



Volume 18, Issue 2

Newsletter for the 'Hawkesbury Bushcare' Program

Spring 2018

## Koala Fest @ Kurrajong Awareness-Action-Conservation by Richie Benson

Join the Hawkesbury Environment Network supported by Hawkesbury City Council to celebrate the Hawkesbury Koala population. This is an event with loads of support from government and non-government organisations coming together to create a family day for all ages. Activities will include face painting, local speakers, live entertainment, competitions and cuddly real koalas.

Businesses in Kurrajong Village are encouraged to get involved by selling food or items in theme with the event. There will also be a large range of government and non-government organisations holding marquees to promote and provide information as to how we can all help protect koalas along roads, in parks and reserves and private properties.

Koalas are under threat due to road accidents, dog attacks, disease and land clearing and the Hawkesbury koala population is the only koala population in NSW that is (rapidly) increasing. We hope that everyone will leave the event with greater knowledge about threats to koalas but also greater knowledge in what we can



Kurrajong RFS, one of the community groups that will be showing their support at "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong".

do to help them. Simply planting a tree, volunteering for the HCC Community Nursery, joining your local Bushcare or Landcare group, keeping dogs locked up at night and using caution while driving at night are all things which are easy to do and have the greatest impact. Hope to see you there!

**Where:** Memorial Park, Kurrajong

**When:** Saturday, 15th September 10am - 2pm

## Editorial

Hello Bushcare fans.

This is a special edition of Weed All About It. If the penny hasn't dropped, this edition has a bit of Koala theme (Man, how much can a koala bear), which is in aid of the inaugural "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong", that will be at Memorial Park Kurrajong (see page 3).

The Hawkesbury Koala Working Group has been doing a stack of behind the scene preparation to ensure "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong" will be a day to remember. So don't miss it! And I look forward to seeing you there. Once again thanks a million to all of those who sent some ripper articles in. Unfortunately we were not able to publish all of them, but never fear, your creative expertise may be used for the next edition.

Happy reading & happy days.

Marty Gauci  
Community Bushcare Officer & HIMAG Facilitator  
[mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

## PHEEN update

**Term 3 PHEEN Meeting - 13 September  
3.30pm to 5pm, Penrith Observatory,  
Western Sydney University**

Our PHEEN (Penrith Hawkesbury Environmental Educator Network) meetings are a great way to connect with other teachers in the local area, your local council, and other organisations in our region. Our Term 3 meeting is being hosted by Penrith Observatory at Western Sydney University's Werrington North campus. The Observatory team will show us their large telescope, 3D theatre, and talk about their school incursion and excursion programs including rocket workshops and portable planetarium!

*continued page 2*



Steven Body, Principal Brewongle Environmental Education Centre & Jo Cafiero, Kurrajong PS, Class Teacher. Two proud members of PHEEN showcasing Boomerang Bags.

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](mailto:mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au). We would love to hear from you.



# Grants report to August 2018 & Project Update from Land Management Officer

- Michael Pattison



Local Land Services  
Greater Sydney



Office of Environment & Heritage



**Mac Valley Arundo** – The Arundo project is progressing well with over 20 public sites under ongoing treatment. Combined with the works on private lands, a significant area of the infestation is undergoing treatment. The project will continue this year with funding through GSLLS and Council.

**Greater Sydney Local Land Service (GSLLS)** – Have provided funding for two projects this year. One is to protect and enhance Shale Sandstone Transition Forest and prime Koala habitat in the Kurrajong Hills area. Works are focussing on the removal of invasive woody weeds and vines to ensure the viability of mature Koala feed trees. The other project is to rehabilitate two ephemeral wetlands, one at Cattai Creek and the other at Charles Kemp Reserve. Cattai Creek has been suffering the destructive impacts of recreational 4WD vehicles so we have installed a heavy duty gate to prevent access to the wetland. Combining this with bush regeneration we hope to see the wetland return to a healthy condition when the rain returns. Charles Kemp wetland has been historically drained for farming so we will be filling the drainage point and again, waiting for rain. These are exciting projects as we get to monitor the changes as the vegetation returns to aquatic species.

**NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)** – Funding has been received through the Bush Fire Risk Mitigation and Resilience program to undertake maintenance to the main fire trail west of Bowen Mountain. This trail is considered to be one of the most important fire trails in the Hawkesbury, enabling fire authority's clear access to protect life and property.

