RHHFFPS

Wallumetta

No. 320

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

Website: https://rydehhffps.org.au/

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

OCTOBER 2026

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

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Recently the Federal Parliament adopted the "Improved Native Forest Management" method. This allows native forests that stop logging to store carbon and earn Australian Carbon Credit Units.

This follows the NSW Government submitting the Great Koala National Park project to the Clean Energy Regulator to generate Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) while permanently banning coal and gas companies from buying these offsets.

The Great Koala National Park would add 176,000 hectares of state forest, (an area more than twice the size of the city of Canberra), to existing protected areas to create a 476,000 hectare reserve. It is to protect about 12,000 koalas, water catchments and carbon stores.

Groups like The Australia Institute and conservationist Bob Brown argued tying a promised national park to carbon offsets sets a controversial precedent, while groups like WWF-Australia welcome the ban on fossil fuel buyers.

The NSW Government has stated it will prioritise these credits for targeted manufacturing industries inside the state to support job transitions and any revenue raised to help fund the ongoing land management of the park

While the goal of the project is positive, carbon credit projects have been sharply criticised. Scientific studies have found major shortcomings with the main types of projects used in Australia suggesting that carbon credits do not represent real emissions reductions

It adds up to a strong case for a thorough audit of carbon credit projects. Carbon credits are being reviewed as part of the review of the Federal Government's Safeguard Mechanism.

Here is the official page for the review, with a consultation paper - **https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/2026-27-safeguard-mechanism-review**

The Society will be monitoring the progress of the Great Koala National Park, the stopping of logging in the Park, the application of funds from carbon credits and the review of carbon credit schemes.

Frank Breen,

President

POSITIONS VACANT - We need your assistance!

WEBMASTER:

Our longstanding Society member, Sandy Larson, will be returning to his native Canada later this year. In addition to being a host at the Visitors Centre and assisting with putting on event in the Field of Mars Reserve, Sandy has been our volunteer Webmaster for over ten years. He has been instrumental in keeping the Society's message available to members and the wider community. We thank Sandy for assistance to the Society and wish him well as he returns to Canada.

With Sandy's departure, we hope there is a new volunteer Society Webmaster among our members or friends.

Thanks to Sandy, the RHHFFPS website is up and running. The role is predominantly updating new material and liaison with our domain name host and web space providers. Sandy estimates the Webmaster role takes an average of 4 hours per month.

If you, or someone you know, can help us with appropriate skills and knowledge, please let us know – contact Phil, our treasurer, as listed at the end of this newsletter.

We now offer one year's free membership to new volunteers.

VISITOR CENTRE VOLUNTEER:

Members are encouraged to volunteer to keep the Visitor Centre open on weekends… can YOU?

Our volunteers open the Field of Mars Visitor Centre on weekends and public holidays to welcome visitors to the Reserve and provide maps, information, opportunities to look at birds and other animals outside, and see our displays inside the building. Some visitors simply appreciate a friendly chat.

Our roster is arranged with 4-hour shifts for each volunteer to do once or twice a month, and organised to fit in with your availability. We enjoy spending time in the pleasant environment there. Contact Alfred on 0403749181. We'll help you get started.

Do you know anyone who would be interested in joining our Visitor Centre roster or committee? See page 8 for contact details.

COMING EVENTS:

SPIDERS OF NORTHERN SYDNEY: talk/presentation by HELEN SMITH – Sunday 25 October – 2pm

Dr Helen Smith has worked behind the scenes at the Australian Museum in Sydney since 1995. There she helps to look after one of the largest spider collections in the southern hemisphere and often answers public enquiries. In this talk, Helen will give plenty of general information about spiders that covers most of the common questions and a few myths and misconceptions. We will talk about spider diversity in our area and the whole talk will be illustrated by mainly local species.

