



Eucryphia

ISSN 1037 – 2032

Number 152 – November 2017

Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson environment.
PO Box 3045, Robertson NSW 2577 www.reps.org.au

PUBLIC MEETING
Friday, 10th November 2017, 7.30pm at
the Robertson Community Hall

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
and
GUEST SPEAKER
DR KAREN GUYMER
Bushland Projects Officer,
Wingecarribee Shire Council

CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS
IN WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE

Wingecarribee Shire is a 2700km² semi-rural biodiversity hotspot within the Sydney to Canberra corridor. It supports over 472 native animal species (56 of which are endangered) and 2057 native plant species (128 of which are endangered). Fifteen threatened ecological communities are found within the shire. The *Southern Highlands Link* is an important component of the *Great Eastern Ranges* which provides the vision of landscape-scale conservation covering 3600km from Victoria to Queensland.



Dr Karen Guymer

The community of the Wingecarribee Shire values the environment, as articulated within the *Wingecarribee 2031+* Community Strategic Plan that “*Wingecarribee’s distinct and diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced*”. In addition and importantly, for the past 17 years, the majority of the community has supported a vast array of environment and sustainability projects through the collection of a special rate, the Environment Levy. Private land conservation partnerships have been an important component of the *Protect and Grow* theme of the environment levy.



Red-browed Finch – photo by Terry Dunlea

The *Private Land Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan (2014-2019)* has been implemented over the past four years, building on previous efforts. The three-tiered approach to conservation through **Habitat for Wildlife (HFW)** for urban and peri-urban residents, **Land for Wildlife (LFW)** for larger properties and the **Vegetation Conservation Program (VCP)** for high value remnants >2ha, is an approach that works for this shire. Excellent customer service through the provision of detailed property assessments and

education and capacity-building of landholders through the production of quality information resources and practical land management workshops are key elements of the programs. An emphasis on wildlife conservation, effective marketing and promotion and building strong partnerships with organisations including the NSW National Parks Association and the Office of Environment and Heritage are other elements that have helped make the programs successful.

There are approximately 54,500 ha of extant native vegetation within Wingecarribee Shire and around 2900 hectares or 5.3% is conserved in LFW agreements on private land. A goal for the next few years is to retain existing LFW properties and to grow the area conserved to 10%, in addition to brokering more permanent conservation agreements and biodiversity stewardship agreements with the recently created NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.

There are over 100 pages of environment and sustainability information at Council's web address and if you are interested go to the Environment tab and visit "Get Involved". Residents can sign up for *Wingecarribee Web* (bi-monthly) and *Wildlife Wingecarribee* (bi-annual) electronic newsletters by contacting staff. For specific information on **Land for Wildlife** and to view the five short films promoting this program visit www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/land-for-wildlife.

There are many ways residents can participate in biodiversity conservation including participating in Council or state government programs or by joining a wildlife rehabilitation organisation such as WIRES or Wildlife Rescue South Coast.

e: karen.guymer@wsc.nsw.gov.au

w: 02 4868 0828

m: 0428 286 467

ALL WELCOME

Join us for supper and a chat after the talk.
A gold coin donation would be appreciated.

'MAREMMA – YOUR GUARDIAN DOG OF CHOICE'

Report of REPS meeting 13th October 2017

REPS President Peter Glass introduced our guest speaker for the evening, Richard Woodman, known locally as 'Woody', who began with the

comment that he had expected an easier life when he retired from being a 747 pilot – until he and his wife Kirsten began doing wildlife rescue!



Woody with a Maremma

At this point Woody was upstaged by the entrance with Kirsten of the 'stars' of the evening: Norman and Titus, two of the four Maremma dogs that live on their property. Even for those in the audience who were familiar with the sight of Maremmas, large dogs with long fluffy white coats, the size of the fully grown Norman, was impressive.



