of any grade, please contact me at outings@npaact.org.au.

Mike Bremers, Outings Convener

Stone axe head

While I was out in the Murrumbidgee River Corridor earlier this year, not far from the suburban edge of Tuggeranong, a river stone caught my eye. It appeared to have been 'worked' at each end on opposite sides to form an edge. One of these edges had been ground to make a relatively sharp cutting edge. The stone is most likely an Aboriginal axe head. After taking photos, I returned the stone to where I found it and reported my finding to ACT Heritage. It is important to note that all Aboriginal places and objects in the ACT are protected under the Heritage Act and are recorded in a centralised database maintained by ACT Heritage. This find was another reminder to me of past Aboriginal habitation of the Canberra region.

Axe head

Mike Bremers



Axe head edge All photos by Mike Bremers



Bushwalk reports

Queanbeyan River

Date: 4 June 2023

Participants: Marlene Eggert (leader), Mike Bremers, Isobel Crawford, Wendy Davidson, Nancie Lim, Peter Lindenmayer, Robyn Ling, Jade Lynch, Reshenda O'Mara, Kellie Osmialowski, Galia Shy, Brian Slee

Weather: Sunny at first then cloudy, 14°

Stats: 13.7k m, ascent: 250 m, 4 hrs

Queanbeyan greeted us with sun and deciduous trees still bearing brilliant autumn colours to enjoy throughout the walk. We set off at 9 am from the historic suspension bridge, painted white, located at the end of Isabella Street in the heritage precinct of town.

We were to do two stretches of the river from here. The first was a long loop upstream, beginning on a footpad through Karabar, south to Ellerton Drive, where we crossed the river via the huge bridge opened in 2020. The river had become free flowing beyond the backup from the weir. A local reported seeing a rakali but all our peering into the water in this regard went unrewarded. We returned to the suspension bridge on the opposite bank via Queanbeyan Golf Course, keeping to the edge and doing our best to stay out of trouble.

By now five participants nursing injuries or running out of time left the group and seven continued on the north-western extension into the ACT. All voted in favour of beginning with morning coffee in the open area at historic Byrnes Mill. Thus refreshed we followed the river downstream, past historic Queanbeyan cemetery, under the railway bridge and past the junction with the Molonglo into Oaks Estate. Many nice old cottages can be found here and one senses that gentrification cannot be far off for this part of Canberra.

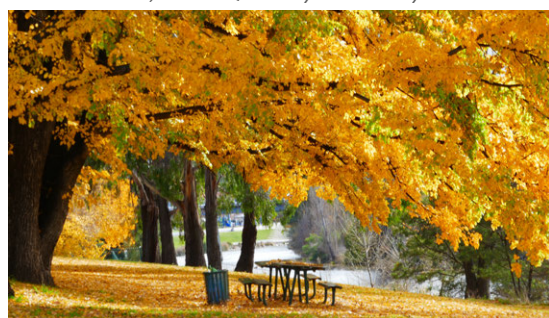


Mike, Peter, Wendy, Marlene, Galia, Robyn on return stretch. Photo by Brian Slee

We returned to the suspension bridge via the historic railway station, Ray Morton Park, and under Kings Bridge with platypus and black swan murals, arriving at 12:45 pm. A lovely walk showing off some of Queanbeyan River and other, lesser known, town assets.

Marlene Eggert

Autumn leaves, central Queanbeyan. Photo by Mike Bremers



Mount Jerrabomberra

Date: 28 May 2023

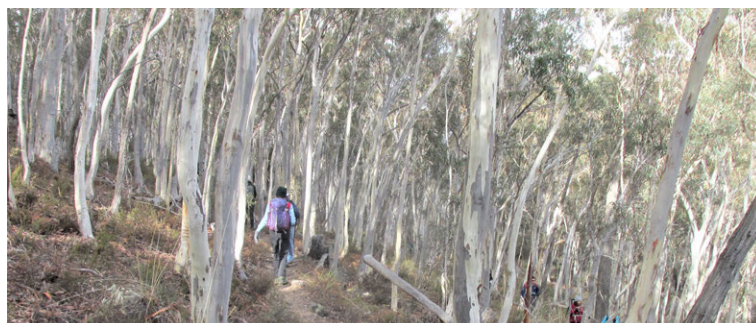
Participants: Marlene Eggert (leader), Elaine Atkinson, Ailsa Brown, Virginia Buring, Swee See Colton, Ian Davis, Anne Forsythe, Alan Laird, Glenda Lynch, Neil Lynch, Marian Pearson, Margaret Power, Julia Robinson, Ralph Secombe, Leanne Sherley, Brian Slee, Adrian Walkden, Evelyn Walkden

Weather: Cold morning after minus 5° overnight, sunny, light winds

Stats: 12 km, climb 320 m, duration 4 hours

After initially being washed out, this walk was rescheduled for three weeks later and this time the weather was fine but cold. The group met at 9:30 am at 'The Scar' Recreation Area (a rehabilitated quarry) off Southbar Road, Queanbeyan.

We climbed to Mount Jerrabomberra summit via footpads, a fire trail and some 109 steps through amazingly intact bushland. A feature was a wattle in full, pale lemon blossom. Many tracks were quite rocky but the use of hiking sticks made negotiating these easier. At the summit lookout, views over Queanbeyan and the adjoining escarpment were enjoyed.



Mount Jerrabomberra. All photos by Brian Slee

We wound back down the mountain on its southern slope, with views to suburban Jerrabomberra, before crossing Edwin Land Parkway into an adjoining bush area that, to my amazement, has no name, or at least not one that I could locate. Here the lightly timbered bush grows on rocky ground. We found a nice morning tea spot on a hill with fallen timber for seating and sunshine to keep us warm.

After descending to Barracks Creek we followed the footpad alongside it, which doubles as a cycling track, crossing the creek on thirteen charming small wooden bridges. Sadly, while other parts of Jerrabomberra bushland had been weed free, privet and blackberry reign supreme along the creek, together with patches of Mahonia, spurge, ivy and honeysuckle. However, some impressively large eucalypts can be found here and, undoubtedly for the amusement of children, a toy dinosaur and a toy cow had been wedged into trackside stumps.

After completing the Barracks Creek loop, we crossed back over Edwin Land Parkway and returned to the car park on a fire trail, skirting around the northern base of Jerrabomberra Mountain and arriving at 1:20 pm, ready for a hot lunch.

Descending Mount Jerrabomberra

Marlene Eggert



Weston to the Arboretum

Climbina Bold Hill . All photos by Brian Slee

Date: 14 May 2023 (Mother's Day)

Participants: (16) Brian Slee (leader), Margaret Adamson, Collette Barton, Tina Best, Oliver Donoghue, Marlene Eggert, Ana Krol, Ula Krol, John Milthorpe, Robyn Milthorpe, Margaret Power, Angus Reid, Ana Tudor, Ana Vrancic, Michelle Weston, Sim Whyte

Weather: Cool at first; warm and sunny day

Having led previous walks into the Arboretum from the south-east in 2015 (*NPA Bulletin*, September 2015) and the east in 2017 (*NPA Bulletin*, September 2017), both in June, I recced a new route in 2022 from due south. This walk was its first road-test. Moving the date into May worked as we caught the autumn leaves but starting from Dillon Close in Weston was perhaps too far.

