



**RHHFFPS**

# Wallumetta

Newsletter of the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna  
Preservation Society Inc.

Website: <http://rydehffps.org.au/>

Member of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC)  
and founding member of the Powerful Owl Coalition

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*We acknowledge the Wallumedegal, original inhabitants of the Ryde – Hunters Hill area.*

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE -

The City of Ryde has reviewed its tree preservation control plan and has placed the proposed plan (Draft Tree DCP) on exhibition for public comment by Sunday 27 October 2024. The draft changes to the plan may be viewed via this link:

<https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/HaveyourSay/Have-Your-Say/Draft-Amendments-to-Development-Control-Plan-2014-Tree-Preservation>

Section 4 of the document sets out those circumstances where it is not necessary to obtain approval from Council to remove a tree (ie exempt trees).

Page 8 of the Draft Tree DCP states that the following are exempt trees and therefore do not require Council approval to remove-

*iv. ....a tree where the stem of the tree at ground level is within three (3) metres of the outside enclosing wall of legally constructed dwelling or outbuilding of over 20m<sup>2</sup>.*

This is an arbitrary provision that does not take into account the amenity value of the tree, its natural heritage value or its value for local biodiversity.

Section 5 on page 9 of the Draft Tree DCP specifies certain cases where this rule may not apply (eg *the trees/vegetation forms part of a heritage item, heritage conservation area, Aboriginal object or Aboriginal place of significance*) but such provisions would not apply to most trees located on private property.

The proposed removal of any tree *where the stem of the tree at ground level is within three (3) metres of the outside enclosing wall of legally constructed dwelling or outbuilding of over 20m<sup>2</sup>* should be subject to a risk assessment and environmental

impact assessment and mitigation works taken where it is reasonable to reduce any identified risks. The priority should be to retain the tree and removal being a rare event.

Too many trees have been lost in local government areas where such arbitrary rules apply. Retaining and improving tree cover on private property is essential to maintain and improve biodiversity in urban areas. The rules should not provide for arbitrary removal of trees with amenity, natural heritage and biodiversity values.

*Frank Breen,*

*President*

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**COMING EVENT:**

**END OF YEAR AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION GET TOGETHER – SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER**

**Help us celebrate the efforts of our active volunteers!**

All members and friends are invited to come on an afternoon held early enough for you to enjoy our cool environment and avoid the end-of-year rush.

**From 12.30pm a barbecue + salad lunch will be served, and you may have afternoon tea anytime.**

**PAST EVENTS:**

**BIRD WALKS**

On Sunday 25 August our expert Cathy Goswell led two walks from the Visitor Centre at 8.30am & 10.30am. The early walk was well-attended by the birds in the Reserve, but fewer walkers than usual took part in this one. The second walk seemed to be more popular with the walkers.

**VISIT BY JEROME LAXALE, MP FOR BENNELONG**

Members gathered at the Visitor Centre on Saturday 31 August to welcome Jerome and chat over morning tea. We enjoyed the opportunity to network with our member of federal parliament.

**PRE-ELECTION FORUM**

On the afternoon of Saturday 31 August, two weeks before the local government (Council) elections, we held one of our traditional forums for candidates to explain their ambitions to achieve and support positive environmental outcomes.



Of the three forums in the East Ryde - North Ryde - Macquarie Park area, ours had the largest audience.

**MUSIC ON MARS**



This major event was held Sunday 22 September in beautiful weather outside the Visitor Centre. With no wind that afternoon, the acoustic quality of the Buffalo Creek valley was at its best.



We began with Marimba Magic by the Sydney Percussion Ensemble, followed by Songs of Today, by singer/songwriter Sarah Cherlin.





Young performer Chester Johnson came next with his Keyboard Wizardry, then Emma Diaz amazed us with a virtuoso recorder performance of three contrasting pieces, concluding with a short recorder duet for one - playing two different recorders simultaneously.

In a tribute to our late and much-loved Jimmy Shaw, the Shawnuff Reunion Swing Band came together for the occasion, and dazzled us with their ensemble of trumpet, saxophone, guitar and double bass – plus keyboard when they invited Chester to jam with them too, so we heard a unique version of Waltzing Matilda!



