



www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

Volume 19, Issue 1

Newsletter for the 'Hawkesbury Bushcare' Program

Autumn 2019

Koala Fest @ Kurrajong a Huge Success by Jocelyn Howden

On 15 September 2018 many groups including HEN, HCC, GSLLS, WSU, Science for Wildlife and OEH, came together to hold Koala Fest @ Kurrajong; a community event in Kurrajong to celebrate and raise awareness of the iconic koalas that live around the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains and particularly around Kurrajong and Bilpin.

With this event, the groups' aims were to educate as many local residents as possible about koalas, where they live, how they move around (sometimes across roads!), how to care for their local koalas by planting trees that these animals like to eat, and what to do and who to contact if they see a koala.

Koala Fest @ Kurrajong was attended by about 2,000 people from as far afield as Griffith and Campbelltown. "Cranky Koala" dressed in a koala suit and entertained the children. Great music created a vibrant atmosphere that was provided by Davinia Jean Eather, Colleen Fricker and Buralow. Councillor Mayor, Mary Lyons-Buckett opened the festivities; Cate Faehrmann MLC MC'd the proceedings, Susan Templeman MP spoke at the opening and Science for Wildlife provided entertainment in the form of a trained dog who could find Koala scats in record time! The Kurrajong Rural Fire Service held a sausage sizzle and raised money for their organisation.

Editorial

A lot has been happening in the world of Bushcare, Landcare, PHEEN and Indian Mynas over the last few months. If you are not on any of the mailing lists or facebook for these groups it may be worth your while to help you keep updated on what has been happening on a more regular basis.

There is a lot of love, passion and heart in this BUMPER edition of Weed All About It (thanks authors!); so take your time, soak it in and enjoy the read.
Happy days.

Marty Gauci
Community Bushcare Officer & HIMAG Facilitator
mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au



The festival atmosphere of "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong".

Darug Aboriginal Corporation performed a water ceremony as Welcome to Country and the local Primary School contributed a stall as did Martin Gauci and Jutta Hamilton who gave away koala habitat and food trees for most of the day from the Hawkesbury City Council Community Nursery stall. Other stalls selling honey and artefacts were also very popular. Children received a Koala Passport / Booklet each, which was real winner in both educating and entertaining the kids.

The Hawkesbury Koala Working Group is grateful for the financial support from Hawkesbury City Council, Western Sydney University, Hawkesbury Landcare Network and others. In-kind support was provided by Hawkesbury Environment Network and other volunteers and organisations.

All the behind the scenes are now being planned for the 2019 'Koala Fest Hawkesbury'. The date and location have all been set. Sunday 8 September, Governor Phillip Park, Windsor. The Hawkesbury Koala Working Group are hoping for this event to be even bigger than last year; but this can't be achieved without great community help and support. So if you are keen to help with "Koala Fest Hawkesbury 2019" please contact – koalafest@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

Weed All About It - Newsletter for the Hawkesbury Bushcare Program Volume 19 Issue 1 Autumn 2019. This newsletter has been printed on sustainable managed forest paper.

If you are interested in being involved in any of the Hawkesbury Bushcare sites, or would like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Council's Community Bushcare Officer on **4560 4525**, or email: mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au. We would love to hear from you.



PHEEN Update

by Andrew Hewson

Special thanks to Luke, Jane, Gabrielle, and Sean from Cambridge Park Public School for hosting our term 1 PHEEN (Penrith Hawkesbury Environmental Educators Network) meeting. Luke and Jane work in the school's support unit for students with autism and intellectual disabilities, and developed their gardens and sustainability initiatives as a way of engaging their students. They have seen a real improvement in the students within the Support Unit since the introduction of nature based classes; which has seemed to be a real catalyst to hook the students interest and attention. The work is now spreading into the rest of the school as the Principal and other teachers recognise the benefits the program is having. Some of their initiatives include:



Groovy Bee Hotel!

- The "Support Unit Market Garden", which was started by the support unit students, and used by them to show that they are amazing kids with plenty to offer the school and broader community.
- A growing shed made from upcycled screen doors.
- No dig gardens built in upcycled ute trays – particularly to get some of the boys excited about working in the garden.
- Vertical gardens using upcycled water bubbler troughs.
- Insect hotels using the tops of rusted out old bins.
- A fertiliser station using compost tea, worm wee and manure tea. These will be used to do experiments and use maths to calculate growth rates using the different mixtures.
- Garden beds built using excavator treads.
- No dig habybale garden.

There's even more plans in track including engaging more of the broader school community, and also making the school self sufficient in terms of energy. If you'd like to learn more you can contact Luke at luke.giblin2@det.nsw.edu.au.

If you would like to learn more about PHEEN or like to keep in touch, please contact us on 02 4732 7983 or email andrew.hewson@penrith.city, or join our private Facebook group for more information. Our meetings are a great way to connect face to face with others in the network, ask questions and share ideas, and see what others are up to first hand. We'd love to see you there! Meetings are typically 3.30pm to 5pm, and the upcoming dates are below.

- Wednesday 26th June (Term 2, week 9) – Glenmore Park High School.
- Thursday 29th August (Term 3, week 6) – Kurrajong Public School.
- Monday 2nd of December (Term 4, week 8) – Brewongle Environmental Education Centre.

Bushcare Landcare Awards 2018

by Patricia O'Toole

The award came as a complete surprise! In 16 years of Bushcare I had done nothing special but had just been there when I could make it. I felt very honoured that my service had been recognised equally with people who have worked on outstanding aspects of Bushcare.



Some of the happy faces and award recipients at the 2018 Bushcare Landcare Awards at McMahon Park, Kurrajong.

With exposure to the bush from an early age I think I grew to love the look of the Australian bush, even as varied as it is. It always troubles me to see the invasion of exotics. Generally one has to grin and bear it, but being part of a Bushcare group gives one the opportunity to do something about it by assisting to restore a small area. It takes a long time to convert a forest of lantana and privet to bush. It is very rewarding to see this happening.