We gathered for a 9:30 am departure and followed the shady cycle path north beside Weston Creek before crossing Dixon Drive to North Weston Ponds. We continued over Clos Crossing (Molonglo River) and climbed Bold Hill for morning tea.

After retracing our steps, we followed the fire trail into the Arboretum before veering east into an eye-catching grove of osage orange trees (Forest no. 102), replete with yellow (inedible) fruit with the characteristic brain conformations. Next north were the Spotted Gums/Ironbarks, looking healthy with trees up to 10 metres.

Once past the utility pond, we turned left to the Lancewoods (no. 89). These strange New Zealand trees, which grow like folded umbrellas until they reach a considerable height then unfold, need shade

to thrive. Having now been provided the protection of a fast-growing forest of wattles, they continue to fail. Time to give up?

Nothing exceeds like excess and the Japanese maples in the next plantation west (no. 84) had colour in abundance. We began climbing around the prominent *Pinus radiata* stand and once over the ridge descended through the diaphanous weeping snow gums, showing no sign of borer infestations. They somehow find themselves living next to weird South American silk floss trees, with their maliciously thorny trunks (no. 58). Best visited when flowering or fluffing.

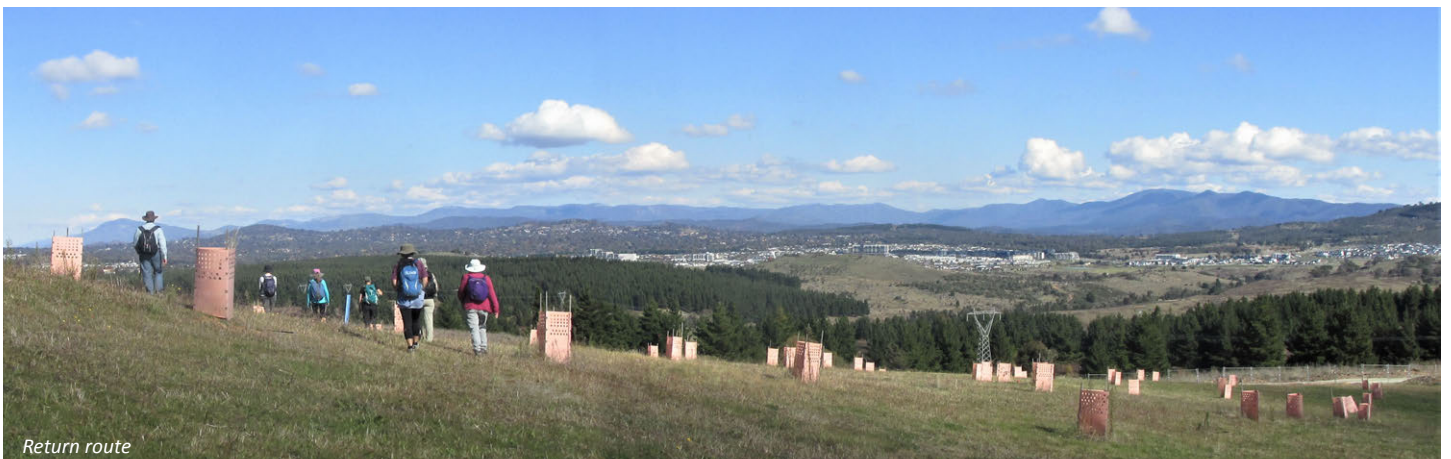
Lunch was on a hill west of Dairy Farmers, under lovely Chilean cedars (no. 57). Below us the stone pines were still bushy but growing well; they will be umbrella shaped when mature, producing edible pine nuts.



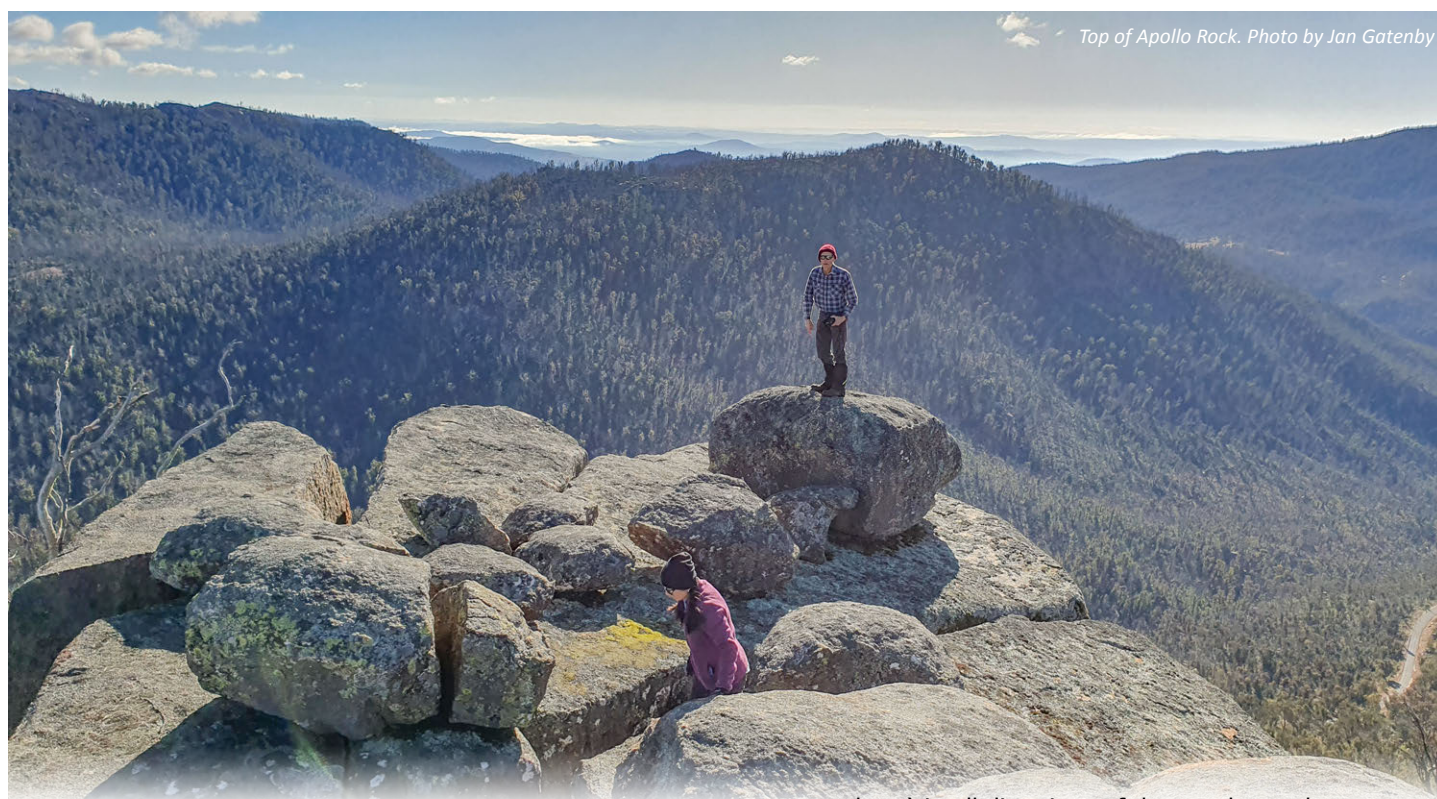
We returned near the western Boundary Road, contouring the dips to avoid the climbs, and passing through plantations of poplars and oaks and beautiful small-leaf eucalypts (no. 81). The plan had been to cross Southwell Bridge but a sign stated that it was closed so we continued back on the outward track, arriving 2:30 pm.