**Estuary Management Program; Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH)** – We have received word our application to the NSW Estuary Management Program to undertake a water quality monitoring program and prepare Estuary Health Report Cards has been approved. The project will collect water samples from five locations in the river and provide a robust data set of water quality indicators (pH, Salinity, dissolved oxygen, clarity [turbidity and secchi disk]), and biological indicators (chlorophyll-a, seagrass/macrophyte depth range, epiphyte abundance) for the Upper Hawkesbury estuary. This will allow us to better inform the community on the health of the mighty Hawkesbury River.

## Phoen update *continued from page 1.*

To RSVP please email [andrew.hewson@penrith.city](mailto:andrew.hewson@penrith.city), so we can send you a parking pass, and information on how to find the building. Our Term 4 meeting is on Monday 5 November at Jordan Springs Community Hub, so mark that in your calendar too.

Kurrajong PS hosted the term 2 PHEEN meeting, showcasing an array of environmental initiatives; from outdoor nature play, chickens, veggie garden, return and earn,

## National Tree Day Plant giveaway 2018 by Wendy Lawson



For the past few years, the Planet Ark National Tree Day plant giveaway has been celebrated as part of Local Government Week at the Hawkesbury Community Nursery site, in collaboration with our "neighbours" at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter. The day has been well supported by the local community, and has grown from the basic giveaway to last year's "extravaganza" that was a showcase not only for the nursery, but all community based environmental groups.



*Some happy customers.*

This year saw a change of venue, as we moved to Governor Phillip Park as part of "Hawkesbury Fest", which not only highlighted a range of Council programs and services, but celebrated the completion of the new children's playground.

And what a crowd there was! Despite very windy and challenging conditions, thousands of people turned up to enjoy the activities and entertainment.

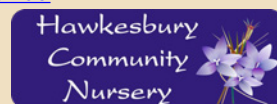
As usual, our Community Nursery stall was a smash-hit! The line of "customers" stretched right across the park at times, with people from all over the Hawkesbury eagerly waiting to choose from a range of our terrific local plants. Everyone loves to get a free plant! And visitors who were not "locals" were disappointed that they did not have a giveaway like this in their own area.

Information sheets for each plant, and advice from staff and volunteers from the Nursery and Bushcare groups, helped to make sure that everyone got the right plant for their situation. It was good to see that many people were "return customers" who were happy to tell us how well the plants they had received in previous years had flourished.

If you need some ideas for your native garden at home, come and visit the Hawkesbury Community Nursery on a Wednesday, 9am-1pm at 10 Mulgrave Rd, Mulgrave.

Or by appointment, please contact Jutta Hamilton, Community Nursery Officer 4560 4651 or [Jutta.HAMILTON@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jutta.HAMILTON@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au).

For more information on the Hawkesbury Nursery and to see what current plants are in stock, see - [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/environment/natural-environment/bushcare/community-nursery](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/environment/natural-environment/bushcare/community-nursery)



composting, wicking beds, Straw No More (eradicating plastic straws from the canteen) and Boomerang Bags.

Teacher Jo Cafiero & her band of environmental warriors will be proudly promoting Kurrajong PS at "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong" and bringing a stack of Boomerang Bags to help reduce the negative environmental impact of plastic bags in the Village. The school will also be showcasing their findings from Think Share Act project stage 2 and 3 have been working on this term.

# Hawkesbury Landcare Network Upcoming events



## Friday September 7th THREATENED SPECIES DAY

Remember this date as one where the last known Tasmanian Tiger died in captivity. Take it as an opportunity to talk with your family, friends, colleagues, peers or groups about the importance of what we have left. Landcarers and Bushcarers everywhere do their part in protecting and restoring what we have at every meeting and workday. Well done. Hawkesbury Landcare Network will be commemorating this year's Threatened Species Day with a walk and talk to East Kurrajong Primary School.

## Saturday 6th October RAINFOREST WALK

Join landholders of the Kurrajong Hills area for a walk and talk at two properties with the Endangered Ecological Community, Western Sydney Dry Rainforest. The first property is one that has been restored with assistance, the second is more of a natural remnant. Learn about the species found in these unusual rainforests. Enjoy a light lunch and learn about starting a Landcare group. Numbers limited. This event is a partnership event between Greater Sydney Local Land Services and the Hawkesbury Landcare Network.