SCOUT CAR BOOT SALE – Sunday 1 November, 8am-1pm

In 2013 the City of Ryde Council asked 1st East Ryde Scouts to help our community join the Garage Sale Trail, an initiative to encourage recycling. This is an opportunity to buy pre-loved items and save them from ending their life early as landfill. Although it is no longer officially supported by Council, the scout group has continued to hold these events in the grounds of Macquarie Hospital at the corner of Twin and Badajoz Roads (adjacent to North Ryde Common). Official date for the 2026 Garage Sale Trail is 8 November, but here it will be held a week earlier because of our End-of-Year Celebration.

END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATION: 60 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENTS! – Sunday 8 November 10am – 3pm

As our 60th anniversary year draws to a close and we celebrate the work of our members, we will hold another open day with displays by:

- City of Ryde Bushcare
- The Habitat Community Nursery
- Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre, and, of course
- our own Society.

Included in the planning are **family activities** and our traditional **barbecue lunch**.

Mayor of the City of Ryde, Clr Trenton Brown, will present a plaque commemorating our 60 years of service to the community and to nature.

And finally, for 2026:

BIRD WALKS led by Cathy Goswell – Sunday 29 November - departures 8.30am and 10.30am

PAST EVENTS:

WILDFLOWER WALKS

Our guided walk was held on Saturday 1 August and those who came saw a diversity of wildflowers and interesting features of trees along the Sand Track. Flowers included Acacia species, Boronia ledifolia, Dillwynia retorta (eggs and bacon), Grevillea buxifolia, Grevillea sericea, Hakea Sericea, Lambertia formosa (mountain devil bush) in fruit, Olearia microphylla and Woollsia pungens (snow heath).

Along the way we also admired interesting features including Eucalyptus sclerophylla (scribbly gum trees), Xanthorrhoea arborea (grass trees) and, at the junction of the Kunzea Track, some of the Kunzeas for which the track was given its name,

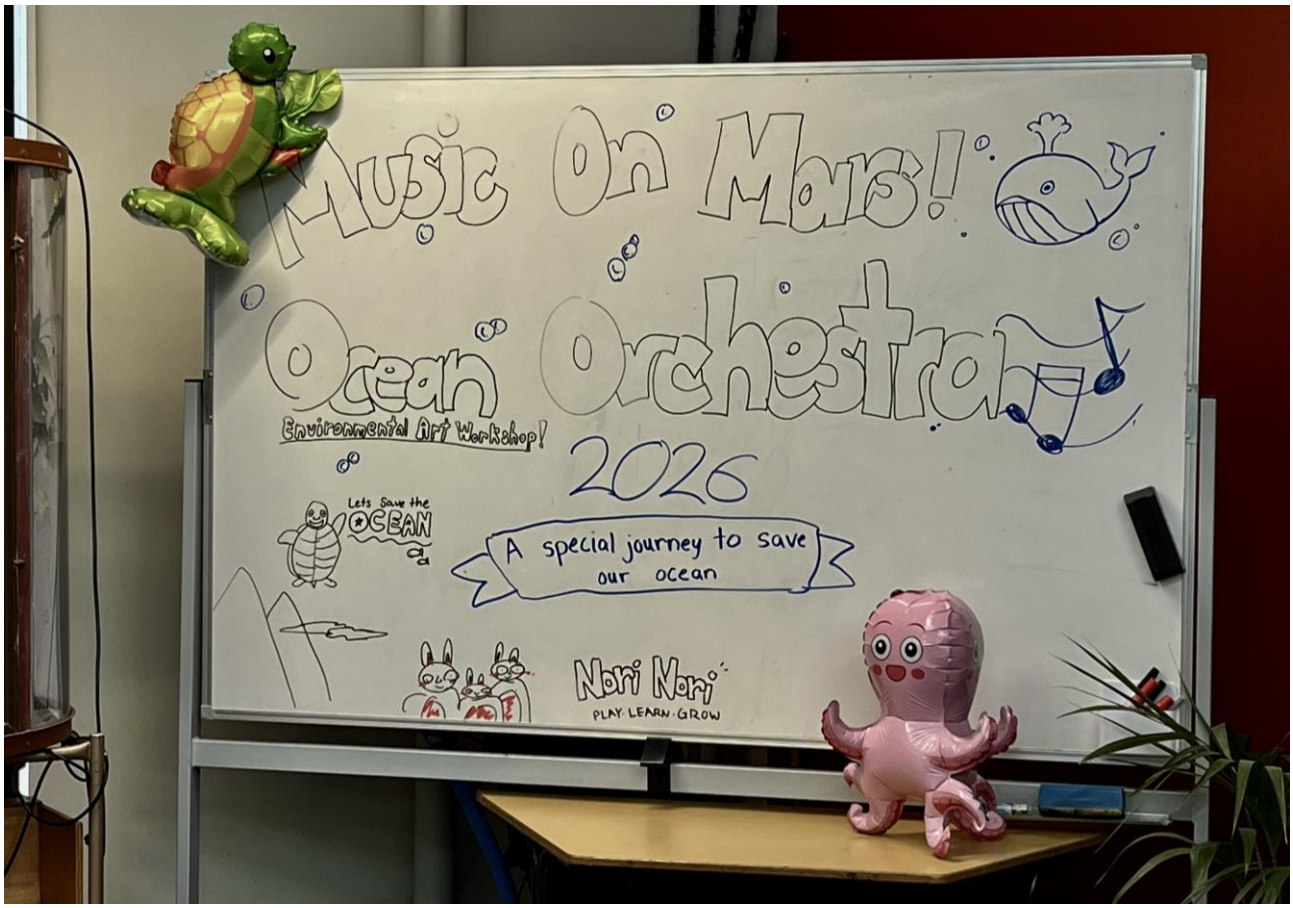
AN INTERESTING EPISODE OF GARDENING AUSTRALIA ON ABC TV