*Credit: all photos above by Lindsay Mar*

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF MARS

### Track Works

Contractors have begun construction of paved paths around the former landfill area between Buffalo Creek and the Pittwater Rd carpark. This includes the saltmarsh walk. A temporary works shed is parked just below the Kennedy St steps.



*Photo: Erin Turner*

### Wildlife

The wet weather of winter dried up and spring came early! This red-bellied black snake on the Sand Track between Cemetery Creeks 2 & 3 obligingly moved off the track to allow us to pass.

There must have been snake sightings in the Field of Mars Cemetery too:



*Photo: Pamela Ward*

Of greater concern for bushwalkers is that there have been several reports of ticks; see page 5.

## Bushcare

With few recent wet weather delays, work on most sites has continued apace ... and we have good news! Our Society was recently successful in obtaining a \$5000 grant from the NSW Government, to buy a water testing kit which we may use for Streamwatch monitoring. In the Reserve, this is done regularly by bushcare groups working in the vicinity of Buffalo Creek and Strangers Creek.

**Are you interested in this exciting project? We seek volunteers** to help do regular testing at local sites. The data will be a useful tool to help improve the environmental value of our waterways. **Please let us know:** email [rhffps@gmail.com](mailto:rhffps@gmail.com)



The Cemetery Creek 2 bushcare area was impacted by construction of a vault on the south-eastern boundary. Adjacent bushes were damaged, the wire fence to stop rubbish blowing into the Reserve torn down in several places, and debris from building operations left lying along the Fire Trail and in the bushland beyond. A group of enthusiastic East Ryde Cub Scouts recently collected 8 large bagfuls of rubbish from around the Fire Trail. There could have been more, but some of the rubbish was concrete rubble which would have been too heavy for boys and girls aged 8 to 10 years old to lift and carry.

We are also aware of various bushwalkers and Sandy, one of our volunteers, plogging (collecting rubbish as they walk along the tracks). These bags left behind the Visitor Centre are awaiting disposal.

## Visitor Centre



Being in high demand, the Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre sometimes makes use of the Visitor Centre for extra sessions. This photo was taken on 27 August, when participants enjoyed the use of technology in the outdoors setting.

On weekends, our volunteers often see a swamp wallaby as it comes across the grass from the bushes behind the Centre, to graze along Buffalo Creek. It crosses the creek via the footbridge, but it is a bit shy and will go another way around if there are too many people around. Ducks are breeding too, and we have identified three separate families of ducklings.

Our maps remain ever popular with visitors, along with the range of leaflets containing track notes and other information. A recent addition has been a leaflet about ticks – see page 5.

**JOIN OUR VISITOR CENTRE TEAM!** to keep the Visitor Centre open 9am-5pm on weekends and public holidays. Our roster of 4-hour shifts is negotiated according to members' availability. No specialised skills are required, and Alfred happily provides the training needed. Most visitors' questions are answered in the maps and range of free leaflets we have available.

## TICKS IN THE BUSH

Ticks live anywhere, not just in bushland, and are active all year round, but mostly populate the east coastal areas of Australia. Bushwalkers in the Field of Mars Reserve have reported discovering ticks on themselves, We advise sensible precautions including the use of insect repellent. At the Visitor Centre we have information leaflets and first aid equipment. For more information, see [https://www.allergy.org.au/images/pc/ASCIA\\_PC\\_Tick\\_Allergy\\_2024.pdf](https://www.allergy.org.au/images/pc/ASCIA_PC_Tick_Allergy_2024.pdf)

### Sensible Precautions

Before any outdoor activity, especially where your body may contact grass or bushes, be sensibly dressed and treat exposed skin areas with an effective insect repellent. Shower afterwards.

Be aware that tick bites are painless at first, but as soon as you suspect you have a tick on you, it is important to follow the following advice...

### How to Safely Remove a Tick

When removing ticks, it is important that embedded ticks are not removed or touched. Disturbing a tick may cause more tick saliva to be injected into the body by the tick.

