



NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW

protecting nature through community action

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Spring edition

SOUTHERN SYDNEY BRANCH

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BUSINESS MEETINGS All are welcome to attend, have your say and hear what's happening in the NPA. Contact Peter on 95287341 or Gary on 95701813 for details. Held on the 3rd Thursday of every second month.

BRANCH MEETINGS: Come and meet other members from your local area, new members and friends are most welcome. These meetings are organised for you, are informal, informative and relaxing. The next Branch meeting is in June.

The venue for Branch meetings is the Multi-Purpose Centre, 123 Flora St Sutherland (near Belmont St) 3 minutes walk from the railway station and with plenty of parking. All meetings commence at 8.00pm.

Campaign Matters Malabar Headland

In January 2016 the news was reported that the 70-HECTARE eastern section of Malabar Headland will be declared a national park in February, according to the State Government. The Federal Minister, Greg Hunt, was quoted as saying “The south-eastern headland is the most beautiful part of the headland, with coastal views rivalling any section of Sydney’s stunning coastline.”¹

NSW Environment Minister Mark Speakman said it would become a national park in February, joining the 18ha western site that was made a national park in 2012.

In addition a \$5 million upgrade to the Central Malabar Headland has been confirmed in the 2015-16 Midyear Economic Fiscal Outlook.

Of this \$2 million will be used to rehabilitate an area for the equestrian club at the western edge of the central site, behind the Anzac Rifle Range.

“The necessary remediation and construction works are expected to be commencing shortly,” Mr Hunt said.

But amidst all the joy of an announcement that has been long in coming and very frustrating for those who fought for the preservation of this site came this warning:

“Walkers, anglers and other recreational users buoyed by last week’s handover of the land from the Commonwealth to NSW now find they may have to keep their champagne on ice for years.

Access to the area may actually decrease in the short term because new gates, locks and guards will be in place while the rifles are firing, preventing people from entering illegally as they have done for years.

The NSW Rifle Association says its members want more shooting on weekends, and weekdays are regularly used, too.”²

And Greg Hunt added that the association had a “long-term future” at Malabar until there was an agreed alternative site found. Finding a new home for the shooters could take “three, five, seven or 17 years”, according to Mr Hunt. It was claimed that the Government is spending \$3 million to find the shooters a new home but was also using funding to upgrade the range in the interim — including new boundary fences between the range and the new eastern national park. Let’s see.

The Branch has visited the site and takes a keen interest in its development and in its opening. Friends of Malabar are to be commended for their work and members who are interested might wish to bookmark their site to track progress. It’s at <https://malabarheadland.org.au/>

They stated:

“FoMH have always understood and acknowledged that the existence of the rifle range has enabled the headland to be retained in public hands and, with the help of FoMH bush regenerators, preserved the remnant Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub on the site, and most importantly, not lost the headland to development. We hope that the shooters will work closely with National Parks & Wildlife Service to ensure that public access to the park can be maximised. In that way the park and the rifle range can peacefully co-exist until a new home can be found for the rifle range.”

¹ <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/city-east/malabar-headland-national-park-to-quadruple-in-size/news-story/59f957015587e24048c810817a87d2e8>

² <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/city-east/sport/malabar-headland-national-park-to-open-by-june-but-with-severe-restrictions-while-shooters-on-site/news-story/c80850931355971c5fa2cc50b8e9a347>

Wattamolla Master Plan

By the time you receive this public submissions may have closed on the draft Master Plan for Wattamolla. See <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/news/wattamolla-draft-master-plan-on-public-exhibition>

To quote from that webpage

The aim of the draft Plan is to safeguard the natural elements of the site and improve visitor facilities such a new carpark, picnic area and campground, a food kiosk, improved toilet facilities and new walking tracks to link into the Royal Coast Track," Mr Dunnett said. "With its freshwater lagoon, waterfall, beach and stunning coastal scenery, Wattamolla attracts over 300,000 visitors per year and is one of the most popular destinations in Royal National Park. "

On busy days over 4,000 people visit Wattamolla. With such large numbers the current car park and waste water disposal system reaches capacity and unfortunately this often leads to the closure of the road to the precinct.

"The draft Master Plan introduces a number of safe and sustainable options to manage increasing visitor numbers whilst protecting the site's natural and cultural features. "The options set out in the Plan range from redesigning Wattamolla's waste water system to concepts that provide safe pedestrian and vehicle access and parking.

"One option is an online car space booking system for peak days, similar to how people book camp sites. "On busy days visitors are often turned away at the park gates when the site is full leading to disappointment, particularly if other family members are already in the park.

"We want visitors to have a good experience, which is why the online car space booking system is being explored, and to provide visitors with certainty of access." As visitor safety is a priority, we're also looking at ways to strengthen safety particularly around the precinct's cliff lines. "One idea to reduce the number of injuries caused by cliff jumping is to install a 'zip-line' experience, designed and installed by an independent operator, helping to provide a safer environment by reducing unrestricted access to the cliff edge during key visitation times."

Your Branch has made a submission. It recognises that Wattamolla is close to capacity on busy days, accepts and welcomes the upgrade of the toilet block so that sewage is adequately contained and does not enter the lagoon, accepts that that a booking system for picnic sites is a sensible way of dealing with overcrowding and believes that Parks and Wildlife must note that places are sometimes full and must be closed. We note that if a theatre is booked out no one else can enter for the safety and comfort of those already present. We do not believe that expanding the car park into more and more bushland is an option for an agency whose priority, according to the Act, is:

- (a) the conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of:
 - (i) habitat, ecosystems and ecosystem processes, and
 - (ii) biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels, and
 - (iii) landforms of significance, including geological features and processes, and
 - (iv) landscapes and natural features of significance including wilderness and wild rivers,

There are other matters that will focus the minds of members including

1. Fencing and viewing platforms
2. Walking loop tracks and a very large bridge
3. Camping facilities for private parties
4. Camping facilities for the public
5. And, as quoted in The Leader, a “zip line”, for paying customers in the hope that that might stop them jumping off the cliff.