It was wonderful to see so many other lovely people receive awards too! It really takes a strong network of Volunteers and supporters to achieve what we do. Councillor Amanda Kotlash presented the awards which included –

- The Hawkesbury Community Nursery Green Thumb Award – Laurie Camilleri
- 10 Years Long Service to Bushcare – Merv Sharkie and Janet Fox
- The Super Scriber Scripting Award – Wendy Lawson and Richie Benson
- Rookie of the Year – Windsor Wharfies Bushcare
- Certificate of Appreciation for Koala Fest @ Kurrajong, Saturday 15 September 2018 – Hawkesbury Koala Working Group

The Hawkesbury with many bushland areas has a need for many more volunteers to get involved in Bushcare. It is a pleasant time of companionship and contact with the bush and a peaceful way to spend a few hours. There is no compulsion to come every time but every little bit contributes to the whole. So come on retirees - get going!!

continued on page 3

Billarderia

The bountiful berry!

By Wez Champion

I can't help but be passionate about bushfoods! As many already know my garden is purely a bushfood haven, filled with tastes that are so unique you would swear they are from some distant far away land!



One of my first bushfood plants was from the *Billarderia* genus, known as the Apple Berry. This twisty, windy fast growing plant took over the trellis in no time at all and in its first season, burst out in flowers and started fruiting. Naturally, I was so excited as I could not wait to taste the legendary "cinnamon apple" flavours I had heard about. But to my surprise, something just didn't work out... the berries didn't really grow to the expected 2cm length and the fruit on the plant was only in the 10's.

I gave up on the *Billarderia* as a reliable bushfood, pulled it out and decided never to trust the label on a Bunnings purchased plant again! A few years ago, I stumbled across the Hawkesbury Community Nursery giving out free plants at the "Kurrajong-a-buzz" festival. I got excited and decided to see what bushfoods I might be able to add to my collection. To my disappointment, Jutta and Marty could only offer me a local *Billarderia scandens*, Hairy Apple Berry as it was late in the day and supplies were low..."Oh yes..." I said, "I guess something is better than nothing".

I took the plant home and whacked it in the front yard with a trellis. I didn't care, as at least the foliage might make a good feature plant!

After a year of barely any watering or care the plant is absolutely filled with full sized ripening and plump berries! I couldn't work it out!

After much research, I learnt that there are in fact a few different varieties of *Billarderia* that are all commonly named "Apple Berry". The original plant I had planted was from cooler climates like Tasmania; while the Apple Berry that is growing like a crazy mad plant in my front yard is locally sourced from the community nursery.

Yes I know, it's a small difference, but the evidence is right before my eyes. Bushfood plants that belong in our local area will simply thrive in our natural conditions and provide you with more than enough harvest.

Thank you Jutta and Marty for making me take the Hairy Apple Berry on that festival day!

Hawkesbury Waste 2 Art Primary Schools Competition 2019



Now Open

The Primary School 'Waste 2 Art' Competition is on again, as part of Local Government Week (29 July – 4 August 2019).

'Waste 2 Art' focuses on the REUSE part of the 3Rs of the waste hierarchy (reuse, reduce, recycle). Through 'Waste 2 Art', Council hopes to encourage students to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

Students are invited to create an individual and unique, either 2D or 3D artworks which must be made entirely of used/recycled materials. All students will receive a participation certificate and will be judged as per Stages with very generous prizes on offer.

For terms, conditions and registration; see - <https://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/environment/waste-management/waste-2-art>.

Registrations close on Sunday 21 July 2019 (Last day of School Holidays). For more information, contact Waste Education Officer, Justin Murphy on 4560 4566 or Justin.murphy@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

Bushcare Landcare Awards continued from page 2

For Landcare, contact Xuela Slede landcare@hrcc.nsw.gov.au or 0410 616 139 and Bushcare Marty Gauci mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or 4560 4525.

Many thanks to Liz who has been my constant companion through all the years, to various Bushcare supervisors who have all taught me so much and to Martin Gauci for his dedication and encouragement.

Kurrajong Bushcare Visit – Awareness, Action, Conservation, by Andrew Scott

North Sydney Bushcare volunteers collaborate with our Bushcare cousins in Greater Sydney, for joint activities throughout the year to share knowledge and to maintain a vibrant Landcare network. In recent years, we have taken an interest in the challenges faced by community groups managing koala habitat.

On 15 March 2019, the Bushland Team and 9 Bushcare volunteers plus two Wildlife Sydney Zoo Keepers travelled to Kurrajong located 75 kilometres north-west of Sydney at the foothills of the Blue Mountains to work alongside the Matheson Park Bushcare Group.

Matheson Park is a parcel of 6.5 hectares of crown land managed by Hawkesbury City Council. It contains a combination of remnant Cumberland vegetation communities, consisting of; Shale Hills Woodland, Shale Sandstone Transition Forest (Low sandstone influence), Riparian Forest and Riparian Woodland. The dominant trees include Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), Cabbage Gum (*E. amplifolia*), Grey Box (*E. moluccana*), Narrow Leaved Ironbark (*E. crebra*) and Grey Gum (*E. punctata*), the latter, an important source of food for koalas. Source [https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/da049638-cbba-4e97-9c7b-9f7d7a2f6673/Volume-8\(1\)-2003-Cun8Toz001-75.pdf.aspx](https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/da049638-cbba-4e97-9c7b-9f7d7a2f6673/Volume-8(1)-2003-Cun8Toz001-75.pdf.aspx) and <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/nature/cumbPlainMappingInterpguidelines.pdf>.

Matheson Park preserves the history of the first settlement in the Kurrajong area; it was the site of a police station and a convict camp. Aboriginal use of the site evidenced by stone fragments found on the reserve (Ref: Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society).