Ana's distance device suggested 18 km. Really? Whatever, we had earned our coffee and cake at Sakeena's. Thanks to NPA media for the effort to attract non-members, and thanks to those who joined us. A walk worth repeating, perhaps starting at North Weston to provide more time in the Arboretum.

Brian Slee



Return route



Top of Apollo Rock. Photo by Jan Gatenby

Apollo Rock

Date: 17 June 2023

Participants: Philip Gatenby (L), Jan Gatenby, Ana Vrancic, Robert Walters

Weather: Sunny and cool

Stats: Distance 7.3 km, climb 480 m, time 7 hrs

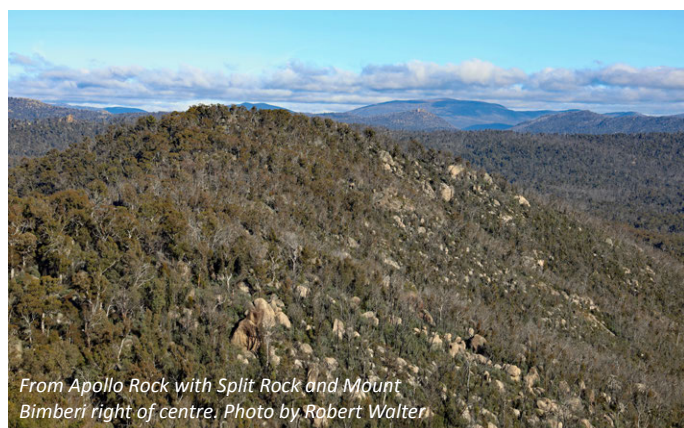
From the Orroral Ridge (also called the Ridge of Stone) on the eastern side of Orroral Valley an offshoot ridge heads north-east, to the south of the site of the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station. This ridge undulates, with a number of its high points capped by spectacular granite outcrops. Although less well known than some of the nearby landforms, the ridge not surprisingly has become a popular haunt for bushwalkers and rock climbers. Towering over the most northerly of the ridge's high points is a massive granite boulder which has come to be known as Apollo Rock.

Four of us started out from Apollo Road, parking about a kilometre east of the campground (see map). It was a steady climb of over 300 m in a kilometre to the base of the rock through rapidly regenerating bush – a consequence of the 2020 Orroral Valley fire followed by 3 years of above average rainfall. Scaling the rock without much in the way of climbing expertise involves an interesting route through its middle, emerging on its top after an upward scramble and a squeeze on one's back to stunning views (weather permitting, which it was the day we

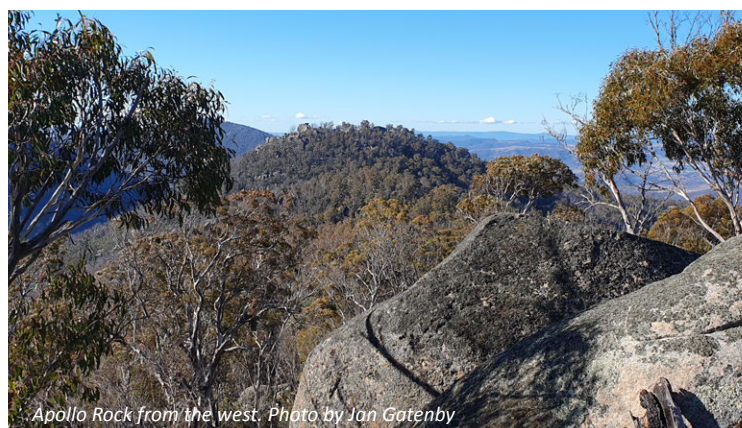
were there) in all directions of the nearby peaks – Booroomba Rocks, Deadmans Hill, Mount Tennent, while to the west the Scabby Range and Brindabellas, to name a few. Large eucalypts between boulders, survivors of the fire, were a welcome sight in an otherwise regrowing landscape. A nearby rock pile which looked interesting, but didn't offer much in the way of views, was also explored.

From Apollo Rock's knoll we turned south-west along the ridge, going over two more knolls to a low saddle where we left the ridge. Progress was slow with regrowth on the ridge thicker than on its approaches. Nearing the third knoll we passed an egg-shaped boulder perched precariously (so it seemed) on another boulder. A large flattish rock nearby, beneath an ancient gum, offered a good spot for lunch. Below the rock was a natural shelter (worth remembering for a rainy day).

Outcrops on the descent off the third knoll to the low saddle give views to the south-west along the ridge. In the foreground is a rock which, in *Exploring Namadgi & Tidbinbilla*, Barrow called the Spinnaker, 'an astonishing rock, for all the world like a 12 metre's spinnaker thrusting forward filled with strong winds'.¹ This impressive feature may have had an Indigenous name but was called Honeysuckle Crag by members of the rock climbing community before Barrow coined the name, Spinnaker.