On 11 September, Gardening Australia began the program from within the Wallumatta Nature Reserve, admiring the value of this small pocket of critically endangered Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest.

It is a matter of pride for members past and present that this area of natural bushland, formerly called the Twin Road Forest, still exists at East Ryde. The land was earmarked for future expansion of NSW Department of Health services adjacent to the North Ryde Psychiatric Centre (now named Macquarie Hospital) but, as requested by early members of our Society, during the 1980s the NSW Government transferred control of this land to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

`Preservation and bush regeneration in Wallumatta Nature Reserve is now managed under the direction of the Head Ranger at Lane Cove National Park.

MUSIC ON MARS – Sunday 20 September [*Report by L.Langtry; photos by A.Vincent & P.Ward*]



What a wonderful time it was for our fourth afternoon of performance in the Field of Mars!

The entertainment began with an environmentally themed musical play, "What Does the Rabbit Look Like", based on a Korean folktale, with English dialogue. Invited by the talented actors and musicians of CARE and PURÉ, children joined in the action and then took part in related activities at the EEC. Later they all presented a musical item playing their instruments created from recycled garbage.

Young, local talent Ineke Olive expressed her appreciation of the opportunity to present and we in turn welcomed her beautiful voice and playing of the acoustic guitar.

In a change of mood John August read stories and poems under the title of *Hidden Landscape I*. What a varied selection! It was reprised in *Hidden Landscape II* later in the program.

Next to present was all female group AvaZan, singing Persian folk songs and playing varied instruments. Their lively repertoire included both traditional and modern popular songs.

The concert concluded with well-known local choir of long standing, The Macquarie Singers. From a Zulu language hymn to Mozart and excerpts from *Stella Natalis* by Welsh composer Karl Jenkins the theme of peace and compassion matched the beautiful surroundings of the Field of Mars Reserve.

[*This photo supplied by H.Clark*]

The management committee truly appreciated the attendance of so many people including Councillors Keanu Arya and Penny Pedersen and the sponsorship of the event by City of Ryde Council. Committee member Alfred Vincent is to be congratulated for his leadership in the coordination of proceedings.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF MARS

Bushcare

Along the cemetery's south-eastern boundary, further development of vaults resulted in safety fencing encroachment into the Reserve, with damage to some native seedlings and adjacent foliage in the Cemetery Creek 2 Bushcare area. We collected the equivalent of an 80L wheelie bin full of rubbish that had blown or been dumped into the natural bushland nearby.