On the morning of our visit we met our hosts Marty Gauci and Melissa Medo – Hawkesbury City Council Bushland Team and long-time Bushcare Volunteers, Patricia O'Toole, Liz Chellingworth (2002) and Gail Barnes. The Bushcare group was started at Matheson Park in 2004 in response to severe weed infestations, namely *Lantana camara*, a particular threat to resident koalas as it prevents them coming to ground to travel between feed trees.

Before we were set the task of weeding we enjoyed very informative talks.

First, we met Richie Benson, the founder of Koala Fest @ Kurrajong, held last year at Memorial Park, Kurrajong Village to raise awareness of the plight of the endangered koala and to encourage the community to protect them. It was a great success; thousands of people supported it. Richie said the idea for the festival evolved out of an Intrepid Landcare weekend and participation in a previous visit to Kentlyn Bushcare Group with North Sydney Council's Bushland Team in 2015; another community managing Koala habitat in Greater Sydney. He said it evolved over 12 months of conversations and took 6 to 7 months to organise, supported

by local and state government, local community groups, TAFE and Western Sydney University. Activities included; Science for Wildlife sniffer dogs to find koala scats and 500 koala feed tree plant giveaways. Most of the Koala habitat in the Hawkesbury is located on private land; Richie wants to encourage landholders to apply for funding to protect it and to lock up dogs to protect koalas. Ultimately he would like to see the government create

a koala management plan. The next Koala Fest is planned for Sunday 8 September 2019 at a projected cost of 7.5 K, several North Sydney Council Volunteers have pledged their support.

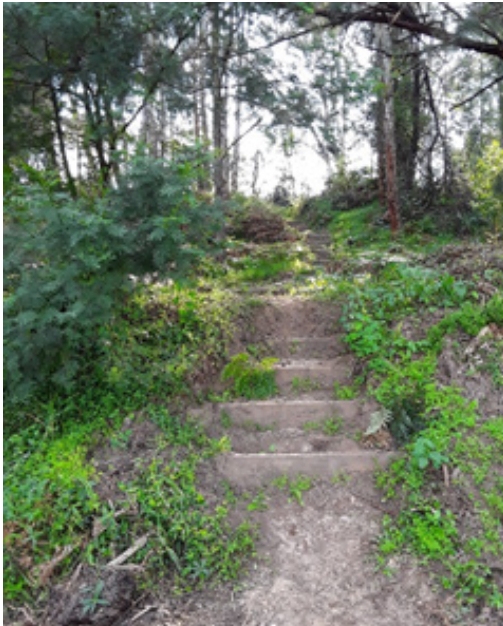
The second speaker was Morgan Philpott who has been with Hawkesbury WIRES for 6 years and stepped up to replace long-time koala carers Danny and Vickii Lett. Morgan showed us a picture of Wally; a young male koala who was found on site and released last year. Morgan said all the koalas released in his care at this location have suffered from Chlamydia. He said the most serious threat to koalas is deforestation and forest fragmentation, as koalas have to come to ground to travel between trees and are vulnerable to dog attack and other threats. He has worked with Dr Kellie Leigh on a 7 year grant tracking koalas. He said when they find a koala in a tree they measure the tree's girth, record the species of the tree and its GPS location. Morgan said koalas need big trees as they are cooler; when big trees die it forces koalas into smaller trees where they can overheat. High intensity bushfires are a threat as well; it is for this reason fire stick farming (cool burns) are promoted. Morgan said few wildlife carers were interested to care for koalas as they are not prepared to undertake mandatory retraining every three years at Port Macquarie.



An army of Koala caring Bushcarers!

continued on page 5

SWALLOW ROCK RESERVE – EBENEZER by Karen Barron



The old steps uncovered.

Conservation and Land Management students from Richmond TAFE visited 'Argyle Bailey Reserve' (or better known to some as Swallow Rock Reserve) at Ebenezer on 21 March this year to give a much needed hand to clear the site of invasive Trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) which carpets the ground and inhibits the growth of native ground covers and grasses.

This small section of the Hawkesbury River is well used by locals and visitors alike; some arriving by car, some by bicycle and others arriving by boat. It is also adjacent to a well-known illegal camp site that is frequented by overseas travelers who set up camp and enjoy the beautiful scenery.

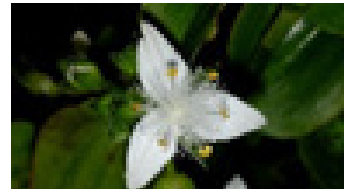
Marty (Bushcare Officer) from Hawkesbury City Council came to give the students a talk on management issues in council reserves and a pep talk on some of the more positive aspects of his job (which includes a great outdoor office). The students also learnt a great deal about native plants, weed removal and some of the impacts that affect land managers on a daily basis. With only three short hours (minus the amount of time Marty talked for) the picture shows what a great effort our 11 enthusiastic students put in for the morning. We also discovered a set of steps that had been installed about twenty years ago that was covered with Trad!

TRAD FACTS

Trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) is an invasive weed that can quickly cover the ground, out-competing native vegetation if left untreated.

Trad, originally from South America is a trailing succulent plant which prefers damp, shady areas, can cause skin irritations in dogs and is particularly toxic to cattle.

Source; <http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/>



Kurrajong Bushcare Visit – Awareness, Action, Conservation continued from page 4

Later we undertook primary weeding; lopping Lantana up into manageable piles as we cut and poisoned the stems at ground level with Glyphosate neat. The strategy was to create a corridor through the head high Lantana thicket to allow koalas free passage. Past weeding indicated high resilience; we observed, regenerating natives including Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*) and Hairy Clerodendrum (*Clerodendrum tomentosum*) among other species. The high humidity and hard work made for sweaty conditions but the morning and informative guest speakers made the experience worth our efforts.