Woody and Kirsten with Norman and Titus

Woody explained that in addition to the wildlife that he and Kirsten regularly cared for, they also had other livestock on their property, including sheep and goats. At one time they also had geese (which were named after musical composers including Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Could their owners have heard something in the voices of the geese that the casual listener might have missed?). After Rachmaninoff was taken by a fox, Kirsten did some research on guardian animals. They were in the process of obtaining some alpacas, which are known to be good guardians against foxes, when they spotted the farmer's Maremma dog. When

the farmer explained that it was there to help guard the alpacas, they decided to cut out the intermediate stage and go straight to Maremmas as their chosen guardian animals.

At this point Woody pointed out that guardian dogs should not be confused with herding dogs (such as Blue Heelers or Border Collies). There are many breeds of large guardian dogs that live with and protect livestock, but the most popular in Australia are:

- Maremmas – introduced from the Abruzzi region of Italy in the 1980s
- Anatolian sheepdogs
- Central Asian Ovcharkas
- Pyrenean Mountain Dogs

All breeds of guardian dog do the job well. They are floppy-eared, and see animals with pointed ears as predators to be fended off. Initially they will bark, which is often sufficient to see off would-be predators, but they will confront and attack if necessary. Overseas, predators include bears, wolves and jaguars. A single dog will protect its territory and animals successfully, but they tend to work better in pairs. In areas where there are wild dogs, which tend to attack in packs, three or four may be needed for complete protection. De-sexed dogs seem to work better.



Kirsten, Maremma and Lyndy

Maremma pups are delightful and make great pets, but it takes 18 months to two years to train them fully. Woody’s advice is to get a mature dog initially with at least some training. You can complete its training tailored to the needs of your livestock, and that dog can then help train a second, younger dog. As the owner, you need to introduce your dogs to the animals they are to bond with and guard. You need to be a leader without being too dominating, and keep a balance

between playing or socialising and guarding. You need to be there to introduce the dogs to visiting humans, so that they know not to view them as potential predators. No special fences are needed, as the dogs know their territory and rarely leave the property – except that they will jump a fence in pursuit of a fox. They can bond with and protect children, but as with all large dogs, they should not be left unsupervised with children.

You can obtain dogs from a reputable breeder, but should be wary of buying from a source where a dog’s history is unknown – Woody gave the example of a dog which had been crossbred and had a hunting gene, which made it unsuitable as a guardian animal. He and Kirsten have obtained dogs from a Maremma rescue service where dogs have been redirected from a pound to which some owners have sent them after discovering their unsuitability as pets in urban areas. (They bark at unusual noises, especially at night, and do not thrive where they cannot work as guardian dogs protecting livestock.) The rescue staff make sure they get to know the capabilities of each dog before selling it to a new owner.

Maremmas are fairly low-maintenance dogs. They have a low metabolic rate so eat less than most other dogs of comparable size, and do not over-eat. Their coats are self-cleaning and contain lots of lanolin, so don’t need washing too often even though they are white; and they don’t smell when they are wet. They are very independent dogs and can easily be trained to do what they naturally want to do. However, they can’t be trained as easily to do certain human-induced tricks.



Maremma response to orders

They don't attack kangaroos, wallabies or wombats, but will see off stray dogs, and will of course chase and kill foxes.

After responding to many questions from the interested audience, Woody was thanked with the usual flowers and wine. Peter Glass also presented a cheque, plus cash collected at the meeting, as a donation from REPS towards the running costs of Woody and Kirsten's wildlife rescue activities.



Peter Glass thanking Woody

Report by Judith and David Mee.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been my pleasure to serve as President of REPS for the 2017 year, our 27th.

A big thanks to our REPS committee of Vice President David Mee, secretary Lyndy Scott, treasurer Anne Wilson, Mike McIdrum, Dr. Allan Stiles, Helen Tranter OAM, Lynn Stevenson and Elizabeth Bennetts, for their help and support. If there is anyone who supports our aims and would like to join the committee you will be most welcome.

Our public meetings throughout the year have been well attended, starting with Alan Stephenson, our native orchid expert, at our AGM on November 11th.

At our first meeting for the new year on February 10th Joe Stammers from the Council spoke about working together to save our Koalas. The hall was packed; a most popular talk.

On 21st April our speaker was Dr. John Black AM, FTSE, FAIAST, who spoke about his research into artificial feeding of honey bees. We invited members of The Southern Highlands Beekeepers Association, who attended in good numbers.

