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.
What happens when you combine land conservation, flora regeneration and wildlife recovery?

Cumberland Land Conservancy Inc. (CLC) is a not-for-profit, community charity established to protect and restore the natural environment in Western Sydney. We have just created the first community-owned conservation reserve in the region and are looking for your help! CLC is a little over a year old but our members and committee will include many familiar faces. So what have we been up to?

Protecting bushland

Our core purpose is to acquire and conserve land for conservation. CLC manages land for one purpose only - conservation – and protects it forever under legal covenant. Land can be donated by the public, corporations or government knowing it will be protected and restored.

CLC are proud to already be managing our first property (under trust) at Mulgoa. This 38 hectare woodland will be owned and managed by our members – passionate locals like yourself. We have named the property “Wallaroo” in honor of the mob which call this site home.

A smaller 6 hectare property has also been approved for handover to CLC (sale price $1) and we are awaiting the legal processes to be completed.

Restoration

From the start we’ve recognised that it isn’t enough to protect land – we need to restore it too. So we’ve jumped straight in with restoration projects on land we are acquiring and other properties that need a hand. CLC is a registered Landcare group and we are looking for new members to help us restore our bushland. Of course as a member you become a co-owner of the bush you are restoring! Our biggest tasks are the typical weeds of the Cumberland Plain Woodland: African Olive, Small and Large-leaved Privet, Cats Claw Creeper and introduced pasture grasses.

We have also begun some fascinating wildlife recovery. A major problem for wildlife in the region is the lack of fallen timber. So we have been rescuing Eucalypt logs from the chippers of tree surgeons and developers and restoring this at ‘Wallaroo’. If you know an arborist or developer willing to donate and transport logs for wildlife please let us know!

How you can help

You can help by just being a member (annual fee $10), making a donation or assisting with on-ground activities like Landcare.

Visit us at www.cumberlandlc.org.au for more details or check us out on Facebook.

Hollows as Homes by Kirsty Reynolds

After attending a seminar on ‘Hollows as Homes’ I was truly inspired. Hollows are used by around 300 animal species around Australia, with at least 64 of these threatened by extinction.

The project gathers information on hollows currently being used by wildlife, whether they are natural hollows in trees or artificial man-made nest boxes. Information is collected to help understand what animals are using hollows, where the hollows are, what tree the hollow is in, how high up it is and other details. The more information is gathered, the better understanding on how to help conserve the future of our wildlife.

If every Bushcare group or caring landholder spent 10 minutes a week watching a hollow and submitted the data at www.hollowsashomes.com, can you imagine the information we could gather!

Hawkesbury Bushcare has been lucky enough to get the team from Hollows as Homes to run a workshop on hollows (approx. 3hour duration) for Saturday 20 May 2017 in Kurrajong.

To register for this cool workshop contact -

Martin Gauci
(02) 4560 4525 or 0413 195 248 or email mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au. Places are limited and bookings are essential.

Galah in tree hollow

Hollows as Homes

by Kirsty Reynolds

Photo: J Turbill OEH
NEST BOX BOOK
- By Peter Ridgeway

The updated ‘Build your own Wildlife Nest Box. A guide for Western Sydney’ booklets are now available from Greater Sydney Local Land Services. There is both an electronic copy and a hard copy A4 booklet. Copies of this book are also available for loan from the Windsor and Richmond Libraries.

Most of our wildlife needs tree hollows for shelter but trees can take 100 or more years to develop hollows. Where natural hollows are limited, you can help your local wildlife by installing nest boxes.

This book was developed to encourage community to build boxes for the species which most need it and ensure quality construction which will provide homes for wildlife for years to come. The fauna targeted include: Sugar, Squirrel and Feathertail Gliders, Pygmy Possums, Antechinus, Microbats, Red-rumped Parrots, Musk Lorikeet and Pardalotes. Nest boxes can make a big difference in reversing these species decline and because they are small, these boxes are less prone to invasion by more aggressive (larger) species.