The North Sydney Council Bushland Team would like to thank Hawkesbury City Council Bushland Team and the Bushcare Volunteers in being such great hosts; we hope to work together again in the near future.

Matheson Park Bushcare Group meets on the 3rd Friday of the Month, 9am to 12noon, contact Martin Gauci – Hawkesbury City Council Community Bushcare Officer for further information, on mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or 4560 4525.



Hawkesbury It's time for a Chemical CleanOut.

You can drop off for free:

- Household cleaners
- Fluorescent globes and tubes
- Car and household batteries
- Motor oils and fluids
- Paint
- Garden, pool and hobby chemicals
- Gas bottles and fire extinguishers
- Poisons

Only household quantities accepted.

Sunday 28 July 2019

Hawkesbury Showground
(Enter via Gate 1)
Racecourse Road, Clarendon

between
9am & 3.30pm

For more information call the Environment Line on 131 555 or visit www.cleanout.com.au.

Nocturnal Nature Safari by Tom Covell

"This place is teeming with life!" that's what a surprised Mum said to me at the end of the Nocturnal Nature Safari, and the truth is, the Hawkesbury is very alive! On this tour we heard indescribable screeches, from Yellow-bellied Gliders, while whisper quiet Feather-tailed Gliders soared effortlessly over our heads.

Nesting White Bellied Sea Eagles, green tree frogs, tawny frogmouths are all captured by our torch beams; suddenly a trapdoor spider launches out of its hole and pounces on an unsuspecting beetle grub, that's only a tiny sample of the experiences. Yep, that's the action on the Hawkesbury Nocturnal Nature Safaris.

Recently over the summer period I was lucky enough to run the Nocturnal Nature Safari series with Hawkesbury Bushcare at Ebenezer, Kurrajong and North Richmond. We were amazed, but not surprised to see an array of wildlife; from those freaky, but cool Trapdoor Spiders to the ever reliable but so cute Ringtail Possum. These Bushcare

sites and pockets of bushland on both public and private lands are vital habitat homes for our wildlife.

I'm Tom and I run, "Hooked on Nature" I don't focus on the pristine parts of Australia, but suburban bush; the reserves, the parks, the school yards, your garden... these places aren't valued like national parks, but gee are they teeming with life!



This Tawny Frogmouth comes from Kurrajong. On our night safaris we saw Tawny's at Ebenezer and North Richmond.

I don't want to lose my childlike awe, so I started a nature experience business, it's quite simple, I get a small group of people together and we create our own nature safari of a reserve, discovering the local wildlife and plants. My aim isn't to be the expert leading the "tour" but to engage with people to make

their own discoveries. So, if you want an unforgettable experience, check out Hooked on Nature; see - www.hookedonnature.com.au/ and stay tuned for the next series of the Hawkesbury Bushcare "Nocturnal Nature Safaris".

Upcoming War on Waste Monthly Workshops:



RECYCLE KITCHEN GARDEN Thursday 27 June

10am-midday: Use reclaimed items and plants to create a low cost recycled kitchen garden.

PLASTIC-FREE LIVING Thursday 25 July 10am-

midday: Learn how to eliminate plastic from your life with Margaret Moss, using alternatives such as bees-wax wraps.

DECLUTTERING Thursday 22 August 10am-midday:

The ABC of decluttering, donating & sustainably removing your stuff.

FREE – BOOKING ESSENTIAL via

<http://hawkesburywaronwaste.eventbrite.com> or contact Council's Waste Education Officer Justin Murphy on 4560 4566 or Justin.Murphy@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

The life and times of HRN by Trish Butler

On the 17 May 2019 a small group of people gathered in Kurrajong Memorial Park to catch up with original members of the Hawkesbury Rainforest Network (HRN). HRN was inaugurated in 2006 by Robin Woods to obtain grants to assist local residents with plant identification, Bushcare, Landcare and regeneration and revegetation of native species.



Most of the HRN gathered at Memorial Park, Kurrajong Village.

Some of the sites that were worked on were McMahon Park, the tanker site and the verge on Old Bells Line of Road (renamed by me as oblör), all in Kurrajong. We always had morning tea on the side of the road and the world's problems were discussed at length.

There was a Cat's Claw Creeper education program established to enlighten local residents about the existence of this
continued on page 7

Macdonald Valley Weed Wackers Update by Vicki Winton

<http://valleybushcare.blogspot.com/>

In 2013 on the riverbank land of the Darkinjung People, a dozen enthusiastic Macdonald Valley locals met at the Fire Shed for the ubiquitous tea coffee and cake. Ideas were thrown around for improving the sorry state of the adjacent riverside land and to continue regeneration works previously started along the Macdonald River far too many years ago! And thus was the birth of the Bush Regeneration group the St Albans Weed Wackers which was initially set up as a sub-committee of the Macdonald Valley Association (MVA).

The MVA was the recipient of several grants to begin eradicating *Arundo donax* (Giant Reed) and Tree of Heaven in the valley - a great starting point for river bushcare at St Albans Park. The group was then officially registered with Hawkesbury City Council.

In February 2017 the St Albans Weed Wackers became an independent group, no longer under the umbrella of the MVA, and joined forces with the other Bushcare Groups in the Hawkesbury.

The group has a constant core of coolly committed volunteers led by the knowledgeable and affable Melissa Medo often with her equally experienced sidekick Gail Barnes and in December 2014 took out the Rookies of the Year Award at the annual Hawkesbury Bushcare Landcare Awards.

On 31 October 2015 a celebration of both the Weed Wackers and MVA's riverbank restoration work was held in the park and from our small number of valley inhabitants plus weekenders, nearly a hundred people turned up to a great food feast. Speeches were made and Certificates presented to the landholders who participated in the HCNMA (now GSLLS) scheme under Linda Hanlon, whose aim was to aid rehabilitation on the riverbanks of private land.