## Date TBC (October)

### BROADWATER/ LITTLE CATTAL CREEK LANDCARE

Contribute to Landcare in the Little Cattal Creek catchment and carry out bush regeneration on the Broadwater Wetland. Privately owned, and the largest freshwater wetland in the Sydney basin, not otherwise open to the public – the Broadwater is one of the Hills best kept secrets. Next workday organised by the Cattal Hills Environment Network and Hawkesbury Landcare Network.

### Other news of interest:

**FORMATION OF A SMALL FARMS NETWORK.** Follow the Hawkesbury Small Farmers Network Facebook page for events and other relevant information that may be of interest to you in your sustainable agricultural pursuits in the Hawkesbury area.

**ROBERTS CREEK LANDCARE** is about to begin with a community landcare approach, asking the residents of the Roberts Creek catchment what is valuable to them in their catchment. If you live on the northern side of East Kurrajong Road, please get in touch and tell us what is valuable to you in the land surrounding Roberts Creek.

**WETLAND-CARE** is about to be formalising a Bushells Lagoon Landcare Group to bring together residents owning or living next to the Lagoon. Land management

**KOALA FEST @ KURRAJONG**

Awareness, Action, Conservation

Family fun day festival with everything and anything about Koalas. An event for all ages.

» **LIVE!! KOALAS**  
» **LOCAL SPEAKERS**  
» **ENTERTAINMENT**  
» **KIDS ACTIVITIES**

**SATURDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 10AM-2PM**  
**KURRAJONG VILLAGE, MEMORIAL PARK**

Contact: (02) 4560 4525 | [koalafest@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:koalafest@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

Logos: Western Sydney University, Brewongle, Local Land Services Greater Sydney, Office of Environment & Heritage, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Science for Wildlife, BUN, City of Sydney.

actions to be included will be the fencing out of stock from the Lagoon. Equipment and labour will be provided to do this, as will the potential for including alternative water sources for the animals.

The **COMMUNITY LANDCARE STORAGE CONTAINER** is full of tools and equipment available to community groups for loan in the restoration of the Hawkesbury's natural environments. All of Hawkesbury Environment Network's and Green Army tools now reside in the Container. So if you are looking for anything to help you in your natural area restoration pursuits get in touch and see if we have something that could be loaned out to you. The Container is kindly housed in South Windsor at the Hawkesbury River County Council's Depot.

**STREAMWATCH** in the Hawkesbury is currently seeking volunteers for Bushells Lagoon, Redbank Creek and two sites in Maraylya (Cataract Creek and Cattal Creek ford).

For any information on these events or other news of interest, please contact Hawkesbury Landcare Network's Local Landcare Coordinator, Xuela Sledge e: [landcare@hrcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:landcare@hrcc.nsw.gov.au) or m: 0410 616 139



Hi, I'm Xuela.

# The Quirky Character of a Wildlife Detection Dog

by Dr Kellie Leigh



and SE Wollemi area, as part of our Blue Mountains Koala Project. Finding scats is the best way to confirm what habitats koalas are using; it can be difficult to see koalas when they're in tall forests and thick canopy and there's a risk of falsely concluding they are not around just because you can't see them.

If you were one of the dedicated volunteers who helped out with our recent Intrepid Koala Scat Survey, you'll realise that fossicking through the leaf-litter with a stick looking for small koala scats is painstaking business. It's even more painful when you realise that while it takes three people up to an hour to complete a single survey transect, a sniffer dog could cover the same area in about five minutes.

It is incredible what a dog's nose can do. Sadly, we lost Badger our koala scat sniffer dog to cancer at the beginning of this year, at only 9 years young. He was an extraordinary dog and it was a heartbreaking loss. People often ask what makes a good sniffer dog, and there is no single factor that makes one dog better than the others. It's a combination of factors and different dogs have different talents. They must all have the right drive and a strong will to work. The training is based on positive reward, so to the dog it's one big, fun game. And don't worry, the positive reward is never a koala it's a treat of some kind. The dogs are trained not to chase wildlife and evaluated for that before they are approved to work.

A dog that is completely obsessive about a stick or ball often has the right single-minded focus and can be trained using toys as a reward. These dogs generally work enthusiastically, racing around at high speed and covering large areas quickly. On the downside, they can take longer to train and you can't easily control the area that they search if they're working off-lead. Other dogs respond better to food rewards, like a lot of the sniffer dogs that you see working at the airports, and these dogs work more slowly but are very thorough. If the dog is highly intelligent then you can also direct it to work exactly where you want it to, just like a herding dog.