From Apollo Rock with Split Rock and Mount Bimberi right of centre. Photo by Robert Walter



Apollo Rock from the west. Photo by Jan Gatenby



Ascent of Apollo Rock. Photo by Robert Walters



Lunch rock. Photo by Philip Gatenby

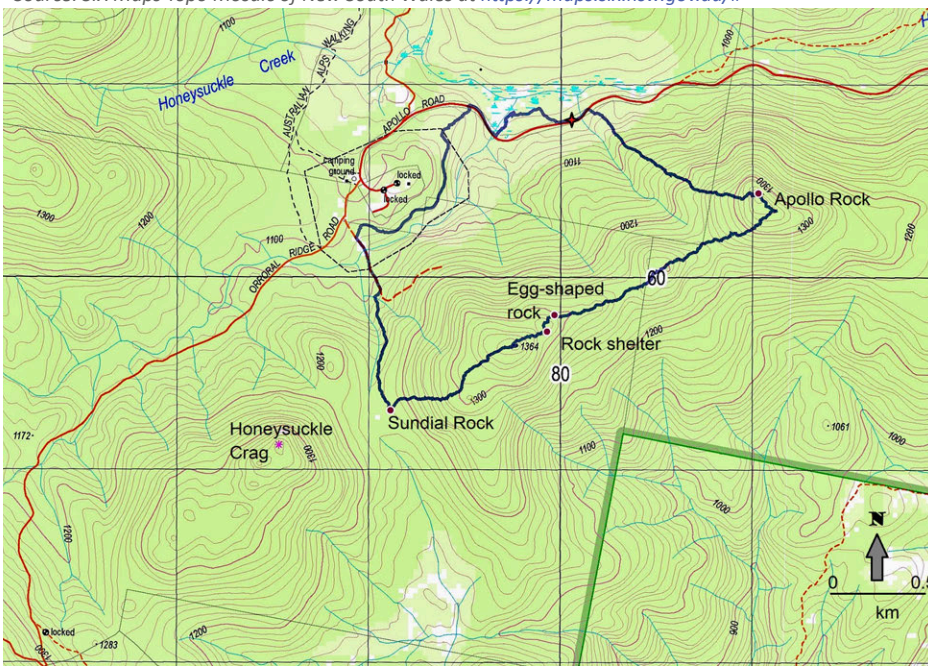
In the saddle, which is about halfway along the ridge, is a boulder known by bushwalkers familiar with the area as Sundial Rock. Its shape is thought to resemble this ancient timepiece. To leave the ridge we found an intermittent footpad. It initially went north from the saddle, then swung eastwards to join a management trail which, to the right, continues part of the way up the side of the knoll we'd recently been on and ends at a couple of water tanks. In the days of the tracking station they were likely to have been part of its drinking water infrastructure. Today one is maintained for firefighting. But our direction was to the left, downhill towards the campground, crossing a swiftly flowing creek (a major tributary of Honeysuckle Creek) and joining a recently constructed foot track that circumnavigates the tracking station site. The track passes an old weir (another part of the tracking station's infrastructure). We left it at its most easterly point to rejoin Apollo Road, about 600 m from the car.

In summary, a walk of many interesting rock formations and great views, when the sun's out. Plenty of thick scrub and rough terrain though make for slow going in parts (about a kilometre an hour overall).

Philip Gatenby

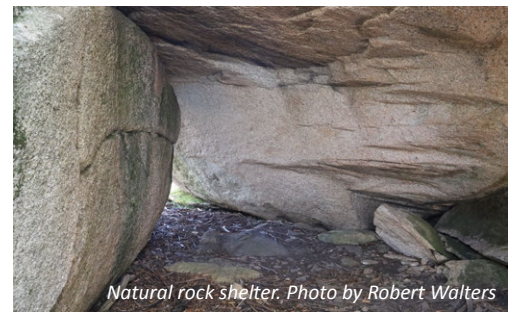
Map: Where we went.

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

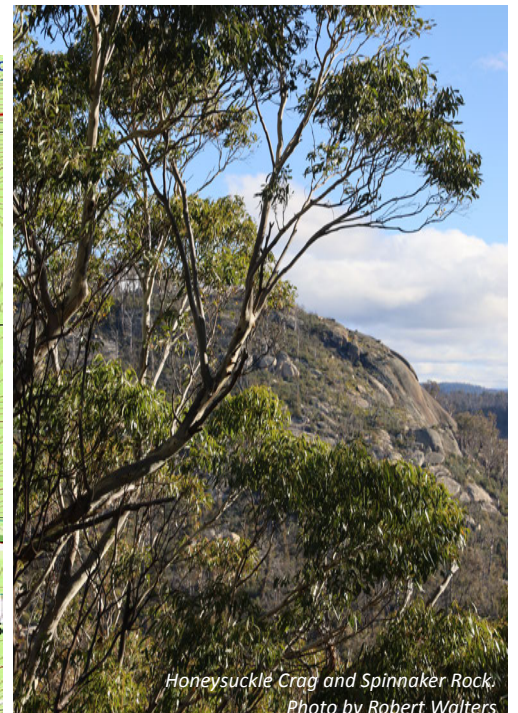


Reference:

1 Graeme Barrow wrote a number of bushwalking guides for the ACT and surrounding areas. His walk descriptions were a valuable source of information for anyone wondering where to go walking, particularly in the days before gps and gpx files.



Natural rock shelter. Photo by Robert Walters



Honeysuckle Crag and Spinnaker Rock. Photo by Robert Walters



Following the flow on the Great Darling Anabranh – Part 2

In the last issue of the Bulletin, Mike Bremers described his kayak journey down the northern part of the Great Darling Anabranh, starting from Menindee, a distance of 350 km that took him 7 days. His account of the journey continues here.

By the end of day 8 we had passed the last of the major lakes and we reached our first major obstacle, 183 Weir. It was a major obstacle for the carp also, such that large numbers were congregating below the weir. Water was flowing over the road that formed the spillway. We made camp here and we were entertained during the afternoon by the carp trying to make their way upstream by jumping up over the spillway. Yabbies were also on the move upstream, crawling over the stranded carp in the shallows. The flow at 183 Weir was 3,200 ML/day and rising, indicating that almost all of the floodwaters were being captured in the Anabranh lakes as they filled. The river was now mainly confined to the river channel for the rest of the journey.

It was another 30 km the next day to Bunnerungee Bridge where the Silver City Highway crosses the Anabranh. It's a nice place to camp and we retrieved our food cache that we had buried before the start of the trip. The cache comprised mainly treats but, because we now expected to finish 6 days ahead of schedule and the heat had suppressed our appetites, more food was added than was taken out.

We were now approaching a section of river that contained numerous low-level bridges and other crossings that could impede our progress. Many of these may have been part of weir structures that were built in the 1960s or earlier. Following the construction of the Menindee Lakes Scheme in the 1960s, an annual stock and domestic replenishment flow of 50,000 ML was delivered down the Anabranh from Lake Cawndilla (when water was available) over a 3-month period in late winter to early spring. This flow was captured by a number of small weirs constructed by landowners to pond the water, and very little, if any, reached the Murray River. These more permanent pools influenced the vegetation and limited fish movement along the Anabranh. It is estimated¹ that only 3,000 ML of the 50,000 ML released was actually needed for stock and domestic purposes.