There was much to celebrate in 2015, as again, in December, at the annual Bushcare Landcare Awards, Weed Wackers' Vera Zaccari was the very proud recipient of the "Environmental Volunteer of the Year". 2016 and 2017 saw the usual hard work: the constant eradication of the annoying Turkey Rhubarb, Trad, Paddy's Lucerne, etc. plus the excitement of seeing the changes we had wrought.

We raced through 2018 with the most difficult weather conditions ever experienced; a summer of extreme heat followed by a weird winter with heavy frosts and warm days. We are amazed that many plantings have not only

grown, but they have thrived especially the *Eucalyptus michaeliana*, *Callistemon shiressii*, almost all the *Lomandra longifolia*, the *Leptospermum polyanthum* and

Glochidion ferdinandii. Council has also helped out by building steps to the river and stopping vehicles from coming into 'our' area where the playground also is.

It is May 2019 as I write this and we are congratulating ourselves on the wonderful Weed Wacker stall at the

St Albans Easter Markets where we raised \$313 for the Macdonald Valley Primary School by selling local provenance tubestock raised by the Hawkesbury Community Nursery. It's always a great opportunity to create more awareness of our Bushcare Group and to chat to locals about native plants and weeds. It was definitely a case of many hands make light work with Weed Wacker volunteers helping all day; and everyone did their little bit to make what I thought was one of the loveliest markets ever.



Marty, Melissa, Viki and Vera at the St Albans Easter Markets.



Weed Wacker Vicki Winton removing a Paddy's Lucerne.

It's a wonderful feeling to be part of such positive actions and I enthuse and encourage people to come along to their local bushcare group, get their hands in the dirt and help restore our unique landscape. Once begun Nature will do the rest as Nature is a great Climate Change Solution.

The life and times of HRN continued from page 6

destructive species on their properties. Not to forget the educational talks put on at the CWA hall in Kurrajong featuring interesting and diverse speakers on flying foxes, creeks and WIRES. These talks served to strengthen us all in our resolve to preserve the native flora and fauna in the Hawkesbury.

A Streamwatch Group was also set up by Sydney Water with HRN to monitor the health of our local creeks, where Jim Vaughan and Ian Butler discovered the endangered Macquarie Perch living in Little Wheeny Creek. HRN often amalgamated with firstly, Green Corp and after that The Green Army.

All members can attest to our lively HRN meetings which could erupt into much hilarity; so good for our souls. These took place at the homes of various members; usually accompanied by a sly red.

At our recent gathering, original HRN members were Robin Woods (chief dude), Garth and Brenda Smith, Janet Fox, Peter Mobbs, Pat O'Toole, John Jose, Eric Brocken, Kate Young, Helen McEwan, Christa Magee, Ian Butler and myself. We all remembered Ian McEwan who is no longer with us.

Several years ago HRN ceased operating and HEN took over the gap for the environment in the Hawkesbury. For more information contact HEN at www.hen.org.au or info@hen.org.au.

Planting in autumn

by Jutta Hamilton

Planting native plants on your property is rewarding and can be a lot of fun, particularly when done with family or friends. In the Hawkesbury, autumn is generally the best time as it gives the plant time to establish itself before the next summer. As we had recent rains, now is a great time to get started!

For great success and good environmental outcomes, choose locally native plants grown from local seed. These plants are best adapted to your soils, climate and aspect and much appreciated by the local wildlife. Choose plants for your soil type, rather than import soils to suit the chosen plants and keep in mind, that plants needing full sun, rarely survive in shade. Prepare your planting site by removing weeds. The use of mulches (no more than 50mm thick) and groundcovers will help to reduce weeds in future and will keep the soil moist, cool and friable. Having mulch too thick can impede moisture to the soil and plants.

Most native plants will grow well without extra fertilisers, and high phosphate fertilisers or fresh manures can be harmful to them.

A well prepared planting hole with a rim of soil to collect water when hand watering, will make follow up watering easier and more successful. If you are super keen and are planting a tree a "long-stem" planting technique can be time consuming but in the long-term is a real winner. <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/grants/Longstemguide.pdf>

Surrounding the newly planted tree or shrub with a frost bag, can protect the young plants from frost, dry hot winds, rabbits, an unintended wiper sniper, mower and herbicide damage. In areas with wallabies, kangaroos or deer, more substantial guards are usually required.

As a tip, a light pruning of shrubs and groundcovers promotes compact growth and more flowers.

The Hawkesbury Community Nursery Staff and volunteers were recently at the Hawkesbury Show giving essential plant advice on pruning, teasing roots, planting, garden designs, digging holes, tips on effectively removing pots from the plant and long stem planting techniques. If you missed out on any of this great advice, all is not lost; come and see us at the nursery on a Wednesday, 9am-1pm at 10 Mulgrave Rd, Mulgrave (across the road from Windsor High School).



Wendy and Ken; very helpful at the Hawkesbury Show.

Or by appointment, please contact Jutta Hamilton, Community Nursery Officer 4560 4651 or Jutta.HAMILTON@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

For more information on the Hawkesbury Nursery and to see what current plants are in stock, see - <https://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/services/places-and-facilities/community-nursery>.

Help Save Our Species by Michael Pattison

Hawkesbury City Council has been awarded a \$153,000 'Saving Our Species' (SOS) grant from the Office of Environment and Heritage to protect the remnant Shale Sandstone Transition Forest in the Kurrajong Hills area.

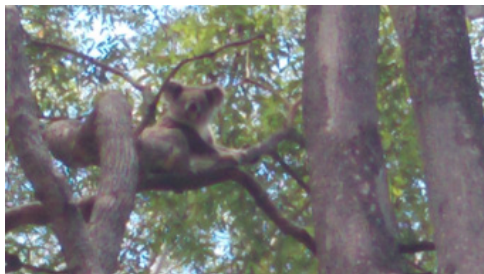
Saving our Species is a program run by the Office of Environment and Heritage which aims to protect threatened plants and animals in NSW.

