



NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW  
*protecting nature through community action*

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NEWSLETTER NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC  
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**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. These meetings are now held on either the 1st or 2nd Wednesdays of the month, except when this coincides with school holidays

**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. An interesting evening is guaranteed and supper is provided. 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. Now held on the 4th Wednesday night every second month, depending on public holidays.

**The next meeting is April 18th**

## Our Branch

The NPA offers members over 1000 free midweek and weekend activities a year including bush walks, canoe trips, bike rides, biodiversity surveys, bird watching, and family trips. Activities cater for all levels of fitness. Easy/short walks, day bushwalks, overnight bushwalks, week bushwalks, educational walks,

## Walks/Activities

**Branch Talks** (contact Peter Vaughan for details, at [peter17vaughan@gmail.com](mailto:peter17vaughan@gmail.com) )

18 Apr                      Citizen Science underwater and the case for a Sydney-wide marine park  
The waters around Sydney are world renowned for their natural beauty, almost 600 fish species have been recorded in Sydney. Martin Puchert and Lou de Beuzeville are amateur SCUBA divers, underwater photographers and citizen scientists. Hear about their involvement in the Reef Life Survey which monitors the biodiversity of underwater life around the world, including Sydney. They will also talk about the case for the first Sydney-wide marine park.

27 Jun                      Birds and wildlife of Florida: Guest speaker Gary Schoer will share stunning photos from his recent trip to the USA where he got up close and personal with wetland birds and wildlife in some remote wildlife refuges. Gary will also share tips on wildlife photography, and give hints on possible photo gear purchases for visiting your next wild place. This is also the night of our AGM.

26 Sept                      People power in the Powerful Owl Project.  
The Powerful Owl Project is a citizen science project that provides a conduit for the community to learn about and get involved with owl and habitat conservation actions in the urban environments. Project Officer Beth Mott will share what we have learned about urban Powerful Owls in the last seven years, and what we can do to help keep them in our urban environments

28 Nov                      Georges Riverkeeper: managing an urban river in a rapidly changing urban landscape – implications for our bushland

For close to 40 years the Georges Riverkeeper (former Georges River Combined Councils Committee) has represented the interests of member local government councils in managing the Georges River.

Today the Georges River catchment is at the forefront of Sydney's rapid urban expansion and the Georges Riverkeeper program is proactively altering its strategy to manage a liveable urban river while protecting the vital bushland of the river's source, mouth and foreshore corridors.

Tony Wales from the Georges Riverkeeper will talk about the recent history of the program and plans for the future.

## Walks:

(Contact Brian Everingham for details at [brian.everingham@gmail.com](mailto:brian.everingham@gmail.com) )

March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Minnamurra to Kiama
March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Kiama to Gerringong
March 31 <sup>st</sup>	Carrington Falls
April 6 <sup>th</sup>	Dharawal National Park
April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Scouters Mountain, Heathcote National Park
April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Faulconbridge to Springwood
May 9 <sup>th</sup>	Fire Ecology in Royal
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Manly to North Head via Shelly Beach

And do keep an eye out for Short Walks notices where there will be more events added.



Members walking the Red Hand Cave Circuit

## **WESTERN WALKWAY OPENS IN MALABAR HEADLAND NATIONAL PARK**

The time: mid-1990s. The place: a patch of bush, south of Maroubra Beach, adjoining the Anzac Rifle Range and backing on to suburban housing. Four cul-de-sac streets point their stubby fingers expectantly into the bush. “This is better than the Royal!” I exclaimed to myself as I walked through the heath. There were some tracks worn in various places, punctuated with burnt-out car wrecks. Unfortunately, the land is zoned for housing.

Fast forward to Saturday 17 February, 2018. The Mayor of Randwick, Councillor Lindsay Shurey (long-term member of Friends of Malabar Headland, Greens Councillor) formally opens the walkway in the 17 hectare section of MHNP, known as the Western Section, in the presence of hundreds of local residents. Friends of Malabar Headland have received an official invitation.

What happened in the interim?

In August 1987, the Western Bushland was included on the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission.

Car wrecks were removed and fencing put up in 2001, with a fire-break between the fence and the 1960s and 1970s home unit blocks.

FoMH had advocated vigorously over sixteen years to have the bush rezoned as “National Parks and Nature Reserves”, through a campaign of raising local awareness and letter-writing stalls at community events, and promoting the beauty of the bush by giving prizes at two annual local art shows. There were numerous meetings with councillors, state and federal members, and the local Aboriginal Land Council.

It was announced that parts the Western section would be transferred on 28/2/2011 for conservation purposes from Commonwealth to State ownership, under the Environment ministry of Peter Garrett. In March 2011 Councillor Murray Matson, Greens Mayor of Randwick Council applied to rezone Lot 4 DP 809094 on the Malabar Headland from '2B (Residential B Zone)' to the current '8 (National Parks Zone)' as the first stage of the creation of a new national park on the Headland. The Commonwealth then completed remediation of the Western Bushland (principally removal of small pockets of hazardous and general rubbish.) Transfer of the Western Bushland to its new owner the State of New South Wales was made official with a handover ceremony on 2 March 2012. Declaration of the 17.7 hectares of the western section as Malabar Headland National Park was announced in the NSW Government Gazette no. 126 of 7 December 2012.

Malabar Headland National Park contains some of the last stands of a relic of vegetation once found throughout coastal areas of Sydney: Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. ESBS in the Sydney Basin Bioregion has been determined to be a Critically Endangered Ecological Community by the NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee and the final listing was published on 1 December 2017. The 17.7 ha in the western Section includes 5.5 ha of ESBS.