In 2006, a pipeline from the Murray River was completed to supply stock and domestic water to properties along the Anabranh¹. Not only did this provide a reliable source of water for the properties, it enabled the water savings to be used for environmental flows, and the weirs could be removed and/or replaced by low-level bridges. An environmental flow down the Anabranh of 60–75,000 ML for 30–45 days on average every 2–3 years has been proposed. It is expected that this would provide a more natural ephemeral system and allow, during these releases, flow all the way to the Murray, so enabling fish migration. These plans are dependent on water in Lake Cawndilla and during 2014–2020 it was possible to release an environmental flow in only 2017, following drought from 2002 to 2010. Over the 2 days we passed seven river crossings. Some were completely submerged, while others we could barely scrape over. Three required portaging but this was relatively easy with Bill and I being



Yabby and carp below Weir 183



able to carry the fully laden kayaks the short distance across the road.

Day 11 was another day of about 40 degree heat and we were pleased with our intended destination, Anabbranch Hall. In days gone by, this corrugated iron hall was a vital venue for social interaction for people living in the isolated Anabbranch district. Dances, and sport days using the adjacent tennis courts and sports ground, were popular. It now can be hired from Wentworth Council for functions. While the tennis courts and sports ground are in a dilapidated condition, there are new showers and toilets (locked when we were there) and a new veranda that gave us good afternoon shade. As a bonus there were large rainwater tanks from which we could replenish our drinking water supplies.

The Anabbranch was now a series of long pools with a

gentle current, interspersed with thickets of saplings growing in the river channel producing faster flowing water. These saplings were mainly River Red Gum but also a species of *Acacia* possibly River Cooba. Finding a path through the thickets was made more difficult as they were a haven for Golden Orb-weaving spiders and we ran the risk of being covered in spiders and their webs. Presumably the thickets had grown during extended periods of low or no flow in the shallower parts of the channel – the current prolonged period of high flow may thin them out.

On day 12 we passed Milpara Bridge and started to notice the highwater marks on the trees as a result of water backing up from the Murray River 80 km downstream, when it was in flood a couple of months earlier. We also noticed that River Red Gums lining the banks became more frequent and we started to see ring trees. These are trees which have had their young branches trained to form rings when they are mature. It is believed that Aboriginal people used ring trees to mark places significant to them. Interestingly, in 2020 when on the Lower Darling River, I also noticed an increase in ring trees on approach to the Murray confluence.

By mid-morning on day 14 we had arrived at the Murray River confluence. The Murray River was still flowing strongly, supplemented by the Darling floodwaters. Fortunately, we did not have to paddle 30 km upstream to Wentworth, because Fort Courage Caravan Park, where we had left a car, is located just a few kilometres downstream of the confluence.

Despite the heat it was a great journey on a rarely paddled waterway. The floodwaters filling the lakes were wonderful to see with the ecological benefits expected to last for years.

Mike Bremers

Reference:

1. Assessment of environmental water requirements for the proposed Basin Plan: Lower Darling River System, MDBA Publication No. 29/12, 2012



A ring tree. These trees were modified by Aboriginal people to mark significant places.

Work party reports

NPA work party summary – May to July 2023

Month	Activity	Agency	Participants
May	Dananbilla Nature Reserve tree planting: 600 tube stock planted in the vicinity of the old Barrelli farmhouse. Additionally, redundant tree guards were removed and two exclosures were built to preserve seed-stock from grassing. The work party extended over 3 days.	NPWS	10 plus 2 NPWS rangers
May	Stockyard Arboretum: 12 juniper and 150 conifers removed (all but one being Noble Fir seedlings). Snow and ice conditions prevented venturing down to Stockyard Creek.	PCS	6
June	Orroral fence removal: 1,330 m of barb removed from seven lengths of fence to the east and south east of the Orroral Homestead.	PCS	10
July	SHORT NOTICE: Bullen Range wilding pine control. 970 wilding pines removed from the verges of the public 4WD loop-road from Murrays Corner picnic area, north east to the crest of the Bullen Range, then south to Bullen Hill, thence back to the picnic area. Most trees were pulled out by hand, the remainder required hand-sawing.	PCS	11 plus 1 PCS ranger
July	Glendale fence removal: final 390m of fence removed! Some 95m of collapsed fence left in place and 15m of standing fence in heavily treed country also left as it was assessed as little threat to wildlife.	PCS	5 plus 1 PCS ranger in the morning

Martin Chalk

Removal of barbed wire from fences near Orroral Homestead

Date: 24 June 2023

Barbed wire remains attached as one or two strands to the tops of many of the remnant grazing era fences in Orroral Valley. Once entangled, kangaroos usually endure cruel and lingering deaths. This work party concentrated on removing the barbed strands from fences near Orroral Homestead.

Ten volunteers gathered at 9:20 am in Kambah before proceeding to the homestead where ranger Mark Elford briefed us on the task. The main fence line is about 50 metres east of the homestead, beginning at an old cattle yard at the northern end and running up the valley for about a kilometre to its southern end. At right angles to the main fence are two fences heading east down to the Orroral River and a couple of shorter stretches heading west up the slope.

Working in groups in two sessions, from 11 am to 12:30 pm and 1 pm to 2:45 pm, volunteers removed barbed wire from about 1.7 km of fences. Coiled wire was left in piles near the vehicle track for collection by rangers. Barbed wire remains attached to about 300 metres of fence near the river. We did not get to the fence, partially collapsed, which runs for about 150 metres SSE of the woolshed.

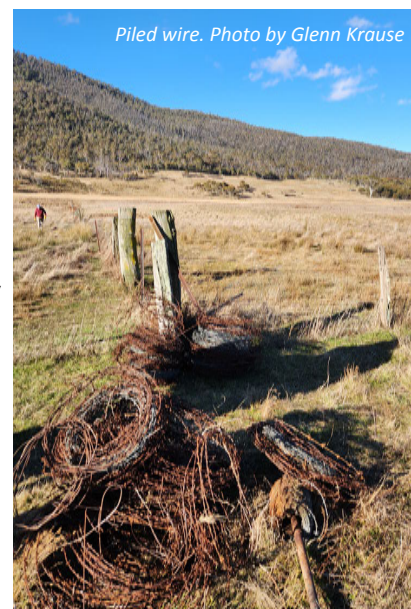
Apart from the cold wind, the work party was conducted in fine and sunny weather. It was preceded by group photos, aimed at providing a working party image for the new NPA website. A flock of Flame Robins was present in the valley and an occasional Nankeen Kestrel hovered. After being largely closed since the 2020 bushfires, it was great to be back in Orroral, particularly in a mostly unburnt section of valley.

Afterwards, the volunteers convened for refreshments at Coffee Guru in Lanyon Marketplace. Thanks to Vicky Browne, Marlene Eggert, Steven Forst, Philip Gatenby, Glenn Krause, Sonja Lenz, Kevin McCue, Michaela Popham and Pommy Paul Regan for your enthusiastic participation. We very much hope that Glenn and Vicky will join us on future working parties.

Thanks also to Mark Elford for his leadership and Martin Chalk and Michaela Popham for organisational support.

It is recommended that high priority be accorded to the removal of all strands of barbed wire remaining in Orroral Valley. Also, that consideration be given to entirely removing the fences near the homestead, particularly the remnant southern end of the main fence and the lateral fences.