The Shale Sandstone Transition Forest is an important ecological community, which is a naturally occurring collection of native plants, animals and other organisms occupying a particular area. Ecological communities are threatened when they become at risk of extinction. Currently over 100 threatened ecological communities are recognised in NSW.

The Shale Sandstone Transition Forest in the Kurrajong Hills area is listed as a threatened ecological community. This SOS grant would help support a key part of the Hawkesbury environment and hopefully help to preserve the native forest which is home to koalas and many other native fauna and flora. The seven year project will be funded by both Hawkesbury City Council and the Office of Environment and Heritage. The project will focus on

Matheson Park, Singletons Reserve and Diamond Hill Reserve bushland areas.

These areas are significant as they contain good quality remnant Shale Sandstone Transition Forest. They also have good vegetation connectivity to the lower mountains and form part of the wider koala habitat in the region. The sites are home to many native fauna and bound by Little Wheeny Creek.



A koala up a tree at Singletons Reserve. Can you see it?

The threats impacting on this ecological community include invasive species such as weeds, foxes and rabbits, and unauthorised clearing of vegetation. Council staff will be coordinating the project with assistance from the Matheson Park and Mill Road Bushcare Groups.

Now would be a great time for new volunteers to join these Bushcare groups to help with this special project.

Local residents interested in being part of this new project can join the Matheson Park and Mill Road Bushcare Groups. Please call Council's Bushcare Officer on 4560 4525 or email martin.gauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au for more information on becoming a volunteer.



Hawkesbury
Landcare
Network

Upcoming events:

Hawkesbury Landcare is starting to make some great inroads into workshops, training and new Landcare Groups.

GREEN DRINKS – Hawkesbury (our first meeting!)

Friday 31 May. 4.30pm Mingle & 5.30pm Meeting
Macquarie Arms Hotel, Windsor

Green Drinks is a worldwide phenomenon. There are more than 700 cities worldwide with a Green Drinks event; see – <http://www.greendrinks.org/>. Green drinks has been up and running in Western Sydney now for a few years with a strong following both in Campbelltown & Penrith and now it is Hawkesbury's turn!

Special Presentation:

Carolyn Williams from Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMS) will present the Planning and Development Tool Kit that BMCS developed for the Blue Mountains LGA. This is a must for anyone interested in making submissions on DAs, reporting illegal land clearing or other environmental issues. The Tool Kit is something, that if developed by the Hawkesbury or Hills (or wider) community could really help people in having a say against development that is detrimental to the environment.



Pair of White Bellied Sea Eagles that live on the edge of Bushells Lagoon. Photo: Sharyn Simmich.

All enquiries to Xuela Sledge, Hawkesbury Landcare Network
landcare@hrcc.nsw.gov.au or 0410 616 139.

New & emerging Landcare Groups in and around the Hawkesbury

- Blue Gum Landcare (Blue Gum Creek, Annangrove)
Contact: Sue Martin (Chair) sue@kcj.net.au
- Broadwater / Little Cattai Creek Landcare (Glenorie)
Contact: Jocelyn Howden jocelynhowden@gmail.com
- Cumberland Reach Landcare (Cumberland Reach)
Contact: Richie Benson officialrichie00@gmail.com
- Roberts Creek Landcare (East Kurrajong)
Contact: landcare@hrcc.nsw.gov.au

Bushells Lagoon WetlandCare

Next workday:

Thursday 30th May, 27 June & 25 July (4th Thursday of the Month; 8.30am-12noon)

8:30 – Birdwatch at Bushells Lagoon – Meet on the corner of Blacktown Road and Brewers Lane, to walk in and catch bush birds

10:00 – Water testing with the StreamWatch group

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2019

GEORGE STREET RESERVES - BLIGH PARK

by Karen Barron

If anyone was driving along George Street near Bligh Park shops on Sunday the 3 March, you could be forgiven for thinking that someone had dumped a truck load of rubbish near the brick building adjacent to the play-ground area.

But it was left there on purpose by the amazing group of people that answered the call to clean up our little patch of Bushland that runs along the edge of George Street.

The volunteer Bushcare group that gives up one Sunday morning per month to combat the weeds growing in the Reserves and preserve the remnant Cumberland Plain vegetation growing there were extremely grateful to the 21 people that turned up in the morning to give their support and make their efforts all worthwhile (with a special thanks to Western Sydney Intrepid Landcare members).

Everyone worked extremely hard and the weather was warmer than we would have liked, so a well-deserved break at morning tea with cakes and beverage provided by the Bushcare regulars meant we had a chance to chat and meet some like-minded people who all agreed that it was well worth the effort and looked so much better without the rubbish.

And we covered the whole Northern section of the Reserve from Bligh Park shops to the football fields. A GREAT EFFORT!!



Most of the volunteers that showed up in the morning.

11:30 – 12noon Morning tea/ cuppa
(supplied – location TBC)

1pm – Maintenance of plantings/
weed control on Johns
Island

2pm – Finish
Contact: John Varley
johnvarley6@gmail.com or
Xuela (see above).



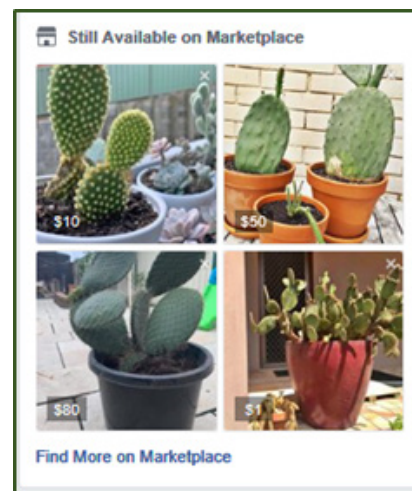
Hi, I'm Xuela.