Interestingly, almost all drownings in Wattamolla over the years have been associated with children drowning in the actual lagoon and/or rock fishermen being washed off in high seas. Not, please note, from jumping off the rocks.



(photographs Brian Everingham)



Yeramba Lagoon

The National Parks Association of NSW – Southern Sydney Branch, is in full support of the Yeramba Lagoon Masterplan as agreed by National Parks and Bankstown City Council and advocated by the Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance. We hope that Brian Shaw's advocacy can lead to funding for this important work from the Commonwealth Government and support his efforts.

The catchment for Yeramba Lagoon comprises an established residential area and part of the Georges River National Park. As you are aware, Yeramba Lagoon is located within the national park and was an estuarine system prior to the 1960s. The lagoon has been closed to tidal flows from the Georges River since construction of the weir and culverts in the 1960s. Lack of tidal flushing and ongoing sewage overflows and stormwater inputs from the upper catchment have resulted in the lagoon becoming highly eutrophied.

This plan to build a temporary weir to the Georges River side of the present weir. This weir will have removable panels and would see after the present weir is removed, a gradual lowering of the lagoon to its pre 1960s state. Admission of salt water from Georges River would gradually remove the *Salvinia* and our understanding is the other weeds would then be removed.

We hope that the Commonwealth Government can find the funding for this important project and have written to the local MP supporting this concept.



Yeramba Lagoon (*photograph Brian Everingham*)

Our Wildlife

Hollows for Wildlife

With the help of the community Hollows as Homes aims to assess the availability of tree hollows and their use by wildlife across the Sydney region. The Hollows as Homes team wants you to report tree hollow(s) in your backyard, street, park and/or paddock through www.hollowsashomes.com. A description of the information to record is available on the website. In the online version of this newsletter that hyperlink is live.

The information you provide will inform Councils' management plans. In NSW, hollow-dependent species include at least 46 mammals, 81 birds, 31 reptiles and 16 frogs. Of these, 40 species are listed as threatened with extinction. An aim of Hollows as Homes is to collect data to inform Councils decision-making process when installing supplementary hollows to support biodiversity. Hollows as Homes therefore welcomes reports of nest boxes and cut-in hollows in addition to natural tree hollows.

DR ADRIAN DAVIS | Honorary Associate
Hollows as Homes Coordinator
Taylor LabSchool of Life and Environmental Sciences (SOLES)

Note that you can also read about the value of hollows for wildlife in a CSIRO book entitled [Tree Hollows and Wildlife Conservation in Australia](#) by Philip Gibbons and David Lindenmayer. It is no longer in print but can be purchased as an e-book.

This Powerful Owl delights in nest hollows!



A Special Sighting



Tailed Emperor, *Polyura sempronius*

Photographed by John Prats at Audley on March 5th, this butterfly is large by Australian standards, with a wingspan of some 75(♂)–85(♀) mm. It is uncommon but widespread and it is found in northern and eastern Australia, where it occurs predominantly in the warm and subtropical coastal regions. It is a resident species where its food plants, certain legumes (Mimosaceae and Caesalpineaceae) and Kurrajongs, are native.

It did expand into NSW in the 1970's but as yet it is not permanently established so this evidence of breeding in Sydney is significant.

It is always worth checking on these sightings. They tell us much about changing distribution patterns. Behind that there lies a story of our changing world.

NEW LAND FOR HEATHCOTE NATIONAL PARK

'Heathcote National Park gained an additional 6.9ha of land worth \$2.6 million today, NSW Environment Minister Mark Speakman announced.

The land comprised seven blocks purchased from private owners and government agencies by the Department of Planning & Environment's Office of Strategic Lands.

"This addition to Heathcote creates more public space for the community to enjoy and will help to protect our native wildlife," Mr Speakman said.

"Heathcote National Park has been a place of recreation for generations, and I'm pleased to see it growing so future generations can also enjoy it."

Mr Speakman said the NSW Government was committed to improving and protecting the state's national parks, which now covered more than seven million hectares across NSW.

The additional land would simplify the national park's eastern boundary, Mr Speakman said. It would also assist with weed control, simplify fire management and help with management of illegal rubbish dumping and unregulated vehicle use within the park.

Member for Heathcote Lee Evans said the additional land was a win for the community. "Heathcote National Park is a well-used public space and a vital sanctuary for native flora and fauna," Mr Evans said.

NSW Department of Planning and Environment acquired the land to protect bushland and boost open space.

The transfer of land was gazetted today.³

That was the wording of an official media release issued on April 29th 2016. As yet we have not seen a map of this addition

Activities

Tuesday 24th May	Bola Creek – Walumarra Track
Monday 13th June	Walk with Mal January
Tuesday 14th June	Woronora River – Scouters Mountain
Thursday 30th June	Bundeena – Little Marley via Jibbon Head
Sunday 3rd July	La Perouse to Clovelly
Sunday 24th July	Engadine Royal NP: Engadine - Audley - Uloola Falls – Karloo Pool – Engadine

For details contact Brian Everingham .

³ <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/MinMedia/MinMedia16042901.pdf> April 29th 2016