Brian Slee, Leader



Piled wire. Photo by Glenn Krause



Working near Homestead. Photo by Brian Slee

Survey finds Australians want more action to conserve biodiversity

In late 2022, the Biodiversity Council – a group of university experts working on solutions to Australia's biodiversity crisis – conducted an online survey of more than 4,000 people across Australia on their attitudes to environmental issues.

Among the key findings of the survey published in a 'Biodiversity Concerns Report' were that:

- most Australians are aware of the uniqueness and benefits of Australian biodiversity (our plants, animals and other living things)
- many Australians feel connected to nature, more than 8 in 10 (83 per cent) of them saying it is important to them to know that nature is being looked after.
- many Australians are not aware of the extent of biodiversity loss in Australia
- almost all (97 per cent) of Australians want more action to conserve biodiversity, and most consider that 'every person in Australia' has a responsibility to act, including those at all levels of government
- 85 per cent of Australians are moderately or highly concerned about threats to nature, particularly:
 - increasing levels of waste and pollution;
 - the effects of climate change on biodiversity
 - the loss of pollinator species and natural places
 - the extinction of native plants and animals
 - land clearing.

The council's full report on the survey is available at:

https://biodiversitycouncil.org.au/media/uploads/2023_6/202305_biodiversity_concerns_survey_report.pdf



Unidentified fungus.
Photo by Philip Gatenby

Gudgenby Art Week 1 – 7 May 2023

Participants: Eleanor Cotterell, Adrienne Nicholson, Hazel Rath, Judith Bourne, Mim Moore, Abigail and Daniel, Elias and Michaela Hallaj, Lois Padgham with day visits from David Cunningham and Trevor Costa.

Adrienne painting

Our twice annual treat to have Arts Week at Ready Cut Cottage was met with a range of weather conditions including frost, wind, rain, sunshine and even some snow falling as we left on the last day. The cottage of course was very cosy with the wood fired combustion heater. It was great to see several new faces there this year (Judith, Abigail and Daniel, Mim, Lois, Elias and Michaela, Trevor, David). Elias brought his daughter Michaela who was keen to learn some photography skills.

Lots of meandering through/sitting in the bush, or just sitting on the front balcony in the sun watching the wedge-tailed eagles soaring in the distance, as usual provided plenty of artistic inspiration. A local dingo howling at night sounded too close for comfort as Mim and I were playing with some light painting at night resulting in a hasty retreat back to the cottage (what appeared to be dingo prints were evident on the track the following day). Several participants went for a bike ride.

It was, as usual, a wonderful week that by all accounts was enjoyed by all.

Eleanor Cotterell

Twine making practice. All photos by Eleanor Cotterell



Ministers declare new era of cooperation over feral horses

The divide over feral horse management between NSW and its neighbours in the Australian Alps has been overcome, with federal, state and territory governments meeting in June declaring a new era of cooperation in culling feral horse numbers in the Australian Alps and agreeing to revive the Alps Ministerial Council, which last met in 2010.

Conservation groups hailed the move but warned that federal and state funding was well short of what was needed to increase culling programs.



Sydney Morning Herald <https://bit.ly/43vgVPG>

Wild horses in the Kosciuszko National Park, by Wikimedia Commons

Restoration of Kimberley sanctuary underway

Researchers, ecologists and operations teams are returning to the Australian Wildlife Conservancy's (AWC) Mornington-Marion Downs Wildlife Sanctuary (Bunuba and Kija country) in the Kimberley following a devastating cyclone and flooding in early January 2023 that forced the evacuation of AWC staff and visiting researchers.

The sanctuary and its neighbours in the central Kimberley entered a state of emergency when ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie inundated the region with record rainfall and flooding. Damage to facilities has been significant, and the restoration program will continue at least into 2024.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy <https://bit.ly/43i3ZvF>

Call for VIC Government to 'live up to' promise on national parks

The Victorian Government needs to live up to its promise of creating new central-west national parks in the state, says an article of the June issue of the Victorian National Park's Association magazine *Park Watch*.

June marked the second anniversary of a promise by the government to establish 65,106 hectares of new national parks in the central west. This includes the Mount Buangor National Park, east of Ararat, that will protect the lush forests of Mount Cole/Bereep-bereep (the Djab Wurrung name for the area), a forest oasis that towers over the cleared agricultural land surrounding it.

'Unfortunately for Victorians,' says the article, 'this anniversary brings few celebrations, as the government is yet to follow through with its promise and legislate the Mount Buangor National Park.'

Victorian NPA <https://bit.ly/3XEY5U4>

NPA NSW welcomes underground transmission inquiry

An inquiry into the feasibility of using underground transmission connections for renewable energy projects in

NSW has been welcomed by the National Parks Association of NSW.

Welcoming the announcement by NSW Energy Minister Penny Sharpe in June, NPA NSW CEO Gary Dunnett said global best practice had moved to less environmentally damaging underground transmission options as offering the best way to avoid the devastating environmental damage caused by overhead lines to natural landscapes, including national parks.

NPA NSW also called for a review of underground options for the Snowy 2.0 transmission through Kosciuszko National Park and said it would continue to pursue all options to overturn the ill-advised overhead transmission lines through the park, including its ongoing legal action'

NPA NSW <https://npansw.org.au/category/media-releases/>

New book on Tasmania wilderness

Nature writer and fishing guide Greg French has written a collection of stories about Tasmania's Western Lakes wilderness, centred around Lake Malbena, the location of a controversial proposed heli-tourism development. *Wild Heart of Tasmania* is described as an inspirational tale for those who love wild places and wildlife, and a cautionary one for those who believe Australia's national parks to be well protected and its democracy sacrosanct.

The Tasmanian National Parks Association, Wilderness Society, Fishers and Walkers, and a number of individuals have fought a



long and expensive campaign to have the lake returned to the public and the right of public access restored.

Tasmanian NPA <https://tnpa.org.au/new-lake-malbena-book/>

Follow Victorian lead on logging, says NSW NPA

The National Parks Association of NSW has urged the NSW Government to follow Victoria's decision to accelerate shutting down public native forestry by the end of 2023. NPA president Dr Grahame Douglas said NSW should begin with an immediate moratorium on logging within the proposed Great Koala National Park.

'One of the reasons for moving forward Victoria's deadline is that logging in public native forests is simply uneconomic, with plantations providing far more reliable, fit for purpose wood products,' Dr Douglas said.

'Industrial logging in NSW public native forests is just as uneconomic as in Victoria, with the Forestry Corporation relying upon massive government subsidies to keep decimating our forests.'

NPA NSW <https://bit.ly/3rmAlrQ>

'Cynical attempt' to derail Koala park

The National Parks Association of NSW has accused the Forestry Corporation of a cynical attempt by to derail the creation of the Great Koala National Park in the Coffs Coastal region and called on Agriculture Minister Tara Moriarty and Environment Minister Penny Sharpe to intervene.