At Monash Road site, the treated area now extends further west. Most privet bushes have been removed, except for those which were left to keep the creek banks stable.

In the Kennedy Street area, volunteers have continued to spread mulch and planted seedlings in the newly amalgamated area near the Visitor Centre.

Wildlife in the Field of Mars Reserve

Spring has sprung, with new families of ducklings appearing in Buffalo Creek. Other young bird families, notably magpies, are in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre. An ibis nest has been built in the Casuarina branches almost directly above the birdbath.

And along the Sand Track, a mother wallaby was seen with her half-grown joey.

The windstorm on 5 September brought down some trees but they did not block the tracks:

Visitor Centre

Our 60th anniversary displays inside the centre continue to attract interest and comment, so we are keeping the photos and other items of interest where all may see and enjoy them. Leaflets, maps and all the usual items remain readily available. Before the Music on Mars event, some members held working bees to clean and tidy the building. We disposed of lots of unused materials and our treasurer started cleaning old photos and sticky tack off the walls, as you can see in this photo! He will share his knowledge of the most efficient way of continuing on to the other walls, and will be grateful for members to undertake this task .

BUFFALO CREEK RESERVE AFL PROPOSAL

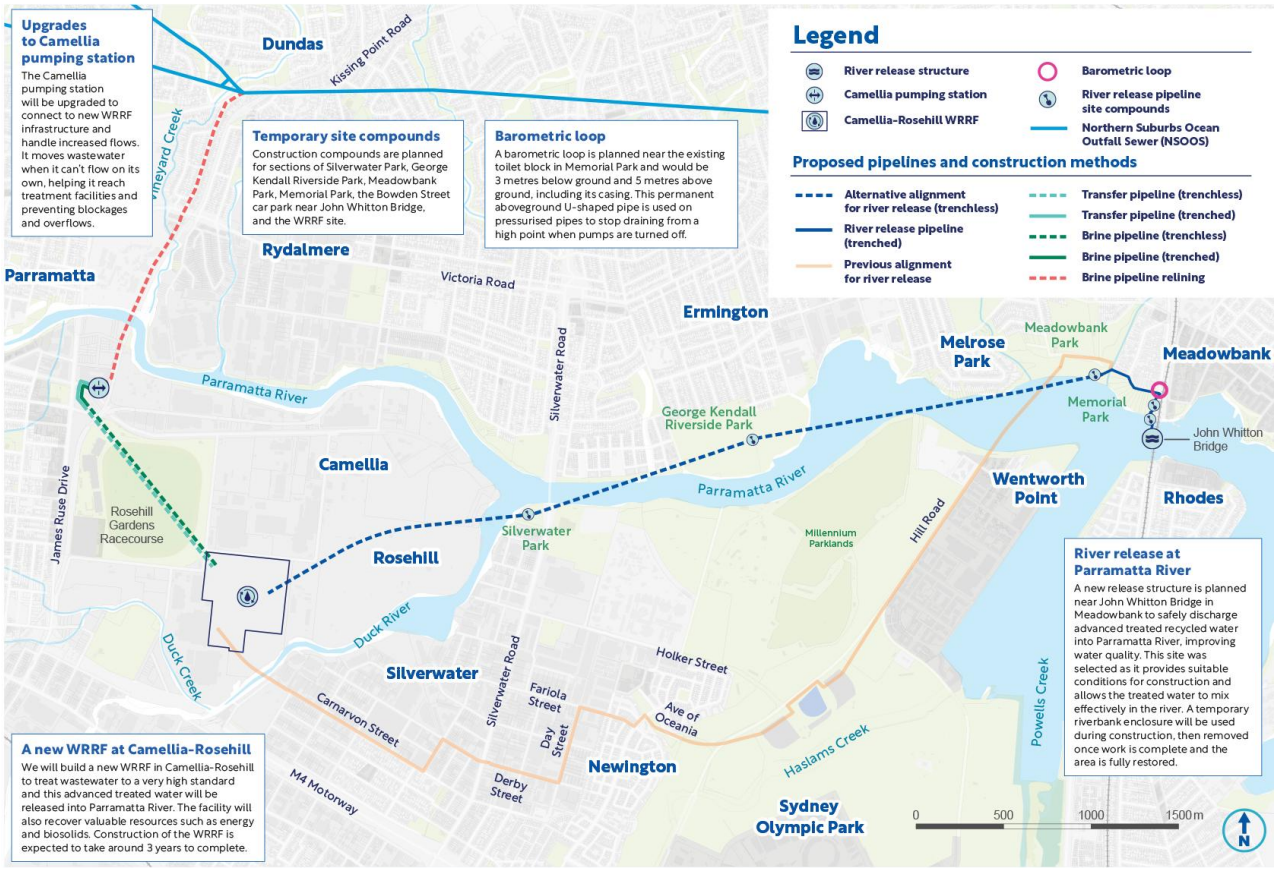
Heather, a nearby resident and former Society member, alerted us to a proposal apparently put forward by Hunters Hill Council to allow the use of Buffalo Creek Oval as an AFL home ground. Close neighbours are worried by Council's lack of consultation with the community and its apparent intention to allow this proposal without preparing a Plan of Management.