If you would like a hard copy please just let us know. Small quantities are available free of charge while copies last - just send us your mailing address and we can post them to you. If you would like bulk copies please contact us with your needs and we can arrange a quote for printing. We hope you enjoy the booklets last - just send us your mailing address and we can post them to you. If you would like bulk copies please contact us with your needs and we can arrange a quote for printing. We hope you enjoy the copies please contact us with your needs and we can arrange a quote for printing. We hope you enjoy the copies please contact us with your needs and we can arrange a quote for printing. We hope you enjoy the copies please contact us with your needs and we can arrange a quote for printing. We hope you enjoy.

For the download version the guide is available here: http://greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/publications

KOALA TRACKING

IN THE HAWKESBURY
by Dr Kellie Leigh

Executive Director of Science for Wildlife and adjunct at the University of Sydney.

Following the bushfires back in 2013, koalas were spotted in parts of the Mountains in which they had not been seen for decades. Following that event, I initiated the Blue Mountains Koala Project under not-for-profit organisation Science For Wildlife. It is a research and conservation project that includes surveys of the Hawkesbury area and much of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The koala is a threatened species under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and as a fluffy iconic species it makes a great flagship species for learning more about and conserving eucalypts habitats.

This is a particularly challenging project as although we know koalas are likely to occur in some places, they can be incredibly hard to detect. A lot of the habitats contain tall forests with trees over 40m tall and lots of canopy so the koalas are hidden, while in other areas where the soils are a bit sandier they are likely to be in lower numbers with much bigger home ranges, so they occur in low densities.

To find the koalas, we really need the community’s help. We are encouraging people to report any sightings of koalas as once we have a good number of records it tells us which habitats we should undertake more detailed ecological surveys in. There are some habitats we know it’s not worth looking in but there are others where we would not have expected to find koalas but are receiving sighting reports.

We also want to identify the threats to koalas, so having information on where koalas are being seen entering urban areas and encountering high speed roads and domestic dogs is important.

The koalas in the wider Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury regions have more tree choice than anywhere else in Australia; eucalypt diversity is one of the main values of the World Heritage listing. To be able to protect the koalas we need to understand what habitats they use and which food trees are important. We collar and track koalas at selected sites and so far at one site on rich shale soils in Wollemi National Park we found that Eucalyptus punctata was a strong favourite, along with some use of Eucalyptus deanei, but then we found koalas on other soil types that favoured E. piperita and Corymbia gummifera. At one of our new sites along the Colo River they’re using a range of ironbarks and stringybarks. It looks like koalas are using a wide variety of species and that changes depending on their location. We have a lot more to learn about them.

If you see or hear a koala please report your sighting via Science for Wildlife. You can also register to become a volunteer on the project, and come out in the field with us to do surveys. www.scienceforwildlife.org or email info@scienceforwildlife.org, or find us on facebook, www.facebook.com/ScienceForWildlife.
Thanks heaps to Chris Vella from Western Sydney University (WSU) who organised a real ripper of a meeting, with a stack of interesting interactive speakers; here’s a summary of the minutes taken by Andrew Hewson from Penrith Council.

Dr Ian Wright from WSU presented on water quality in creeks. Australia’s creeks are quite fragile due to our unique environment, which means urbanisation easily negatively affects them. As little as 10% of impervious surface in a creek’s catchment has a direct correlation to decreases in water quality in the creek. Concrete too negatively impacts on water quality in creeks by changing the chemistry of the water. Calcium from concrete pipes could be a larger issue than other key parameters like phosphate.

Dr Justin Welbergen from WSU presented on flying fox colonies from across Australia and the work to mitigate extreme heat on them. Flying foxes are vulnerable to extreme heat, because they are unable to self-regulate their body heat when it is over 42 degrees. They identified a need to come up with a more strategic approach to help flying foxes; as a result they developed an online heat stress forecaster http://www.animalecologylab.org/ff-heat-stress-forecaster.html. It considers projected temperatures, location of flying fox colonies and size of flying fox colonies. This then enables them to prioritise which colonies to assist to maximise their effectiveness.