NPA President Dr Grahame Douglas said the Forestry Corporation had added an additional 746 ha of prime koala

habitat in Pine Creek State Forest for clear felling', on top of the 374 hectares already planned.

NPA NSW has dismissed Forestry Corporation claims that these forests are plantations, arguing that many of the areas targeted in Pine Creek State Forest are not genuine plantations but native forest that is of vital importance as koala habitat.

NSW NPA <https://bit.ly/3PRGExA>

QLD national parkland returned to traditional owners

The ownership of more than 79,000 hectares of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park in north-west Queensland has been returned to the land's traditional owners, the Waanyi People.

The Waanyi Prescribed Body Corporate will lease the national park land to the state, the first lease-back arrangement that has been successfully negotiated on national park land in Queensland.

The national park will become Queensland's first National Park (Aboriginal land) after the Aboriginal land title deeds are handed over and when it is rededicated as Boodjamulla National Park (Aboriginal land).

This is the first co-designed cooperative management agreement between a traditional owner group and the State of Queensland. The handback is the first step of a staged approach that will result in the full transfer of the entire Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park to the land's rightful owners, the Waanyi People.

Qld Government <https://bit.ly/3pwG3a4>

New WA national park 'bigger than Bali'

A new national park and nature reserve have been created in the remote Goldfields, adding more than 800,000 hectares to Western Australia's conservation estate – an area bigger than Bali.

The creation of the Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara National Park and the Lake Carnegie nature reserve protects Martu Aboriginal cultural heritage values and the area's unique biodiversity.

The Tarlka Matuwa Piarku Aboriginal Corporation will jointly manage Matuwa Kurrara Kurrara National Park and nature reserve at Lake Carnegie with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement was signed in October 2022. This is the largest exclusive possession native title agreement in Australia and the largest for the creation of a new jointly managed and jointly vested conservation estate ever reached in WA.

WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions <https://bit.ly/3D6CFpq>

Matuwa Lorna Glen, by Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions



NT releases parks masterplan

A masterplan outlining the strategic direction for the Northern Territory Government's 85 parks and reserves has been finalised, providing long-term certainty and purpose to park management, traditional owners, Territorians and potential investors.

Also released alongside the Masterplan is the Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan, which maps out infrastructure development for the first decade of the Masterplan.

The Masterplan has been informed by extensive community and stakeholder consultation and provides a strategic framework to guide future programs, projects and partnerships.

Tourism NT <https://bit.ly/3O541T8>

Further concerns about logging in the Tarkine

Tasmania's state-owned forestry company has moved to protect several contentious areas of large trees from logging while earmarking a further 1,000 hectares of native forest for logging.

Environmental groups say the areas of native forest in remote areas earmarked for logging include a significant increase in remote Central Highland forest where old growth is more common, and in the takayna/Tarkine which conservationists have lobbied to be given national park status.

ABC News <https://bit.ly/44dUbnw>



Tarkine walks, by Wikimedia Commons

Traditional owners call for reform over NSW national parks use

Traditional owners in NSW have called for heritage reform to continue cultural practices in national parks.

About 30 per cent of national parks in NSW fall under Aboriginal joint management agreements, under which traditional owners can, depending on the terms of their agreement, use the land to maintain cultural practices. However, for areas like Breelong National Park, no such agreements are in place, and traditional owners must seek specific consent.

NSW Aboriginal Land Council chairman Danny Chapman said NSW was the only state without modernised Aboriginal cultural heritage laws, and reforms were urgently needed so that Aboriginal people did not have to contend with outdated and flawed laws, primarily contained in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW).

The Guardian <https://bit.ly/3pPzgIp>

'Radical changes' needed to retain remnant Vic grasslands

Radical changes are needed if the Victorian Government is to retain the last 1 per cent of the state's grasslands, says an article in the June issue of the Victorian NPA magazine, *Park Watch*.

A 'quietly critical' audit of the government's flagship grassland conservation program has called for major changes to protect some of the state's most precious landscapes.

The audit makes 16 recommendations to redesign the Melbourne Strategic Assessment – an agreement between the Victorian and federal governments – to protect 'matters of national environmental significance', including the critically endangered grassland communities.

Victoria's grasslands have suffered huge losses since colonial settlement, with 99 per cent destroyed by grazing, cropping and urban development.



Park Watch
<https://bit.ly/3PSuDIr>

Photo by
Ian Penna

Albanese Government praised for reef efforts

The head of UNESCO has praised the Albanese Government for making new commitments to protect the Great Barrier Reef, signalling Australia could avoid seeing it being placed on a list of world heritage sites in danger.

UNESCO's director general Audrey Azoulay was commenting on a letter from Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek that outlined new commitments to improve water quality and reduce the stress from commercial fishing over the reef.

Azoulay said there had been a year of dialogue between Australia and UNESCO, with the country making commitments against 10 'high priority recommendations' delivered by the UN-backed monitoring mission.

The Guardian <https://bit.ly/3O7IEBE>

ACT Government seeks comments on koala plan

The ACT Government is seeking thoughts from the community on a draft plan to protect and preserve the koala in the ACT. The animal was formally listed as endangered in the ACT in 2022.

The Native Species Conservation Plan for the Gula (Koala) will identify and assess potential koala habitat across the ACT and determine areas that might need management to ensure the preservation of the animals. It will also investigate the feasibility of a breeding program at Tidbinbilla and, if viable, establish a plan to release koalas into the wild.

The plan will be integrated into the National Recovery Plan for the Koala being led by the federal government.



Canberra Weekly
bit.ly/46NGxJp

Photo by David
Clode on Unsplash

Rewilding projects flourishing in Australia

Rewilding projects – the practice of returning species to ecosystems where they've become extinct due to hunting, habitat loss, degradation, or other pressures – are flourishing in Australia, reports *Cosmos* magazine.

Projects include a 123 square kilometre wildlife reserve in South Australia's arid north, and the WWF's Rewilding Australia, with a mission to return missing faunal links across the nation. Indigenous-led projects abound on Cape York in Australia's north, while at the tip of South Australia's Yorke Peninsula, Marna Banggara claims to be a unique rewilding initiative: not a closed reserve but part of a working landscape.

According to The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, rewilding 'rebuilds ecosystems that have previously been modified by human disturbance, using the plant and animal life that would have been present had the disturbance never occurred'.

Cosmos <https://bit.ly/3pJEk13>

Eastern bettongs return to NSW national park

Eastern Bettongs sourced from Mulligans Flat in the ACT have been reintroduced into a fox and feral cat-free haven to Yiraaldiya National Park (in western Sydney), after an absence of more than a century. The release is the first step in establishing a new population of at least 150 bettongs at Yiraaldiya. Additional Eastern Bettongs from Tasmania are set to be translocated over the next 12 months.