There would be negative effects on the adjacent wetland, which is reputedly the best mangrove area in Sydney, and endangered ecological communities of vegetation and the associated wildlife. The oval is an old tip site, so development would entail levelling and drainage. We fear this may be done with no consideration for the adjacent natural areas - as happened at Boronia Park Oval #3.

Traffic implications would also be serious for the Field of Mars car park and for visitors parking to access the Field of Mars Reserve. During our Music on Mars event, parking was an issue as a result of normal Sunday afternoon sports being played on the Buffalo Creek Reserve oval.

Night lighting has already been installed at the Buffalo Creek Reserve oval, and it is likely there will be demands to create more bitumen space for cars, and to build, in the long run, a clubhouse and/or more facilities for storage etc… as has already been done at Boronia Park. It would be negligent of Council to proceed with no consultation, no consideration of natural areas or traffic, and no Plan of Management.

SYDNEY WATER PIPELINE UPDATE



Sydney Water has made some changes to their Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) Water Cycle Management proposal impacting Meadowbank and Memorial Park. The project is not yet funded, and the decision ultimately sits with the responsible Minister in the NSW Government.

SPANISH MOSS* – reminder in a recent Hunter's Hill Council newsletter

Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*), also known as old man's beard, is a hanging plant without roots. It has naturalised on the far north coast of NSW and on Lord Howe Island and is native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas.

Spanish moss has become an emerging threat to trees and biodiversity in the Hunter's Hill Municipality. Like other Sydney councils, Hunter's Hill Council is working to prevent its spread into bushland and other areas of high conservation value. Over the past two years, [Hunter's Hill] Council has treated 52 affected trees across the Municipality.

Residents can help prevent the spread of Spanish moss by removing it by hand where it is safe and practical to do so. While the plant is generally easy to remove, infestations growing high in trees can be difficult to access. Contact Council for advice on identifying and controlling Spanish moss on your property.

*** See NSW weedwise info https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weed/SpanishMoss**

H5 BIRD FLU: 5 THINGS YOU CAN DO

Précis of an article published by Birdlife Australia, September 2026

H5 bird flu is here. For bird lovers, news of mass mortality events and sick and dying birds can be overwhelming. But there are small, practical steps we can all take to help keep our native birds safe and slow the spread of the virus. Small changes can make a big difference…

1. Learn the signs

Right now, vigilance is key – and by learning the signs and symptoms of H5 bird flu, you can be our eyes and ears and help us monitor and prepare for potential outbreaks.