Angela Colliver, National Treasurer Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE), presented on some of the initiatives being coordinated by AAEE to help schools and other organisations. She also has some teaching resources available at www.coliver.com.au/resources and can be contacted on angela@coliver.com.au. The NSW AAEE conference is being held on 27-29 September at Lane Cove http://www.nsweeconference.org.au/. They’re keen to get people and students to present on projects that they have been directly involved with. AAEE have created some resources with a ranger http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/guided-tours/wilderquest-easter-hunt-with-a-twist and brunch with a ranger http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/guided-tours/wilderquest-brunch-with-a-ranger.

Some of the other round table updates included –
- Creative Koalas. Participating schools will receive a giant fibreglass koala to decorate, around a key sustainability theme of their choice. With the help of a Young Ambassador, they will also develop their own project to create positive change on this topic. More information on http://www.kreativekoalas.com.au/.
- Young leaders are encouraged to participate in the Young Sustainability Ambassador program, which will see them receive useful personal development and professional experience http://youn gsustainabilityambassadors.com.au/apply-now/
- The Bowen Mountain sustainability fair is being held on 29 April.
One of our dedicated Bushcare volunteers, John Jose has been dutifully planting, weeding and restoring the riverbank in and around the Windsor Wharf Reserve (adjacent to the Windsor Bridge) for about three years but he has now hit a real wall in what he describes as a true disgrace.

John has planted the garden beds near the wharf countless times but the plants keep being dug up by people who seem to be digging up worms for bait when fishing. Unfortunately it leaves the soil exposed which is then susceptible to weeds and erosion.

Ironically, native vegetation growing along riverbanks is proven to be a real winner for fish populations along riverbanks. So people digging up the riverbank plants means the exposed soil runs down into the river when it rains, creating a murky water with very little oxygen in it making it difficult for the fish to flourish.

A despondent John needs your help

John would truly welcome a helping hand along the riverbank at Windsor Wharf (adjacent to Windsor Bridge) to restore such a historic riverbank and for people to take ownership of this great location. To volunteer and help John restore this part of the riverbank, contact Council’s Community Bushcare Officer on 4560 4525 or email mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

TurtleSAT the Turtle App

Australia’s freshwater turtles are under serious threat, and they need our help for survival! Mounting evidence now suggests that many turtle species are declining across vast areas of Australia due to widespread drought, fox predation and human activities. To ensure their survival, some important evidence needs to be gathered, and it needs to be gathered quickly.

TurtleSAT is a new website where communities are mapping the location of freshwater turtles in waterways and wetlands across the country. Australia’s unique freshwater turtles are in crisis - their numbers are declining and your help is needed to record where you see turtles in your local area.

If you are unable to do Bushcare (for whatever reason) but are technologically able, this is a great way for you to help your natural ecosystems. There are a quite a few apps out there now, just like TurtleSAT that take on this great citizen science approach to help us understand fauna and flora populations, their threats, movements and more.

For more information go to - https://www.turtlesat.org.au/turtlesat/default.aspx
Western Sydney and Sydney Ecology University along with The Botanic Gardens have teamed up for an innovative study on our terrible troublesome foxes. This project aims to assess fox behaviour, habitat and prey preferences across a gradient of urban density (e.g. Sydney City to Blue Mts N.P.). They will be investigating how their diet composition changes as you move away from the coast and away from population centres. The methods include GPS tracking foxes, assessing scats and stomach contents.

Carcasses and scats can be sent to -

Western Sydney University, Hawkesbury Campus
A) From Londonderry Rd - enter via Vine Dr
B) From Blacktown Rd - enter via Campus Dr
Call Vanya (0479056693) or Ben (0427004036) prior to arrival, to arrange drop-off outside the gates to C17. If carcasses could please be sealed within a garbage bag or similar that would be much appreciated.