Opuntoid cacti in the Greater Sydney region

by Nicola Dixon

More and more people are selling unlabelled cactus and succulents online through gumtree, ebay and facebook marketplace as they are easily propagated. But many of the species on offer are invasive weeds that have the potential to adversely impact our environment, economy and community. Therefore local council weed officers are increasingly required to have an active online presence and must be readily able to identify species that are not permitted to be sold under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015.

So in May 2019, 44 people representing 22 different government and non-government organisations from across the Greater Sydney region came together to learn how to identify and manage Opuntoid cacti. The training was supported through the Greater Sydney Weeds Action Program and delivered by Matt Sheehan, co-author of the [Managing Opuntoid cacti in Australia: best practice control manual](#), and Director of [Wild Matters](#). This manual is a great resource to help understand, identify and effectively manage these weeds.



What are Opuntoid cacti?

'Opuntoid cacti' or 'Opuntoids' are cacti species in the CACTACEAE family, sub-family OPUNTIODEAE. Opuntoid cacti are not native to Australia but 31 species are known to be in the country. 27 of those are listed as Weeds of National Significance (WoNS). 21 are known to have naturalised and infestations of these types of cacti occur in all states and territories. The problematic species found here in Australia are all from the Austrocylindropuntia, Opuntia (generically known as 'Prickly Pear') and Cylindropuntia genera. 'Prickly Pear' is a generic name (a bit like Gum Tree) and covers a wide range of the Opuntia species.



Workshop participants learning the key identifying features of different Opuntoid Cacti species.

What impacts can Opuntoid cacti have?

Opuntoid cacti are highly competitive and have invaded grazing land, range lands, pastures, as well as native vegetation, from coastal systems to open grassland and woodlands, roadsides, gardens and recreational reserves. They also commonly occur along water courses and floodplains and have the capability to establish in the majority of soil types and climatic zones throughout Australia. They can form dense impenetrable thickets that prevent grazing and restrict access to land, shade, water infrastructure and assets. They can cause injury, infection and death to native animals and to livestock, injure humans, contaminate and devalue wool, cause bloat if ingested, harbour pests such as fruit fly and provide shelter for foxes and rabbits.

All species reproduce by vegetative means and many can also reproduce by seed. They are well adapted to spread and can be moved by wind, water and animals, and are easily moved around on clothing, backpacks, machinery, vehicles and shoe laces, without detection.

What are my legal requirements?

Under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015, there is a prohibition on the import or sale of ALL Opuntoid cacti in NSW, except for *Opuntia ficus-indica* (Indian Fig).

The General Biosecurity Duty also applies and therefore any person who deals with these species, who knows (or ought to know) of any biosecurity risk, has a duty to ensure the risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Tiger Pear (*Opuntia aurantiaca*) was recently included in the Greater Sydney Regional Weed Management Plan as a regional priority species. Blacktown and Wollondilly Shire Local Government Areas (LGAs) are in the Core Infestation and land managers in those LGAs should mitigate spread from their land. Land managers in all other LGAs are in the Exclusion Zone and plants should be eradicated from the land and the land kept free of the plant.



The highly invasive Tiger Pear.

What else should I do?

Contact the Local Control Authority (Hawkesbury River County Council) if you see them being advertised for sale, on 4574 9600 or council@hrcc.nsw.gov.au. Practice good hygiene after leaving sites that are infested with Opuntoid cacti.

Where can I find more information?

www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au or <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/invasive-species/opuntoid-cacti-best-practice-control-manual>



Hawkesbury Indian Myna Action Group (HIMAG)

Hawkesbury Indian Myna Action Group (HIMAG) Update
HIMAG is a coordinated community project to improve the biodiversity of the Hawkesbury area through community education and humane control of Indian Myna Birds.

For more Detailed HIMAG info. Go to –
<http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/environment/natural-environment/pest-animals/indian-myna-control-program-himag> or Google "Hawkesbury Myna" it may be quicker. Or contact Martin Gauci: HCC, Community Bushcare Officer & HIMAG facilitator; general enquiries 4560 4525 or 0413 195 248, mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

AVOID BREEDING SHY BIRDS

TRAPPING TACTICS WORKSHOP

Earlier this year, HIMAG was lucky enough to have the local Men's Shed and Pitt Town VAC Peter Ryan run an Indian Myna Workshop at the Hawkesbury Community Nursery.

This covered –

- Nest boxes (for our native fauna),
- Trap construction,
- How to use the Pee Gee trap, and
- Tactics involved in trapping Indian Mynas

The last point of tactics was the major highlight of the workshop. Participants were able to hear insights into Peter's successful trapping techniques and tactics over the past 10 years in how to trap Indian Mynas. The key points were –
Disassociation with you and the trap. And you and Indian Mynas (IM). i.e.

- Do not go near the trap during day light hours (only when the IM are roosting or asleep)
- Do not feed the IM / or top up food in the trap during day light hours (only when the IM are roosting / asleep)
- Do not look at the IM trap from a window during day light hours (only when the IM are roosting / asleep, i.e. at night)
- Do not undertake euthanasia of IM during day light hours (only when the IM are roosting / asleep) eg. do in a shed / garage at night.
- Summary = Do not associate yourself with the food, trap or euthanasia.
- Summary = Only at Night not during the day.

IM are a highly territorial bird, especially during breeding season and are very protective of its food source.

Do a free feed on a mowed area grass area with no trap (you can use a milk crate if you like) at night (Disassociation) for 7 -10 days (however long it takes to establish an ownership of this food source). The aim of this is to get the IM to become "territorial" of this food source. Have the trap on a mowed grass area, approx. 3metres away from a fence with no dog in the yard. A dog will make the IM too nervous to go into the trap.



The lucky participants at the Indian Myna Workshop.