Badger had a winning combination of talents. He responded equally to both food and toy rewards, and as an Australian Shepherd he was highly intelligent so he could be directed to go left or right and search an exact area. That is handy if you're doing scientific sampling

inside defined transects. His intelligence meant he'd learn in a few minutes what other dogs might take a few days to pick up, but it also meant he was smart enough that he'd try to cheat all the time to get his reward the fastest way possible.

For example, in the early training stages I would plant some scats for him to go and find. He'd then follow the scent of where I'd walked several hours earlier to find the scat quickly. I would then have to plant a long and winding false scent trail, so he would work out that it was quicker to use the wind to find the scent than to follow where I'd walked.



*The ever willing Badger. Photo Dr K Leigh.*

Once his training was completed he was amazing. He was originally trained to find the scats of spotted-tailed quolls and could find 1g of a 6-month-old dried out scat from over 40m away in thick bush. His work was published in the scientific journal 'Methods in Ecology and Evolution', so he became an honorary

academic. It took less than a day of training to add on koala scat as a target scent for him. It took a lot more effort to monitor his behaviour and make sure he wasn't training me, instead of me training him.

When he was working he would only get his reward once I had seen the koala scat and confirmed his find, and he sometimes found that frustrating. The scat was often hidden from view under the surface, perhaps under a leaf or piece of bark so I'd ask him to go back and "show me" the scat by putting his nose right on it. He'd get pretty impatient with me due to his enthusiasm to get his toy so sometimes he'd dig in, pick up the scat in his mouth and spit it at my hand as if to say "here you are you poor human now give me my treat!"

I still miss him every day. I am currently working with a volunteer and her dog who have some search and rescue experience, to see if they can take on koala scat surveys with us. We have a lot of survey work to do to confirm which habitats koalas are using throughout the Blue Mountains region. Once a dog proves it has the right stuff and is trained up over many months it still takes a consistent effort to maintain their work ethic, but the results are worth it. We're trying to raise funds for detection dog training so if you'd like to help please consider making a donation via our website (all donations over \$2 are tax deductible):

[www.scienceforwildlife.org/donate/](http://www.scienceforwildlife.org/donate/)

Dr Leigh will be showcasing her tracking equipment at "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong".

# Thanks from George St!!!

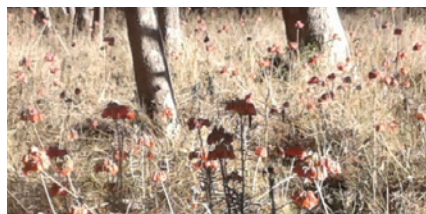


The students from America and their supervisor (left) and the haul of weeds.

'George Street' volunteers welcomed some amazing students from America to their work site at George St Reserves, Bligh Park during the school holidays.

The Year Nine students were on a month long trip undertaking leadership challenges and volunteering to do community based work.

Supported by Wendy, Danah and Vinni (some of our amazing regular George St Bushcare Volunteers) we got stuck into removing the more mature and flowering Mother of Millions (*Bryophyllum delagoense*) to reduce the sheer volume of plants on the site as well as propagules from which the plant can regenerate. Even the wildlife put in an appearance to remind us how important our work is with the resident family of Grey Kangaroos keeping a wary eye on proceedings and a passing Harrier being chased off by the local Magpies.



Before and after photos of one of the densely infested areas at George St Reserve

## Some facts on Mother of Millions:

- Is a priority weed in Hawkesbury LGA
- The plant can regenerate from seed, plantlets and stem sections
- Is toxic to livestock if eaten and can also be poisonous to humans and pets
- Flowers are five times more toxic than leaves or stems
- Eating 5kgs of the plant could kill an adult cow

Ref: <http://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/>



While the first morning was quite cold and frosty we soon warmed up pulling up those 'mothers', cutting them into small pieces, bagging them and then carrying the bags to onsite solarisers made of star pickets and black plastic.

These fantastic young people worked non-stop for the whole day only taking time out to have a quick game of soccer with some local boys and lunch. When their spirits started to flag around three o'clock we fed them almond and mandarin cake (thanks to Wendy-delicious!!) and they powered on till the end of the day.

Surprisingly they all came back for more the next day and with a superb effort they removed every red flower from the site and placed them in the solarisers to break down into harmless compost.

