



# Wallumetta

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

**JUNE 2019 - No. 275**

## **PRESIDENT'S NOTE**

### **The future jobs are in the zero emissions global economy.**

The outcome of the recent Federal election may be seen as the result of the conflict between the environment and jobs. The Coalition gained 23 of the 30 seats in Queensland and it looks like they will have a total 77 seats in the new Parliament and the ALP 68 with six independents. The major issue in the seats won by the Coalition in Queensland is the level of unemployment and the Adani coal mining project held out the prospect of more jobs for Queensland. The Coalition expressed support for coal mining.

However, Professor Ross Garnaut, in the last of six recent lectures on Climate Change discussed "Australia - The superpower of the zero emissions global economy" ([www.rossgarnaut.com.au](http://www.rossgarnaut.com.au)). Ross Garnaut is an economist whose career has been built around the analysis of and practice of policy connected to development, economics and international relations in Australia, Asia and the Pacific. This includes being principal economic adviser to the Prime Minister Bob Hawke, producing the Garnaut Climate Change Review in 2008 and appointment as independent expert to the Multy-Party Climate Change Committee in 2010.

In his lecture Ross Garnaut discusses the decline of the coal industry and the opportunities arising for Australia in a global economy which is moving towards zero emissions. Garnaut sets out the industries where Australia, because of its natural and other characteristics will have a competitive advantage. One example included in the lecture is land sequestration. This is essentially revegetation of the landscape starting with arresting current land clearing rates. Ross Garnaut discusses gaining export earnings by selling emissions offsets that could be generated under this initiative.

This, as expected, requires national policy to support rather than hinder a move away from coal. Ross Garnaut points out the success of the national emissions trading scheme before it was dismantled by the Federal Government in 2014. What Ross Garnaut's lecture shows is that supporting the coal industry is not the way to create jobs. The future jobs are in the zero emissions global economy.

Frank Breen

President

## **WILDLIFE PROTECTION AREAS**

City of Ryde Council's Works and Community Committee resolved to place their proposal for Wildlife Protection Areas on public exhibition. The proposal includes Field of Mars Reserve, Kittys Creek corridor and Terrys Creek corridor. It is proposed that Field of Mars Reserve be declared Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area (cats and dogs both prohibited) and Kittys Creek corridor and Terrys Creek corridor be Category 2 (cats prohibited, dogs allowed on-leash).

There is extensive community consultation including letter box drops within 250m of the reserve, signage, information online, notice in the Northern District Times and 'drop-in sessions' at each area. The Field of Mars 'drop-in session' was on the same day as our Birds event - see page 6.

**We urge members to support this proposal for the Field of Mars Reserve.** There is no plan to reduce the level of protection. If there are very compelling reasons not to declare Field of Mars Reserve a Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area, there is no possibility that it would be declared a Category 2 Wildlife Protection Area, permitting access for dogs. Regardless of the outcome of the consultation there would also be no change to the current classification as a Wildlife Refuge.

### **On 22 May, members with email were sent the following:**

The City of Ryde is seeking your feedback on the proposal to declare Wildlife Protection Areas in three high conservation bushland corridors, including Field of Mars Reserve, Terrys Creek corridor and Kittys Creek corridor:

- **Field of Mars Reserve** - Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area (will continue to prohibit both dogs and cats from entering the reserve)
- **Kittys Creek Corridor** - Category 2 Wildlife Protection Area (allows dogs to be walked on leash but prohibits cats in the parks and reserves)
- **Terrys Creek Corridor** - Category 2 Wildlife Protection Area (allows dogs to be walked on leash but prohibits cats in the parks and reserves)

### **What are Wildlife Protection Areas?**

Wildlife Protection Areas are declared for the protection of our unique native animals and their habitats under the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998*.

Wildlife Protection Areas can be declared as one of two categories:

- Category 1 lands prohibit both cats and dogs (dog walking is not allowed, even on leash)
- Category 2 lands prohibit cats but permits dogs on leash on formed tracks, pathways or roads.

The declaration of Wildlife Protection Areas is intended to promote responsible pet ownership with community education being the main focus.

### **Why have these areas been selected?**

Field of Mars Reserve, Kittys Creek and Terrys Creek corridor have all been identified as a high conservation priority areas with links to Lane Cove National Park. Vulnerable native animals have been recorded in all the proposed areas in Councils recent Flora and Fauna studies, and there has been evidence of cats and dogs off leash.