Since 1986 community members (later formed into an incorporated association “Friends of Malabar Headland” in 2000) worked hard and long to remove extensive infestations of bitou, pampas grass and lantana, as well as many other weeds, from the eastern, coastal section of the future park, surrounding the ANZAC rifle range. Alan Hall supervised volunteer bush care in the West since 1996. Some work was also done by contractors on the eastern edge of the Western section. The main infestations were cleared by 2004. Initially they worked with the permission of the owners, the Commonwealth of Australia. A new group took over in the West on Sundays

from November 2010. Since it became a National Park this group has worked under a Memorandum of Understanding with NPWS. Both East and West groups are still active.

Randwick Council carried out community consultation for the walkway through the western bush in March 2016, and resolved in May 2016 to go ahead with the construction in cooperation with NPWS. The funding was \$800,000 from the capital works budget and \$200,000 from the Metropolitan Greenspace grant in December 2014.

The 1.15 km walkway forms a missing link in the coastal walk which can be used instead of the of the longer 4km coastal track from South Maroubra to Malabar (Long Bay) which is closed to the public when the rifle range is in use on Saturdays, third Sunday of each month, and various weekdays. The walkway, largely a grid-style boardwalk, makes a path up and down through remarkably lovely coastal heath and woodland. The high part on the escarpment overlooks the rifle range for a splendid view of the ocean.

FoMH will continue to work to help the community to meet the challenge of caring for high quality bush so close to suburbia. The park survived informal use over many years. Ongoing problems include littering, dumping, campfires, dogs, and tramping off the tracks. We hope that with increased formal use and popularity, everyone will act in a friendly manner towards Malabar Headland.

#### References:

- <http://www.yoursayrandwick.com.au/malabarwalkway> viewed 13 February 2018
- <https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/planning-and-building/council-works-and-upgrades/major-projects/coastal-walkway-works> viewed 13 February 2018
- <https://malabarheadland.org.au/>
- <http://leptracking.planning.nsw.gov.au/proposal/details.php?rid=406>
- [http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/determinations/FDESBSCEE C.pdf](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/threatenedspecies/determinations/FDESBSCEE_C.pdf)
- <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/malabar-headland-national-park/local-alerts>

Therese Weiss 6 March 2018

## Vale Bob Walshe

It is with deep sadness but also a sense of gratitude that NPA acknowledges the passing of Bob Walshe. As stated in The Leader:

Bob Walshe, OAM, who has died at 94, has been described as an “icon” of Sutherland Shire for his tireless work for the environment and contribution in other ways to the community.

Mr Walshe is the only person to have received the Sutherland Shire Citizen of the Year award twice – in 1995 for his work on the environment and in 2001 for his writing and support for people staying healthy in mind, body and spirit as they age.

A former teacher, he was a prolific writer, and continued with a passion even as his health deteriorated in recent years.

Following a fall, he died in hospital on Tuesday night as the *The Man From Snowy River* was read to him.

Mr Walshe, who lived at Jannali, was the foundation chair of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre in 1991, holding the position for 10 years.

A quiet man with a warm personality and enormous energy, he was just as eager to help school students who contacted the centre looking for help with an assignment as he was to lead protest marches.

Mr Walshe was at the forefront in many big battles, including the protection of Towra Point from a proposed airport, nuclear waste at Lucas Heights and the “mega tip” campaign in the 1990s, sandmining, the desalination plant and overdevelopment.

In 1972, he joined with others, including Milo Dunphy, in establishing the Total Environment Centre, which he named.

In recent years, he was a leader of the First National Park movement, campaigning for World Heritage listing of Royal National Park.

Executive officer and former chair of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Jenni Gormley said, “We are all a bit shell shocked”.

“Bob was such an icon in Sutherland Shire – it’s hard to imagine the shire without him,” she said.

“Bob was involved in so many things and made a contribution in many ways.”

Ref: <http://www.theleader.com.au/story/4200756/shire-icon-bob-walshe-dies-at-94/>

If you wish to hear his voice once more here is an interview with him on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0FIZJfulfTQ>

## Spring Gully Update

This is a quick update to let you know that, based on the legal advice received from EDO NSW, the Spring Gully Protection Group will not be pursuing a challenge to the decision to grant a s153C access to an inholding license to the proposed Bundeena Coast Eco-Lodge.

Their main grievance is that the cumulative impact on the local ecology is likely to lead to significant and irreversible impacts to the critically endangered ecological community Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub including damage to the habitat of Eastern pygmy possum, red crowned toadlet and giant burrowing frog known to be in this area and which are fauna species associated with the Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub.

Legal advice however is that despite whether or not the Minister or NPWS adequately assessed these impacts, state law allows for the significant and irreversible damage to critically endangered ecological communities. Based on the case law they would need to convince a judge that these impacts are likely to cause a local extinction. This would be a difficult threshold to establish in court. In law, under s153C the Minister has the discretion to allow the license even if she is satisfied that there are significant adverse impacts to threatened species and communities.

They are not ruling out future legal challenge. In fact, it is likely that they will need to take further legal action in due course, perhaps in relation to the EPBC Act (Federal) listing of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, Coastal Upland Swamp and Giant Burrowing Frog as threatened species under the act. There are over 50 conditions attached to the license and almost 100 conditions attached to the development consent. It will be interesting to see if the proponent will be able to comply with some of these conditions.