#### **“ FREEZE IT, DON’T SQUEEZE IT! ”**

Ether-containing sprays\* freeze and kill the tick.

If you do not have ether-containing spray, seek medical help to remove the tick.

1. Take the ether-containing spray and place it about 1 cm above the tick.
2. Using the ether-containing spray, spray the tick 5 times.
3. After a few minutes, if you have a magnifying glass, check if the tick is still moving its legs. If the tick has stopped moving, it is dead.
4. If you don't have a magnifying glass or if the tick is not dead, spray the tick 5 times again. The dead tick should drop off.
5. If the tick does not drop off, have it safely removed by a health professional using fine-tipped forceps. Do not use household tweezers to remove the tick, as this will cause it to squeeze allergen-containing saliva into your body, even if the tick is dead.
6. If the patient has a tick allergy, follow the instructions on their ASCIA Action Plan.

*\* Medi Freeze Tick Off or Wart-Off Freeze are types of ether-containing sprays. These, and other brands of ether-containing sprays can be purchased over the counter from your local pharmacy.*

### Pets and Other Animals

Many Australian native animals are not severely affected by tick bites so, if you see one with ticks on it, your best action is to leave it alone. If you are unsure, contact Sydney Wildlife Rescue (02) 9413 4300 or WIRES 1300 094 737.

Non-native animals ARE affected by tick bites, often fatally. Keep pets away from places where they may come into contact with ticks and, if you suspect your pet cat or dog has been bitten, take it immediately to a vet.

## SPANISH MOSS UPDATE

After reading the article by Lyn Langtry in page 4 of the previous edition “Wallumetta” (no.307), City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown moved a Mayoral minute which resulted in Council resolving to take action and to distribute public education flyers in affected areas.

## **‘DELIBERATE SECRECY’: HUNTERS HILL RADIOACTIVE SITE CLEANED UP A CENTURY LATER**

*from a report by Ben Cubby, published in the Sydney Morning Herald 8 August 2024.*

**Residents recall idyllic childhoods, playing by the Parramatta River foreshore and working in vegetable gardens. They didn’t know the extent of radiation contamination...**

Radiation doses over four times legal levels were detected during the clean-up of suburban blocks, of a former uranium refinery that several state governments had repeatedly declared “safe”.

Over 3000 cubic metres of contaminated material has now been removed from waterfront blocks in Nelson Parade – some shipped to a troubled nuclear waste storage facility in the US, the remainder trucked to a remote site in Western Australia. The 3-year clean-up is now complete.

Secrecy surrounded the site for much of the past century. Former residents were lied to about potential health risks; bags of contaminated dirt were left piled on the foreshore where children played on them, and barrels of radioactive material dug up in the 1990s and believed lost somewhere in Sydney were secretly stored at a facility in Lidcombe for 30 years.

Katie McGrath lost both her parents to cancer in their 30s when she was aged five. She believes the former uranium refinery on her childhood street is responsible. The family lived several properties down the road from the polluted site, in an area declared free of contamination. No one warned the family of the radiation before they bought their home, even though the state government had run tests and found alarming levels of radioactivity in neighbouring properties.

The health risks caused by the radiation remain unclear. The government’s consistent position has been that there is no known link between the radioactivity at the site and health problems of people nearby. But a string of cancer deaths among people exposed to the site during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s raised fears of residues in the soil from the former uranium refinery.

## **NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION (ACF) - JABILUKA**

In July, Mirarr Traditional Owners succeeded in protecting their Country at Jabiluka from a planned high impact uranium mine in the top of the Northern Territory.

This unique part of Australia is surrounded by Kakadu, Australia’s largest national park and a dual World Heritage listed area. Despite its international significance, the region has been subjected to drilling, cultural damage and uranium exploitation and risk for over 50 years.

On Sunday 11 August Energy Resources of Australia’s Jabiluka mining lease expires – and it will not be renewed! This is a tribute to tenacity and people power – but above all it is a tribute to the resilience of the Mirarr people who have resisted the mine every day for many decades and across multiple generations.