So, from George St volunteers; a big 'THANKS' to all the students, to Danny and Oonagh, their supervisors, the YMCA for supporting the program and to Rohan and Marty for suggesting George St as one of their work sites. They have saved us months of hard work as well as reducing future generations of this overwhelming weed.

George St Rv Bushcare meet on the 4th Sunday of the month and new volunteers are always welcome. Karen & Julie (George St Bushcare Supervisors).

## Koala Custodians by Steve Body

In the exciting lead up to "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong" on the 15th of September 2018, Brewongle Environmental Education Centre has teamed up with the Office of Environment and Heritage and Science for Wildlife to visit local schools on behalf of our local koala's. Seven primary schools have now



Koala scat, Photo Dr Kellie Leigh, Science for Wildlife

completed the 'Koala Custodians' program and are now equipped to help conserve our local Blinky Bills. These schools have include; Comleroy Road, Kurmond, Kurrajong North, Groseview, Kurrajong East, Kurrajong and Bilpin Public Schools.

Students discovered the ecological needs of koala's, identified prime koala food and habitat trees on their school grounds and delved into scat and track ID. Some of the schools had seen Koala's on their school grounds this year with Kurrajong North PS identifying scratches on trees and a video of a koala crossing their carpark.

<https://www.facebook.com/kurrajongnorthpublicschool/>



Koala Scratching on a gum tree.

Schools now have the chance to enter the Koala ComPOOtition. By making the best edible koala poo for the Koala Festival, they can win a free excursion to Brewongle for their students. We are looking forward to tasting the results!



Cranky Koala

Mark Selmes aka Cranky Koala is a passionate campaigner for saving koalas. He attends events like Koala Fest to highlight the need to protect this iconic species. Mark has been a licenced Wildlife Carer and owns an 80 ha wildlife sanctuary - covenanted in legal perpetuity and a managed site for the endangered *Diuris aequalis* (Buttercup doubletial) native orchid under the Save our Species scheme.

Keep your eyes peeled at "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong" for Cranky Koala.



## Koala trees

What trees do koalas use and like? What trees should I plant on my property suitable for koalas at home? These are regular questions from residents in the Hawkesbury area who visit the Hawkesbury Community Nursery wanting to plant gum trees on their property to help their local koalas.

*Koala Phascolarctos cinereus.*

However, planting a gum tree will not be the only saving grace for koalas. As land managers and land custodians, we need to look at how koalas can benefit long-term considering migration, shelter and stress levels. A bushland strip or corridor with gum trees and various native vegetation layers that connect two larger bushland sections is much better than a corridor of scattered gum trees in a slashed paddock.

Bushland diversity can help koalas in various ways:

- **Camouflage and protection** – koalas are less prone to dog attack when travelling along the forest floor, compared to an open area. It is also more difficult for a koala's scent to travel through a bushland area compared to an open paddock
- **Healthier trees** – generally speaking, gum trees within a natural ecosystem are healthier due to the diversity of insects and other fauna that use the area to help balance and maintain a natural and healthy ecosystem
- **Plant Diversity = Species Diversity** – the diversity of native plants will not only aid koalas but an array of other native fauna
- **Microclimate** – during summer, a bushland area will be cooler and less stressful on koalas than out in the open up a tree.

If you have an existing bushland area, regenerating these areas is always far more beneficial for local fauna than planting; as it is the plants that occur there naturally are the ones that our native fauna will prefer and that the bushland area can sustain long term.

Not all eucalypt habitats are right for koalas, but the Hawkesbury area contains many suitable habitats. The Blue Mountains Koala Project, run by Science for Wildlife, has been collecting records for several years on which trees our local koalas use. Dr Kellie Leigh, Executive Director of Science for Wildlife, said that "The koalas used a wide diversity of habitats and their choice of food trees changes depending on where they are living. There are a lot of potential koala food trees around, and shelter trees are also important for them".

"Our study found that on good soils, both in Wollemi National Park and down in the developed area around Grose Vale and Kurrajong, the Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus punctata*) is a huge favourite for koalas, with over 50% of research records showing koalas occupying this tree species.

"Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) and Cabbage Gum (*Eucalyptus amplifolia*) are also important food trees down on the good soils near human development, and shelter trees include Turpentines (*Syncarpia glomulifera*). Shale Sandstone Transition Forests, which are found in Kurrajong Heights, Kurrajong, Kurmond and Grose Vale, where clay and sandstone soils meet, are highly preferred koala habitats within the developed area," Dr Leigh explained.