Avoid - record - report: Look for **unusual behaviour** in wild and domestic birds, including difficulty breathing, standing, walking or flying. Abnormal posture, lethargy and poor coordination are also symptoms of H5 bird flu and should be reported.

Watch for **dead or dying birds** – especially seabirds, waterbirds, shorebirds or birds of prey.

Many dead birds in one location could be a sign that H5 bird flu has infected local populations and should always be reported.

Record photos and/or videos from a safe distance, and **take detailed notes** including your location, the date and time of your sighting, the estimated number of sick or dead animals present and any clinical signs that sick animals are showing to include in your report. Provide your contact details and those of any other observers, in case more information is required. Immediately report suspected cases to the 24/7 **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888**.

Save this number to your phone, as well as the contact details for your local wildlife shelter or registered carer or rescuer for sick and injured birds that aren't showing signs of H5 bird flu.

Do not touch or take sick or dying animals into your care or to vets or wildlife hospitals.

2. Avoid disturbing birds

Healthy birds are the best defence we have. Stressed birds are more likely to catch and spread disease, so reducing pressure on a struggling bird population helps boost their resilience.

Safe pets - safe wildlife: reduce disturbance to local native birds. Roaming pet cats kill an estimated 546 million mammals, birds and reptiles in Australia every year, so **keep cats indoors**. It's safer for your pet too, as cats can contract the virus by eating infected birds.

Keep dogs on a leash to avoid disturbing or stressing birds, especially around water. Waterbirds, shorebirds and beach-nesting birds are at higher risk of catching, spreading or dying from the virus, especially during breeding season. Even the best-behaved off-leash dogs can easily kill, injure or frighten breeding birds away from their nests or chicks.

3. Don't feed birds

Feeding wild birds can do more harm than good for our feathered friends.

The virus is extremely contagious and can spread rapidly at feeding, roosting, nesting and watering sites – where birds flock together – and bird feeding stations are easily contaminated.

Instead, help backyard birds by providing them with long-term feeding and breeding habitat. **Plant a bird-friendly garden** to give your local native birds the natural food, shelter and nesting resources they need now and into the future, while encouraging birds to find their own food (instead of congregating in large numbers at a single food source).

4. Provide clean water

Don't worry – your bird bath can stay. Like us, birds need water to survive, and many backyard species need fresh water to drink and bathe in. **Safe, clean and fresh water** is a great way to help your local native birds, especially with summer approaching.

We recommend providing **multiple shallow water sources** around your backyard (but only as many as you can maintain!) Different species prefer different depths of water, so try a variety of shapes and sizes to see what water sources work best for your local birds.

Clean and replace water daily to prevent contamination, **and remove any dirt and droppings** by rinsing and scrubbing water sources thoroughly. Disinfect bird baths and other water sources by scrubbing them with hot water and a splash of vinegar or bleach solution, then **rinse thoroughly** and leave them in the sun to dry. Wash hands thoroughly after handling water sources.

5. Add your voice

While H5 bird flu remains a low risk to human health, it could be devastating for Australia's birds and mammals. Our birds now need us more than ever. Help be their voice by advocating for better protection of birds and their habitats. Join BirdLife Australia in our fight to stop bird extinctions.

Campaign for the easy wins to prevent bird deaths and reduce the threats they're already facing – like **removing bird-killing rat poisons** from public sale.

Alongside leading experts and other wildlife and conservation groups, BirdLife Australia also calls for more funding to better protect our native wildlife from H5 bird flu, urging the Federal Government to invest **an additional $200 million in emergency funding to boost wildlife resilience** and reduce the threats our native species are already facing. Needs include habitat protection / restoration, invasive species control, monitoring and on-ground conservation efforts.

Add your voice by copying this letter or using Birdlife's online email tool to contact your MP...