The proposed areas have all been carefully selected, taking into consideration the adjoining land use and the recreational needs of the community.

## **Field of Mars Reserve**

To better protect the wildlife in Field of Mars Reserve, Council is proposing to declare it as a Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area, prohibiting both dogs and cats from the reserve.

Under this proposal, there will be no change to the existing status of Field of Mars Reserve as a Wildlife Refuge that currently prohibits both dogs and cats. The proposal will provide additional protection and ensure a consistent approach to wildlife protection across the City of Ryde.

## **Kittys Creek Corridor**

Council is proposing to declare Kittys Creek corridor a Category 2 Wildlife Protection Area. This will continue to allow dogs to be walked on leash, however prohibit cats in the parks and reserves. The extent of this corridor includes Portius Park, Pryor Park and Kittys Creek Reserve.

## **Terrys Creek Corridor**

Council is proposing to declare Terrys Creek corridor a Category 2 Wildlife Protection Area. This will continue to allow dogs to be walked on leash, however prohibit cats in the parks and reserves. The extent of this corridor includes Forrester Park, Forsyth Park, Pembroke Park, Lucknow Park and Somerset Park.

This proposal will provide consistency with the City of Parramatta's existing Wildlife Protection Areas on the western side of Terrys Creek.

## **Have Your Say**

Drop in sessions at each location were held for the Wildlife Protection Areas in Field of Mars Reserve, Kittys Creek and Terrys Creek. Closing date for submissions was **Tuesday 18 June 2019**.

For more information on Wildlife Protection

Areas: [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/haveyoursay/wpa](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/haveyoursay/wpa) or call Customer Service on 9952 8222 during business hours.

## **GREY-HEADED FLYING FOX HABITAT RESTORATION PROGRAM**

A draft Camp Management Plan for the flying fox colony above Riverglade Reserve (along Tarban Creek near Manning Road, Gladesville) has been completed and presented to Hunters Hill Council for approval. In addition, Council has applied for LGNSW (Local Government) grant funding to implement some high priority level 1 and 2 vegetation management actions. This Habitat Restoration Program project has produced state-wide mapping of foraging areas for Grey-headed, Black and Little Red Flying Foxes and is being assisted by NSW Environmental Trust grant funding.

While there can be mixed feelings across the community there is no doubt that flying foxes are viewed as essential for healthy flora and forest ecosystems, being keystone pollinators and dispersing the seed of over 100 species of native trees and plants. Listed as vulnerable, Grey-Headed Flying Foxes live in a variety of habitats and reside in large roosts, often taking refuge in highly modified vegetation in urban areas as their preferred habitat is increasingly logged or cleared for agriculture or housing. Recently the Royal Botanic Gardens controversially instituted an ongoing and costly program to remove them from their grounds.

Numbers vary in the camps as flying foxes are influenced by availability of food and move in response to irregular blossoming of certain plant species. They will travel at least 50 km at night in search of a food supply and are an impressive sight when they set out at dusk. A survey at the Riverglade Reserve camp in April recorded 6,630 flying foxes but numbers can be much higher at this site. Let's hope we can learn to live with them in our midst and appreciate them for the role they play in our environment.

## WHAT'S IN A (SCIENTIFIC) NAME - 2: WHAT'LL WE CALL THEM: THE FABA-LOUS ACACIAS

Our beloved wattles belong to the huge genus *Acacia*, whose species are found mainly in Australia, with a few also in Africa. Authoritative sources such as [plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au](http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au) include *Acacia* in the Fabaceae family, which we associate typically with beans and peas (see previous *Wallumetta*). Although wattle flowers are nothing like those of peas or beans, their fruits have the legume or pod shape typical of the Fabaceae, whose alternative name is in fact Leguminaceae. (The Latin word *legumen*, in the plural *legumina*, was used of beans and other plants of the pulse type.)

To complicate matters further (sorry!), there have been changes in the classification of *Acacia*, and not all authorities agree. Some systems placed the *Acacia* genus in a separate family, the Mimosaceae. This classification is used in earlier books, such as Les Robinson's *Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney* (2nd edition, 1994).

*Acacia* is the Latin spelling of a Greek word. There is in fact a lot of Greek mixed up in botanical Latin. Greek scholars were the first in the western world to attempt a systematic classification of plants. The project was begun by Aristotle and continued by his great pupil Theophrastus (approximately 371-287 BCE).