Yiraaldiya National Park is one of seven feral predator-free area projects underway across NSW. Once all seven sites are established, almost 65,000 hectares of national park estate will be free of feral predators.

At least a dozen species are expected to be returned to Yiraaldiya with the Brown Antechinus, Long-nosed Bandicoot, New Holland Mouse and Brush-tailed Phascogale set to join Eastern Bettongs in a globally significant urban biodiversity reconstruction project.

NSW Department of Planning and Environment
<https://bit.ly/3DhMgty>

Date announced to end gillnet fishing on Great Barrier Reef

Gillnet fishing in the Great Barrier Reef world heritage area will be phased out by mid 2027 and new net-free zones created to better protect endangered marine species.

Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek announced in June a \$160m plan to significantly reduce net fishing and high-risk fishing on the reef that injure and kill threatened dugongs, turtles, dolphins and protected shark species.

The announcement comes after a long campaign by conservation groups for an end to gillnet fishing on the reef.

The Guardian <https://bit.ly/3rAYVft>

Compiled by Allan Sharp

NPA bulletin board

NPA ACT welcomes the following new members:

Glenn Krause & Vicky Browne
Tina Oldham
Lee de Percy
Jane Melanie & Bill Brummitt
Evelyn & Adrian Walkden
Elaine Atkinson
Debra Robertson
Gabrielle Meiklejohn
Joseph Erskine
Gina De Pretto
Richard Lawrence
Jill & Michael Wenke
Robyn Crisp & Philip Webster
Gillian Shaw
Susan Brown
Phillip Money
John Evans (rejoining)
Catherine Mathieson
Denis & Jenelle Mitchell
Deborah Guster
Shannon Laffan
Mike Wilkins & Barbara Salzborn
Takako Mizogami

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

Social media coordinator

We're looking for someone to coordinate our small social media team. The job involves working with the team to provide regular posts and to help continue to grow our three social media sites – Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter).

Our social media is important in raising NPA's public profile, and in attracting new members. We now have nearly 6,000 followers on Facebook, over 2,100 on Instagram and over 1,350 on X.

If you are interested, please contact Allan at sharpaw4@gmail.com.



NPA ACT Art Week at Gudgenby Cottage

Sunday 5 to Sunday 12 November

Think about what creative things you could do in a comfortable cottage in the heart of Namadgi. Comfortable beds and all mod cons. Come for a single night or the whole week. Painting, drawing, writing, photography, weaving, whatever you like to do.

Leader: Eleanor Cotterell

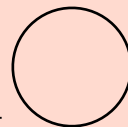
Contact: eleanorcotterell@gmail.com

Red spot

Subscriptions for 2023–24 are now overdue. If there is a red spot on your *Bulletin* address sheet and in your *Bulletin*, or you have received a reminder email and not yet paid, the association's records show your current subscription has not been received.

You can renew using the links in your reminder email, or via the website (<https://www.npaact.org.au/index.php/pages/join>). If you have any queries about your renewal, or need assistance, please contact the office on 6229 3201 or by emailing admin@npaact.org.au

Thank you



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

Bring friends, family and food and drinks to share at Jerrabomberra Wetlands from 11:30 am to 3 pm. You can also take part in a walk before lunch. Please check the website or Burning Issues for any changes and more details closer to the date.



Volunteers needed

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

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

National Parks Association of the Australian Capital Territory Inc.



NPA Bulletin

Editor changes

After many years of contributing and editing the *Bulletin* Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz have stepped down from this duty, although will remain active NPA members. Allan Sharp called for expressions of interest to fill the vacancy in the editorial team earlier this year. As a result, Craig Watson joined the team and has edited this edition. Craig has recently retired from work and when not editing the *Bulletin*, can be found cycling, kayaking and hiking in nice places in the ACT, and even beyond sometimes.



Craig checking out Bluett's Block

General meetings

conservation education protection

General meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, usually at

Weston Creek Uniting Church hall, 16 Parkinson Street, Weston, at 7:30 pm

Thursday 21 September

**Honours Research at
the Fenner School ANU**

Hugh Coppel & Joe Erskine

Hugh Coppel is a member of the NPA Committee and Chair of the Conservation Council Biodiversity Working Group. Hugh will be talking about his thesis on *Weed control for the establishment of Australian native trees and shrubs from seed*.

Joe Erskine is the current NPA Honours Scholarship holder. His topic is *At its core: wood traits associated with Snow Gum dieback in Kosciuszko National Park*.

Thursday 19 October

Kokoda, Everest and Beyond

Zac Zaharias

Zac Zaharias is one of Australia's leading mountain climbers, having summited six 8,000 m peaks including Dhaulagiri, Broad Peak and Everest in Nepal. In recent years he has led 19 treks along the Kokoda Track, which he describes as both challenging and inspiring. He will share his experiences as one of Canberra's great outdoor adventurers.



**Thursday
16 November**

TBA

Please check *Burning Issues* closer to the date.

More for your calendar	September	October	November	December
Committee meetings (5:30 pm to 7:00 pm)	Thursday 7 th	Thursday 5 th	Thursday 2 nd	Thursday 7 th

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 & Membership Liaison Jennifer Carter

Mike Bremers

Hugh Coppel

Alison Russell-French

Marian Pearson

Steve Perry

Benn Schutte

Allan Sharp

Conveners

Bulletin Working Group

Allan Sharp

Cultural Subcommittee

Rosemary Hollow

Environment Subcommittee

<vacant>

Outings Subcommittee

Mike Bremers

Publications Subcommittee

Kevin McCue

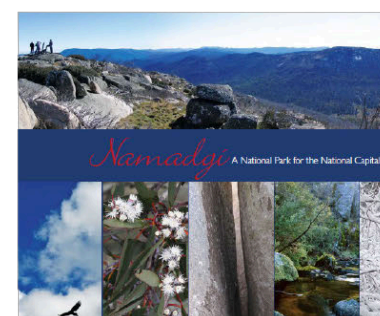
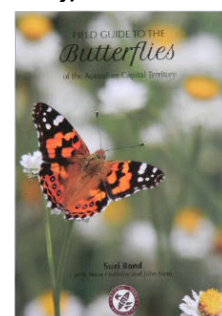
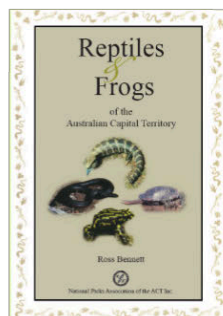
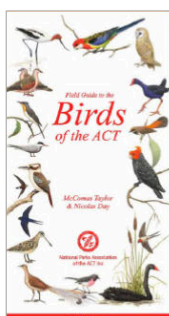
Promotion & Outreach Subcommittee

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
website: <http://www.npaact.org.au> and follow us:
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/npa_act/
X (formerly Twitter): <https://twitter.com/Lovenature321>
Facebook: www.facebook.com/NationalParksAssociationOfTheACT