"In south east Wollemi National Park from Bilpin to Mountain Lagoon and across to Colo Heights, koalas have been recorded across many more habitats and soil types than we expected. Tree species that koalas use frequently include *Eucalyptus pipperita*, *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*, *Corymbia gummifera*, *Eucalyptus deanei* and *Angophora costata*, as well as a range of stringybark species. We have found that the region supports a large and widely-spread population of koalas, and the koalas use many more vegetation types than we anticipated," Dr Leigh stated.

If you want to plant some gum trees on your property but are still not sure, not to fear, you have a few options. They are:

- Contact your local Community Bushcare Officer or the Hawkesbury Community Nursery for further advice (see page 1 & 2)
- Contact the Greater Sydney Local Land Services for advice 1300 795 299 or [www.greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au)
- Join or form a local Landcare or Bushcare group to better understand the native plants of your property (see page 3 & 8)
- See the Koala Habitat Map <http://scienceforwildlife.org/iconic-koalas/koala-habitat-maps> for which habitats in the Hawkesbury are most important to koalas.

If you would like to help map the koalas in and around the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains region, you can report any sightings at [www.scienceforwildlife.org/how-to-help/join-our-koala-project/](http://www.scienceforwildlife.org/how-to-help/join-our-koala-project/).

Information on tree use by koalas was supplied by the Blue Mountains Koala Project, run by Science for Wildlife [www.scienceforwildlife.org](http://www.scienceforwildlife.org).

## Kenny the Koala, by Jessica Barry

Max, our dog was barking for a while the other night. It was really late, nearly midnight. Dad got up to investigate. Shortly after, he came and woke me up because there was a koala in our front yard. We were so excited, I have never seen a koala in the wild before and mum and dad said it was the first time that they had seen one on our property in East Kurrajong.

He was just sitting between the branches as they waved in the wind. We locked Max up so that the koala could be left in peace for the night. The following morning he was still in the same tree from the night before. We left Max locked up for the day so that he was safe to move to another tree, as the tree he was in was a dead wattle with no foliage.

When I got home from school that day I couldn't see him in the tree. I started to get sad and I thought he must've

moved on. But then I spotted him in another tree, it was a gum tree that had a lot of leaves, right behind the dead tree that he was once sitting on. We let Max out and he was no longer worried about the koala and left the area alone. We named the koala "Kenny". We check on him every day in the morning and afternoon, he moves around a bit but is still in our front yard. He is so cute.



*Kenny holding on. Photo Melissa Barry.*

We have let our neighbours know so that they can help keep him safe if he moves to another property. Our neighbour called my mum yesterday to say that there was a koala across the road from us being chased by some dogs. I went out to see if it was Kenny, but it wasn't as he was still in our tree. The neighbour made sure the other koala was safe from the dogs and it is now living at our neighbour's property. We are so lucky to have these koalas living so close to us. I hope they stay!



## 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.

### HIMAG VOLUNTEER AREA COORDINATORS (VAC) AND TRAP AVAILABILITY

**Leigh Williams:** Sackville VAC 0437 498 589

[leigh.williams@pacific.net.au](mailto:leigh.williams@pacific.net.au)

**Peter Ryan:** Pitt Town VAC & free trap hire. 0431 430 800

**Justin Arndt:** Glossodia & surrounds VAC

0421 647 339 [himagglossodia@gmail.com](mailto:himagglossodia@gmail.com)

**Brad Clay:** Wilberforce / East Kurrajong VAC bh: 4560 4532

ah: 4576 3393 [bclay@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bclay@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

**Jenny Fraser:** Kurrajong & surrounds VAC

0409 817 548 [himagkurrajong@gmail.com](mailto:himagkurrajong@gmail.com)

**Hawkesbury Men's Shed:** Indian Myna Trap and nest box sales,  
23 Bosworth Street, Richmond, contact: Terry 0414 355 263 & Les  
0408 442 955, Mondays & Wednesdays.

**The John Morony Correctional Complex.** Trap construction & sales,  
corner of The Northern Road and Richmond Road,  
Berkshire Park Contact: Allan Lister 4582 2219

[allan.lister@dcs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allan.lister@dcs.nsw.gov.au) (Best to call in morning periods)

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](mailto:mgauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au).

### AVOID BREEDING SHY BIRDS

This little article was in the last issue of the newsletter, but this cannot be stressed enough.