For further information on this project, please contact Dr John Martin, Wildlife Ecologist Botanic Gardens & Centennial Parklands 02 9231 8058 or mob 0447 487 094. For Fox Scat Collection Protocol fact sheet, email mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

Men of the Trees NSW closes and passes its hopes to others

By Robin Wood

With the passing of a special group as for a friend there is always some regret and sadness at what has been lost forever.

Men of the Trees (MOTT) NSW has finally had to close its books and hand over the proceeds of its management to Hawkesbury Environment Network [HEN]. The story of MOTT which has chapters in all states goes back to Richard St Barbe Baker who founded the Society of the Men of the Trees in 1922 in Kenya. He devoted his life to convincing others of the menace of soil erosion and the need to stem the encroaching deserts of the world; and thereby provide food for the increasing world population. By some estimates, organisations he founded or assisted have been responsible for planting at least 26 billion trees internationally.

It is now an international, non-profit, non-political, conservation organisation, which is involved in planting, maintenance and protection of trees. Branches started in NSW, Queensland and Western Australia; and these also link with similar groups in South Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and England.

The NSW group were instrumental in the whole concept of raising trees from seed and finding suitable sites to re-establish woodlands and forests. It had strong and enduring links in the Hawkesbury region. MOTT NSW had funded a bush regeneration project at Scheyville National Park by Muru Mittigar, an Indigenous group that teaches horticulture and bush regeneration skills. It also had run a schools project which supplied plants to Bede Polding, Windsor Pre-school, Kurrajong Public School, Windsor High School and Richmond TAFE. Since 1982 MOTT had planted at over 100 sites in the greater Sydney region and at Lismore, Mudgee, Bathurst and Bega. A riverside restoration site on the Hawkesbury at Richmond adjacent to the bridge to North Richmond is showing the height and density of the type of forest once seen all along the River banks on the lowlands. Between 1981 and 2006 over 200,000 trees were planted, many of them grown at the MOTT Nursery hosted by Frank and Libby Braybrooks on their property at Cattai. One of the very active members was Colo High schoolteacher Alec York. Linda and Mark Anderson and their son Ben continued the tradition in the Hawkesbury with their work as part of a Bushcare team looking after Navua Reserve on the Grose River.

MOTT NSW President, Mark Anderson and his wife Linda attended a recent committee meeting of HEN in order to donate a cheque of $10 000 for works similar to the MOTT aims: to assist in retention and repair of our woodlands and forests through planting and bush regeneration as well as through education. Their program had gradually run down due to loss of active members and also due to loss of schools involvement. The AGM held in November agreed to disband and spread the accrued money across other groups, including HEN. Mark stressed that money was able to be used for all layers of vegetation, mulch, guards, and maintenance. HEN Chair Jules Wright thanked Mark and Linda for their remarkable work and the donation to HEN to maintain the main thrust of revegetation. "Considering how much bushland is currently under threat through urbanisation spread to our area, this is a timely handover. We hope HEN may increase the understanding of the importance to maintain connections between bushland remnants for habitat for our many species of fauna and especially birdlife."

Letting St Barbe Baker have the last words:

On the NSW MOTT site is a video showing the final meeting and tree planting with this story told by one of the members. Richard St Barbe Baker said to children as they were about to plant trees: “We give this plant with our hands to the earth; and with our hearts for all the world to share.”

Hawkesbury Indian Myna Action Group (HIMAG)

Indian Myna trapping and education in Australia, if not the world. There recent Indian Myna newsletter reported on a few interesting items.

Some of these included:

Local School Trapping: Schools tend to be one of the hotspots for mynas. Mynas frequent schools as there is always plenty of scraps in the playgrounds during term: during school holidays, mynas will come to the school in the expectation of an easy feed: without the kids providing that, they find the bait in the traps irresistible.