The Greek equivalent of *acacia* is *akakía*, meaning "innocence, harmlessness", from *a-* ("not") and the word for "evil, bad" (as in *cacophony*). A pleasant name, but why did they label this plant, and this alone, as "harmless"? It seems that Greek travellers, probably in Egypt, heard a plant referred to by a name in a local language that sounded a bit like their word *akakía*. So they called it that and the name stuck.

Roman scholars continued the work of the Greeks. Pliny the Elder (23/4-79 CE) mentions *Acacia* in his *Naturalis Historia*, taking over the Greek name but with the Roman spelling we use today.

The names of many *Acacia* species are descriptive, and offer a good introduction to common words used in botanical Latin.

Many species-names end in *-folia*, from *folium*, "leaf". The Greek equivalent is *phylon*, which also appears in plant names, though with a Latin word-ending. Wattles you might see in our area, with names ending in *-folia*, include:

- *Acacia ulicifolia*, aka Prickly Moses, literally "gorse-leafed", from the prickly European plant known in Latin as *ulex*; it appears "Moses" was originally "Mimosa";
- *Acacia linifolia*, aka Flax-leafed Wattle, from *linum*, "flax";
- *Acacia longifolia*, the famous Sydney Golden Wattle, whose Latin name means what it sounds;
- *Acacia myrtifolia*, Myrtle Wattle, from Latin *myrtus*;
- *Acacia obtusifolia*, Blunt-leafed Wattle, from Latin *obtusus*, similar to *A. longifolia*; it has pale yellow flowers and blunt-ended leaves with slightly irregular edges.

Of course, not all plants are classified by the shape of their leaves. Others are named after characteristics of their flowers, or where they grow. Those you might meet around Ryde include:

- *Acacia suaveolens*, Sweet-scented or Sweet Wattle, from *suave*, "sweet" and *olens*, "smelling";

- *Acacia parramattensis*, Parramatta Green Wattle; and
- *Acacia terminalis*, Sunshine Wattle, after the spectacular inflorescences (flower-heads) at the end (*terminus*) of its branches.

Other genera and species are named after the person who discovered or first described them, or after some famous personality. But that is a topic for another *Wallumetta*.

## **NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF MARS**

Possibly because of the warm dry weather, some birds have been exhibiting nesting behaviours. Normal life has returned to Buffalo Creek, to the delight of water birds and kookaburras, but not much fresh water has been flowing down the creek during the dry weather.

### **Roadworks, Drainage and New Turf at the Visitor Centre**

In April there was a lot of activity around the Visitor Centre, with City of Ryde Council completing the upgrade of the roadway between the Buffalo Creek Boardwalk bridge and bus turning circle. With the agreement of our committee, the road surface for this section is a two-part seal. Road surface height has been raised and extra pipes installed to improve drainage of water from Kennedy St during rainstorms. Also the old centre gate has been removed. These works resulted in some damage to the Kennedy St bushcare site but only in the section adjacent to the road.

Meanwhile, pipes were installed to drain stormwater from the Visitor Centre to an absorption trench about 20 metres to the east of the building. While trenching through the old landfill area, workers collected many old bottles (of no historic value) and left them around the veranda. They are now in four large Clean Up Australia bags and will be disposed of as opportunities arise.

After completion of these works, the area in front of the Visitor Centre and extending eastwards was re-levelled and turfed with the native grass Zoysia. A barrier along the roadway currently prevents vehicles being driven on the grass while it becomes established. The badly damaged surface on the steps at the Kennedy Street entrance to the Field of Mars was also repaired.

During all these works we were able to maintain our regular opening hours, and when the area outside the Visitor Centre was fenced off for the works we set ourselves up with tables outside on the grass. It was a very pleasant "outdoor office" in the warm, dry, windless weather.

Until end of July our rostered shifts are shorter, with opening hours being 9am-4pm. Members are always welcome to join our team of volunteers. We do four-hour shifts. No specialised skills are required, and Alfred will happily provide the small amount of training needed. Frequency and times of each person's shifts are negotiated individually, according to preferences and availability. If you are interested please contact us!

We have recently gained a new volunteer at the Visitor Centre - welcome, Elli! We hope you enjoy volunteering at the Centre as much as the rest of us.