### IMPORTANT TRAPPING TIP – Avoid breeding "shy birds".

Euthanase birds at night, when other Indian Mynas are asleep /

roosting. Therefore they will be unable to see or hear this occurring and will not learn to avoid the Pee Gee Trap. If Indian Mynas hear what is called a "distress call" from other Indian Mynas, they become more wary of things that are nearby. If they see a Myna being captured by a human inside a trap, then they also become more wary of that spot, which means that we could end up with Myna populations that avoid traps. For all the science, go to <http://andreasgriffin.weebly.com/>. To hear the various Indian Myna Calls go to <http://andreasgriffin.weebly.com/myna-callsphotos.html>

### TRAPS OUT AGAIN FOR SPRING

Spring is here and so too the breeding season. It's now time to get out your trap, give it a wash down and load it up with some small dry dog food. Get trapping people and if there are successful trappers out there, teach your friends the tricks you have mastered.

Installing nest boxes and having a native garden that is comprised of a diversity of plants is another way to help our native fauna and reduce the impacts of Indian Mynas.

### YOUR INDIAN MYNA PICS & STORY

Send in your Indian Myna pics of hatchlings, nesting, your big catch, the negative impacts they have on your homes and our environment. We would be happy to publish your pics in future editions to highlight the negative impacts they have. Or why not send in your great trapping story; your story can inspire the future Indian Myna trappers of the Hawkesbury. We would love to hear from you. Send to

- Email - [martin.gauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:martin.gauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)
- Phone - 45604525 or
- Post - Hawkesbury City Council, attention Martin Gauci HIMAG, 366 George Street Windsor, NSW, 2756.

## Our Bilpin Bush Trackers Excursion by Annika H, Joel T, Keira K & Luke T

On Thursday 2nd of August, class 3/4 from Bilpin Public School went on a bushwalking excursion behind Bilpin Hall. Who went? Ok there was Marty from Hawkesbury Council, Angie from Local Land Services, Peter a Bilpin local, Mel an Aboriginal Ranger and Dindy who is also a Ranger from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Mel gave us an Aboriginal cultural talk about how to use Aboriginal tools and also told us how Aboriginal people relied on plants, trees and animals from the bush for survival.

Then Peter gave us a talk about the old motorbike track. Then we set off on an adventure. Let's go! We started walking and Dindy and Mel gave us a paint card with a colour on it. We played a game like 'Spotto' but we had to find that colour in the bush. About two seconds later we saw some scat which means poo. We think it was some wombat scat. So we kept going on the track.

In the National Park we saw flowers, shiny ones too. We also saw trees such as Scribbly Gums and Angophoras. We saw the marks that certain insects such as the

Scribbly Moth and the Red Triangle Slug make on these trees. We saw different types of plants too. On our walk we drew pictures of plants and trees to go in the bushwalking map.



Students drawing a sound map.

We also made a sound map where you had to listen to your surroundings and write and draw it down. We heard trees rustling and birds chirping; it was very peaceful.

During lunch Mel showed us how to make ochre out of rocks and water. We all painted our faces and arms in ochre. Then we started walking again. We stopped to look at the hanging swamps then made a mud map of our excursion with Dindy and did some more drawings.

On the way back to the hall we went past the old motorbike track and we heard the ghost of the motorbikers. There were also two jumps. Just after that Mel showed us a special wattle that made soap. If you put it in your hands and added water, then rubbed your hands together they would get soapy. She also told us that the wattle blooming is used as a sign that the whales are migrating.

At the end of the day we said good bye to all the rangers and we had a great time, it was a very good walk!



# Where's Wally? By Morgan Philpott

Pushing through the bush on an early winters morning. Beads of sweat forming on my forehead and arms beginning to burn from the multitude of scratches earned from ploughing through a 20 metre thick wall of Lantana. I reach an opening and finally burst through into a clearing dotted with Black Wattles and Eucalyptus trees. I raise the antenna above my head and begin to scan through 360 degrees. The air is filled with the sound of birds beginning their day of hunting and foraging for food. The sounds of the bush being punctuated only by the distant sound of the occasional dog barking and the cyclic "pock, pock, pock", of the receiver hanging off my right shoulder. As I rotate, the receiver sings ever louder, "pock, pock, POCK". That's it!! That's the sound I'm after, that "kick in the head" tone as described to me by Dr Kellie Leigh, Executive Director of Science for Wildlife and Koala researcher. I know he's here, where's Wally? As I scan the tree canopies I notice a lump. There he is!! Curled up in a tight ball, trying to stay warm, in the top of a large *Eucalyptus tereticornis* is Wally.