So it would be really valuable if we could get traps into more schools during the school holidays: if you have contacts at schools, could you please raise this matter with the principal. Advise them of the massive benefits: improved school amenity and lower health risks from having less mynas around schools.

Pest Bird: CIMAG have managed to get the ACT Environment Minister to agree to include the myna as a “Pest Animal”. CIMAG encourages the public to write to the ACT and federal Environment Ministers requesting that they declare the Indian Myna as a Threatening Process.

CIMAG has strong scientific evidence to support this, especially that of Kate Grarock based on her PhD research in Canberra.


THANKS TO LEIF ROSENGAARD

Thanks so much to Leif Rosengaard who has been a strong advocate for Indian Myna control in the Hawkesbury, particularly that of the Richmond and Hobartville area. Leif has been a dedicated Volunteer area Coordinator in myna control since the inception of HIMAG back in 2009. He has work and passed on his skills to so many people in effective trapping techniques. Leif is now ready for someone new in the Richmond area to step forward to help their local community in Indian Myna control. If you feel you are a successful Indian Myna trapper and would like to pass on your trapping skills to others in your area, please contact Martin Gauci (02) 4560 4525 or 0413 195 248 or email mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au.

Free Worm Farming and Composting Workshops

This project was supported by the Environmental Trust as part of the NSW EPA’s Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, funded from the waste levy.

Council is running three workshops about composting and worm farming at the EarthCare Centre at Western Sydney University’s Hawkesbury Campus on how to create and maintain your own compost bin or worm farm.

- Saturday 22 April, 10am-12pm, Composting Workshop
- Sunday 30 April, 10am-12pm, Worm Farming Workshop
- Wednesday 3 May, 6pm-8pm, Composting Workshop

Attend for your chance to win either a worm farm or compost bin! Children welcome, bookings essential and light refreshments provided.


RSVP: justin.murphy@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or call 4560 4566.
# Hawkesbury Bushcare Calendar

Help the environment and have an enjoyable day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Locations</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
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<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurradjong/Kurradjong Heights Areas</td>
<td>Mill Road Bushcare</td>
<td>1st Friday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<td>Don Street Reserve, Kurradjong Heights</td>
<td>Don Street Bushcare</td>
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<td>McMahon Park, Kurradjong</td>
<td>McMahon Park Bushcare</td>
<td>Last Sunday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<td>Matheson Park, Kurradjong</td>
<td>Matheson Park Bushcare</td>
<td>3rd Friday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<td>855 Comberoy Road, Kurradjong</td>
<td>Morroo Crown Reserve Bushcare</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<td>North Richmond/Grose Vale Areas</td>
<td>Navua Reserve, Grose Wold</td>
<td>Navua Community Group</td>
<td>Various</td>
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<td>Near the North Richmond, Nth Richmond</td>
<td>Phil's Forest Bushcare</td>
<td>1st Sunday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glossodia/Ebenezer/Sackville Areas</td>
<td>Charles Kemp Reserve Bushcare</td>
<td>4th Saturday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<td>Aboriginal Memorial Reserve, Lower Portland</td>
<td>Cumberland Reach Memorial Reserve Bushcare Group</td>
<td>1st Sunday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<td>Wisemans Ferry/Macdonald Valley Areas</td>
<td>Sunnyvale Bushies Bushcare</td>
<td>3rd Saturday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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<td>St Albans Park, St Albans</td>
<td>St Albans Weed Wackers</td>
<td>3rd Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windsor and Surrounds</td>
<td>Nursey Volunteer Group</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Hawkesbury Community Nursery</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Mulgrave Road, Mulgrave (next to Companion Animal Shelter)</td>
<td>George Street Reserve Bushcare</td>
<td>4th Sunday</td>
<td>9am – 12noon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Optional workdays that can be negotiated with the various Supervisors.

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