Trapping techniques need to be done correctly the first time, otherwise IM can be trained to stay away/be weary from/of the Trap and humans.

After a few days trapping can be begin (ie. once IM have become protective of this food source).

Put trap out with food in and around the trap.

Food = small dry dog food (puppy food is good as it is small and IM can pick it up)

Move trap forward each night from large compartment to small compartment as trapped IM would have fouled the ground area where trap was.

Euthanasia to be undertaken at night of all birds (caller birds are not required). Put a blanket over the trap, as this will calm the IM down.

Wash the trap down after 7-10 days with water and vinegar or soapy water and rinse after.

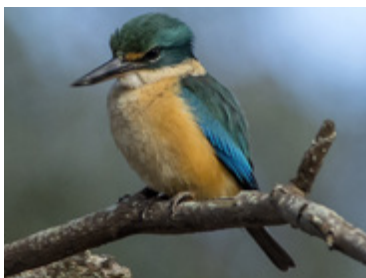
Change the food around. Eg. Grapes, peanut butter on toast, small dry dog / cat food. Not bread or seeds as this will attract other bird species.

Birds in Schools by Tom Covell



'Birds in Schools' is an environmental education program designed and delivered by BirdLife Australia. Birds in Schools is free and open to students and teachers from Years 5 and 6. The program is a teaching resource for primary schools, designed for flexible delivery. Birds in Schools wants local primary schools of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains to be involved in the Birds in Schools program.

Participating schools, students and teachers will get the chance to become citizen scientists and actively participate in the scientific process. It is a supported teaching resource that builds knowledge and skills and clearly links with syllabuses.



Azure Kingfisher, Photo Rob Brear

Teachers receive professional development and resources, equipment and funding to implement an Action Plan (e.g. create a bird-friendly garden). Students will have the opportunity to have a free excursion to Penrith Lakes to

monitor birds, investigate real-life issues, reflect and problem solve and develop action-oriented responses to sustainability challenges. The program is flexible and is delivered by trained teachers, Birdlife Australia staff and volunteers.

For more information, contact Tom Covell on 0416411502 or tom.covell@birdlife.org.au or visit www.birdlife.org.au/education-publications/education/birds-in-schools.

SITE LOCATIONS		GROUP	DAY	TIME	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Kurrajong/Kurrajong Heights Areas																
Singletons Reserve, Kurrajong	Mill Road Bushcare		1 st Friday	9am – 12noon	*	1	1	5	3	7	5	2	6	4	1	*
Don Street Reserve, Kurrajong Heights	Don Street Bushcare		Various	Various	Contact the Community Bushcare Officer for further details (02) 4560 4525											
McMahon Park, Kurrajong	McMahon Park Bushcare		Last Sunday	9am – 12noon	*	24	31	28	26	30	28	25	29	27	24	*
Matheson Park, Kurrajong	Matheson Park Bushcare		3 rd Friday	9am – 12noon	*	15	15	19	17	21	19	16	20	18	15	*
North Richmond/Grose Vale Areas																
Navua Reserve, Grose Wold	Navua Community Group		Various	Various	Contact the Community Bushcare Officer for further details (02) 4560 4525											
Near the North Richmond Bridge, Nth Richmond	Phil's Forest Bushcare		1 st Sunday	9am – 12noon	*	3	3	7	5	2	7	4	1	6	3	*
Glossodia/Ebenezer/Sackville Areas																
Charles Kemp Recreational Reserve, Ebenezer	Charles Kemp Reserve Bushcare		4 th Saturday	9am – 12noon	*	23	23	27	25	22	27	24	28	26	23	*
Aboriginal Memorial Reserve, Lower Portland	Cumberland Reach Memorial Reserve Bushcare Group		Various	Various	Contact the Community Bushcare Officer for further details (02) 4560 4525											
Wisemans Ferry/Macdonald Valley Areas																
561 Settlers Road, Lower Macdonald	Sunnyvale Bushies Bushcare		3 rd Saturday	9am – 12noon	*	16	16	20	18	15	20	17	21	19	16	*
St Albans Park, St Albans	St Albans Weed Wackers		3 rd Sunday	9am – 12noon	*	17	17	21	19	16	21	18	15	20	17	*
Windsor and Surrounds																
Hawkesbury Community Nursery 10 Mulgrave Road, Mulgrave (next to Companion Animal Shelter)	Nursery Volunteer Group		Wednesday	9am - 1pm	*	Open every Wednesday or by appointment, excluding Public Holidays. Contact the Community Nursery Officer for further details (02) 4560 4651										*
George Street Reserve, Bligh Park	George Street Reserve Bushcare		4 th Sunday	9am – 12noon	*	24	24	28	26	23	28	25	22	27	24	*
Windsor Wharf, Windsor	Windsor Wharries Bushcare		3 rd Wednesday	2pm - 51pm	*	13	13	10	8	12	10	14	11	9	13	*

* Optional workdays that can be negotiated with the various Supervisor/s

Come and grow some native plants for your property, school, community, Bushcare or Landcare Group

What to Bring?

- ▶ Sun hat
- ▶ Sturdy shoes
- ▶ Long sleeve shirt
- ▶ Long pants
- ▶ Sunscreen
- ▶ Drinking water
- ▶ Eye Protection
- ▶ Enthusiasm
- ▶ A sense of humour
- ▶ A smiley face
- ▶ Joke
- ▶ A love of the environment

Enquiries

Martin Gauci
Community Bushcare Officer
Hawkesbury City Council
Phone: (02) 4560 4525
Email: mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

This document contains important information.
If you do not understand it, contact the
Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.



Hawkesbury City Council
Address: 266 George Street
Windsor NSW 2756
PO Box 146
WINDSOR NSW 2756
Phone: (02) 4560 4525
Fax: (02) 4560 7746
Email: council@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au
www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au
Council Website: www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30am-5pm