My name is Morgan Philpott and I work as a volunteer for Hawkesbury WIRES. I specialise in caring for sick and injured Koala's. Wally is a 2-3 year old male Koala who came into my care on the 8th of February 2018. He was found by the local water carters at their filling point, on the ground, both eye's fused shut with dried puss and extremely sick with Chlamydia. After a total of 84 days in care and 28 days of antibiotic injections, he was pronounced Chlamydia free and subsequently released back at his rescue site in Kurrajong. He is now part of an ongoing Koala research program headed by Dr Kellie Leigh of Science for Wildlife and has been fitted with an ear tag that has a radio transmitter built into it. This involves me heading out to play "Where's Wally" on a weekly basis to gather data. Over the last seven days Wally has moved about 1km; he's been making me work hard to find him of late.



Wally the Koala. Photo Morgan Philpott.

The Hawkesbury area is experiencing a rapid growth in Koala numbers, which is in stark contrast to just about all other known regions where Koala colonies exist. The single biggest threat facing the iconic Koala is habitat loss and fragmentation caused through reckless land clearing practises. Anyone who has had the horrible experience of bulldozing through a sea of Lantana, or walking through a forest of Small Leaf Privet, may notice that although there may be existing large Eucalyptus trees, there are few, if any Euc saplings growing to replace the large trees when they eventually die. No Euc's = no Koalas. That's why it is vitally important that our council continue to support the community through ongoing bush regeneration programs. Community members can also get involved by volunteering for local Bushcare groups.

It is my sincere hope that our Council will recognise the need to formulate and implement a Koala management plan. As our local Koala colony grows they are being pushed into urban areas and backyards. With the support of our local council we can, hopefully, raise awareness and find a way to cohabitate with these truly amazing and iconic animals. Remember, no Euc's = no Koalas.

Members of public in the Hawkesbury can report a rescue to WIRES on 1300 094 737. For those interested in joining, google Hawkesbury WIRES and follow the links.

The dedicated Morgan Philpott will be at the inaugural "Koala Fest @ Kurrajong", so come along and ask Morgan about his adventures and challenges in being a wildlife tracker and carer.

**Weed All About It** - Newsletter for the Hawkesbury Bushcare Program Volume 18 Issue 2 Spring 2018. This newsletter has been printed on sustainable managed forest paper.

## Hawkesbury Bushcare - Scheduled Meeting Times

**Mill Road Reserve Bushcare**  
Mill Road (Singletons Rv), Kurrajong  
1st Friday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Don Street Reserve Bushcare**  
Don Street, Kurrajong Heights  
Various work days

**McMahon Park Bushcare**  
McMahon Park, Kurrajong  
Last Sunday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Matheson Park Bushcare**  
Matheson Park, Kurrajong  
3rd Friday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Navua Community Group**  
Navua Reserve, Grose Wold  
Various work days

**Phil's Forest Bushcare, Richmond**  
Old Kurrajong Road at Richmond Bridge, Richmond  
1st Sunday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Charles Kemp Reserve Bushcare**  
Swallow Reach Place, Sackville  
4th Saturday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Cumberland Reach Memorial Reserve Bushcare**  
Aboriginal Memorial Reserve, Lower Portland  
1st Sunday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Sunnyvale Bushies**  
Lower Macdonald Valley  
561 Settlers Rd, Lower Macdonald  
3rd Saturday of the Month (9am-midday)

**St Albans Weed Wackers**  
St Albans Park, St Albans  
3rd Sunday of the Month (9am-midday)

**George Street Reserve Bushcare**  
George Street Reserve, Bligh Park  
4th Sunday of the Month (9am-midday)

**Nursery Volunteer Group**  
Hawkesbury Community Nursery,  
10 Mulgrave Rd. Mulgrave. Ph 4560 4561  
Wednesdays (9am-1pm) or by appointment  
[Jutta.HAMILTON@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jutta.HAMILTON@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

**Windsor Wharfies Bushcare**  
Windsor Wharf, Windsor  
2nd Wednesday of the Month (2pm-5pm)

If you are interested in being involved in any of the Hawkesbury Bushcare sites, or have any enquiries, please contact the Community Bushcare Officer, Martin Gauci on 4560 4525, or email: [martin.gauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:martin.gauci@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au). We would love to hear from you.