### **RECENT EVENTS**

**1<sup>st</sup> East Ryde Joey Scouts** visited on the first Thursday evening in April. Together with their parents and leaders, the boys and girls aged 5-7 years old did a short bushwalk and took part in environmental activities. Their mural is currently on display in the Visitor Centre.

**Walking Back In Time (Saturday 20 April)** was well-attended with a dozen walkers on the afternoon walk. It was interesting to see lesser-known features of the Field of Mars bushland, the history of its preservation, and changes over the past 50 years.

**Microbat Presentation (Saturday 4 May)** was hosted at the Environmental Education Centre by City of Ryde Council. Joanna Haddock, microbat specialist from Sydney University, explained the various species of microbats, where they

live, why they are so important and the latest research. We learnt about simple things we can do at home and in our parks to help to protect these vulnerable (and cute!) species.

**Welcome Winter With The Birds (Saturday 1 June)** - Our resident bird expert, Cathy Goswell, led walks at 8.30 and 10.30am along the Buffalo Creek boardwalk and the nearby open area, with 11 or 12 people participating in each group. As always, with her trained ears and eyes Cathy was able to point out many bird species that most of us would have missed. Much appreciated!

On the same day, from 12 to 2pm, Ryde Council officers set up a stall near the Visitor Centre and held an **information and “have-your-say” session on the proposed Wildlife Protection Zones**, of which of course the Field of Mars should be one. Among their first “customers” were participants in the 10.30 bird walk, who were returning to the Centre around 12.

### **CEMETERY EXPANSION AND ENCROACHMENT**

During recent works to expand gravesite availability in Field of Mars Cemetery, works were undertaken within cemetery grounds to pipe the drain which becomes Cemetery Creek 2. Unusual flows of water into this creek resulted in the Sand Track becoming boggy near the creek crossing even though the weather has been dry! Now that works have finished these water flows appear to have ceased. A pleasing feature of this project is that they installed a 1.2m high permanent fence at the top of the embankment in the vicinity of Cemetery Creek 2.

Meanwhile, on the south side of the cemetery a large amount of soil was brought in and dumped across the boundary into the reserve above Cemetery Creek 0 (near Wellington Road). We reported this issue and Ryde Council took action to enforce remediation of this part of the reserve. The contractor was fined and required to under-take a plan of remediation with time targets.

### **BUSHCARE**

On 27 April the Roving Bushcare group worked at Cemetery Creek 1 and found the area in good condition. At the nearby Monash Road site where a group meets every Tuesday morning, we have extended our reach westward between Buffalo Creek and the rear boundaries of private properties in Monash Road and Leawill Place. After selectively clearing large weeds - mostly privet, lantana and ochra - we are controlling germination of new weeds in this area so native plant seeds in the soil may grow.

At the Cemetery Creek 2 site which is worked weekly on Thursdays, we moved our meeting times to the afternoon. It is still dark at 6 a.m. in winter! Odd weeds have been removed from along the Sand Track, evidently arriving there from seeds under shoes. Most work is undertaken along the fire trail to prevent weeds from the boundary embankment encroaching on the natural bushland. We have been progressively planting endemic species along the embankment with pleasing results.

### **NATIONAL TREE DAY PREPARATIONS**

At the Visitor Centre bushcare site (across the creek on the old landfill) we are eradicating invasive weeds especially on the south side in preparation for this year's City of Ryde National Tree Day event. Following the successful 2017

planting on the embankment beside the Warada Track, the plan for 2019 is to fill in the grassed area between the embankment and the bushcare site. In past years when the weed grasses here were long, swamp wallabies favoured the area as a place to hide and feed. Hopefully they will find the area to their liking once again. A truckload of mulch has already been laid in the area in preparation for the planting.

## **FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL**

City of Ryde Council engages contractors to control foxes and rabbits. Methods include trapping but not 10-80 poisoning. When done inside the Field of Mars Reserve, signage is placed along the tracks closer to where the traps are, rather than at entry points to the reserve. There have been successful captures within the reserve. Unfortunately foxes cannot be controlled in urban areas outside the reserve; however, the Field of Mars Cemetery has its own programs of control.

## **COMING EVENTS AT THE FIELD OF MARS**

- Sunday 28 July: **National Tree Day** - event being organized by City of Ryde Council; see <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Events/Listing>
- Sunday 11 August: **Family Day** - for all ages, including children's activities, music, walks and a BBQ lunch. More information on this event will be coming soon!

Light refreshments are available at the Visitor Centre; donations welcome.