> Dear [*insert name*],
>
> I'm writing to urge you as my local MP to take immediate action to protect Australia's wildlife from the growing threat of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) bird flu.
>
> Now that H5N1 bird flu has been detected on the Australian continent, we have a short window to prepare for what could become one of the most significant wildlife emergencies in our nation's history. It is in your hands to ensure our globally significant wildlife are as protected as possible.
>
> While investment in agricultural biosecurity is important, Australia must also urgently invest in protecting the wildlife and ecosystems that make our country unique. Species

already under pressure from habitat loss, invasive predators and climate change could face devastating impacts if H5N1 bird flu spreads through vulnerable wild populations.

Over 380 species of some of our most unique wild birds and mammals are at the highest risk of H5 bird flu, with over a third of these EPBC listed and already highly imperiled.

Threatened species such as the Orange-bellied Parrot, Fairy Tern and Australian Sea Lion, along with many seabirds, shorebirds, waterbirds and native mammals, could be severely affected. Beyond the ecological consequences, these species hold deep cultural significance for First Nations peoples and are a treasured part of Australia's natural heritage.

The Federal Government's $20 million Wildlife Resilience package falls a long way short of what Australia's wildlife needs at this critical moment. We have been calling for $200 million as the minimum investment required to give our wild birds and other wildlife a fighting chance against this unprecedented threat

This investment must focus on:

- Delivering threat mitigation actions for priority sites and species.
- Bolstering populations of the species most at risk from H5N1 bird flu.
- Protecting and restoring critical wetland, coastal and island habitats.
- Expanding wildlife monitoring and conservation planning for at risk species.
- Supporting on ground emergency wildlife response and recovery efforts.
- Increasing preparedness measures, including conservation breeding for species at risk.

We must also remove or reduce avoidable threats to vulnerable species including the public disturbance of important breeding sites through activities such as recreational hunting and vehicles on beaches.

Experts agree that one of the best ways to protect species from the impacts of bird flu is to ensure populations are as healthy and resilient as possible before an outbreak occurs. Investing now will not only help wildlife withstand H5N1 bird flu but will also leave a lasting legacy for biodiversity conservation across Australia.

We cannot afford to lose decades of conservation progress because we failed to adequately prepare and respond to this ongoing risk.

Please commit to supporting the calls for a $200 million Wildlife Resilience Fund to ensure Australia's precious and unique wildlife receives the protection it urgently needs.

Future generations should be able to look back and see that we acted decisively when it mattered.

[*signed*]

For further information, visit the Birdlife Australia website https://www.birdlife.org/

VALE ALEX MOSES

With sadness we report the unexpected death of Alex Moses, a regular walker in the Field of Mars Reserve and husband of visitor centre volunteer Valda. Their daughter Karen has supported our events with her musical expertise, and it was fortunate that Alex lived to see the birth of her son Samson. Alex was never in perfect health, but he had excellent creative and handyman skills. We are all familiar with the corkboard easel he made for us and which we use every weekend for our "Visitor Centre Open" sign:

NEW MEMBERS ALWAYS WELCOME:

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

Or pay by cash: Complete and hand in this form with payment in an envelope at the Field of Mars Visitor Centre.

NAME:			
Address:			
Phone:			
Annual Membership (add $10 for newsletter to be sent via Australia Post):			$
Individual	$ 15	(+ $10)	
Family	$ 35	(+ $10)	
Concession	$ 10	(+ $10)	
		Donation	
	Total Payment:		
Email address to receive your newsletter – please print clearly:			

YARNKNIT RUG RAFFLE PRIZE

Win a Yarnknit rug, in shades of green from aqua to emerald. Donated once again by Holy Spirit Yarn Group, you could be the lucky winner when the raffle is drawn at our AGM in early 2027.

Proceeds support the work of the Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society.

Give to a family member or friend, keep it for yourself or donate it to a worthy organisation.

Tickets are $5 each - buy 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 your contact details** to rhhffps@gmail.com

RHHFFPS

Meetings are held in the Visitor Centre, 1pm on 4th Tuesday of each month. Members welcome.

Postal address: PO Box 552, Gladesville, NSW 1675 **Email**: rhhffps@gmail.com

Website: https://rydehhffps.org.au/ + like us on FACEBOOK.

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