*Photo: Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation*

ACF joined with others in a campaign led by Mirarr senior Traditional Owner Yvonne Margarula to stop the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine. These efforts saw Energy Resources Australia enter into an agreement with the Mirarr that Jabiluka would not be developed without their specific consent.

*“We have always said no to this mine. Government and mining companies told us they would mine it but we stayed strong and said no,” says Yvonne Margarula. “Today I feel very happy that Jabiluka will be safe... Protecting country is very important for my family and for me.”*

Jabiluka can now start to be rehabilitated and healed ahead of its permanent protection by inclusion into the World Heritage Kakadu National Park.

## STANDING UP TO ADANI AND NEWSCORP

### - *message from Adrian Burrugubba (Senior Nagana Yarrbayn Cultural Custodian)*

The past month has been very exciting and has shown how much support and recognition we have from other tribal groups and the wider community.

As Elders and Leaders of the Wangan and Jagalingou Nagana Yarrbayn Cultural Custodians we speak on the importance of protection of Country...



Our *Waddananggu Magarran* (three year celebrations), began on Country in late August, celebrating the three years of the sacred fires burning at Waddananggu (“The Talking”), standing our ground and honouring our Ancestors.

The *Waddananggu Magarran* was followed up with the *Yidaki Magarran Original Vibrations* event on Yuggera Country, where we were joined by people from as far as Arnhem Land in the north to Boorloo/ Perth in the West, as we formed a 500 strong Yidaki (didgeridoo) and Clapstick ensemble in the heart of Maganjin/ Brisbane. It was an incredible sight and sound and we are grateful to everyone that came along to be a part of this historic celebration.

Our opponents like Adani constantly misrepresent our position and make baseless claims to undermine our standing. This corrosive attitude has influenced how we are seen and spoken of in public, to our detriment.

In particular, between 1 April 2023 and 30 August 2023, NewsCorp published articles, social media posts and public comments online which were racially discriminatory and which contained defamatory material.

Gurridyula issued NewsCorp Ltd with a concerns notice under Queensland Defamation law in response to those publications. NewsCorp Ltd has responded by removing the Defamatory Articles and publishing apologies.

**We are resolute in maintaining our culture and standing for our rights, and won’t be put down or assimilated to suit the interests of a mining company.**

Thank you again for all your support. Please continue to stand with us, and also celebrate with us as we stand strong in our culture.

**VALE ANDY JOHNSTON**

Andy Johnston died in July 2024. He was formerly a City of Ryde Councillor and member of our Society. He served on our management committee for some years around 1990 and was involved in water testing in the Field of Mars Reserve long before the arrival of Streamwatch.

**Do you know** anyone who may be interested in the activities of our Society? Or someone who has skills that may be helpful in taking on roles in our special events? Invite them to join us!

**NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME YARNKNIT RUG RAFFLE PRIZE**

Please pay membership fee by direct transfer to our Bendigo Bank account: RYDE HUNTERS HILL FLORA AND FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC, BSB 633-000, Account number 190716589.

Include your name in the transaction description and email your name, address and phone number to [rhhffps@gmail.com](mailto:rhhffps@gmail.com)

Or you may pay by cash: Complete and hand in form with payment in a sealed envelope at Field of Mars Visitor Centre, or post to: RHHFFPS, PO Box 552, Gladesville 16

Donated once again by Holy Spirit Yarn Group, you could be the lucky winner when the raffle is drawn at the AGM in early 2025. The handmade article is suitable for both winter and summer use. Keep it yourself, give it to a family member or friend or donate to a worthy organisation. Funds raised support the Society and the organisations we support.

You may buy tickets at the Visitors Centre or online by transfer to our Bendigo Bank account: RYDE HUNTERS HILL FLORA AND FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC, BSB 633-000, Account number 190716589. Include your name and "raffle" in the transaction description, and email contact details to [rhhffps@gmail.com](mailto:rhhffps@gmail.com)

One ticket for \$2, Three tickets for \$5

NAME:	
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Individual	\$ 15 (+ \$ 10)
Family	\$ 35 (+ \$ 10)
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