For our June meeting the speaker was Dr. Rosemary Purdie, whose topic was "Chasing

Plants on Black Mountain, Canberra; Why updating species records is important." Rosemary was a very entertaining speaker and was accompanied by her distinguished botanist husband, Murray Fagg.

Our 11th August meeting was very different from normal. We had three speakers: Judy Fisk, Pei Wei Lim, and Christine Shipp. Judy spoke on the history of food production in Robertson, Pei Wei on the crop-swap program and Christine on the Robertson bag-swap. The hall was decorated with banners, local produce and displays. Member, Elizabeth Bennetts, organised the evening and for supper we had a variety of delicious foods, including a locally caught smoked trout.

At the meeting on 13th October we had a good friend of REPS, Richard (Woody) Woodman, speaking on Maremma dogs, which guard animals. In thanking Woody I presented him with a donation of \$250 for the South Coast Wildlife Rescue Organisation.

In August REPS was asked by the Robertson Community Information Centre Committee to submit a grant application for the completion of their project. I am pleased to confirm that the application to the Veolia Mulwree Trust for \$10,705 was successful.

In October we manned a stall for REPS and helped with flower sales at the Heritage Railway Fair.

Our publication, *Eucryphia*, continues to be one we can all be proud of, thanks to our outstanding editors, Dr Allan Stiles, Sheila McInnes, and Lynn Stevenson. The reports of our speakers in *Eucryphia* are outstanding, thanks again to David and Judith Mee.

Our volunteers at the Hampden Park regeneration project are Steve Douglas, Leon Hall and Rod Gemmell, together with Elizabeth Bennetts; we thank you. Steve and Leon have given over 25 years of continuous service to this project.

Thanks also to Helen Tranter OAM and Jane Lemann for their continued work at the Nature Reserve. We salute you.

Finally I would like to thank my wife, Lyn, for her support and help with catering for our meeting suppers.

Peter Glass November 2017

ROBERTSON ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION SOCIETY INC

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

These statements have been prepared in accordance with section 47 of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and Rule 17 of the Association's Rules.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

		\$
Current Assets		
Balance per Bank Statement	General Account	1,536.66
	Grants Account	145.19
	Investment Account	6,851.47
		<u>8,533.32</u>
Current liabilities		
	Unpresented cheques	96.80
Net Assets		<u>8,436.52</u>

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FROM 01-10-16 TO 30-9-17

GENERAL ACCOUNT

INCOME		\$	EXPENDITURE		\$
Memberships	730.00		Dept of Fair Trading		44.00
Interest	167.40		Hall hire		174.00
Donations with memberships	240.00		Printing/postage/PO Box		899.00
Donations at meetings	287.85		Other meeting costs –gifts to speaker		25.00
			Internet Web hosting/domain		34.95
			Insurance		345.00
			Membership NCC		325.00
			First aid kit		25.00
			Transaction charges		0.00
TOTAL INCOME	<u>1,425.25</u>		TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>1,871.95</u>
			Excess Income to Expenditure		<u>(446.70)</u>

Bank Reconciliation at 30-9-17 (Consolidated accounts)

Opening Balance per Cash Book	8,883.22	Balance per Bank Statement	8,533.32
Plus Excess Income to Expend	-446.70	Less unpresented cheques	96.80
Closing Balance	<u>8,436.52</u>	Balance to cash book	<u>8,436.52</u>

Anne Wilson, Hon. Treasurer

Note to the financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2017

The financial report is prepared on a cash basis whereby items are brought into account as money is paid or received, from the records of the association.

At the present time the NSW Local Land Services has a campaign in progress of fox baiting to protect our native Quolls.

The Quoll

I would like to extol
The beauty of the eastern quoll.
In faun or black with spots of white,
This creature gives me pure delight.
Slightly built, with largish ears,
There's little that this creature fears.
It moves with elegance and grace,
And has a quite exquisite face.
Our prettiest animal, you'd agree,
If once an eastern quoll you see!

Philip R. Rush.



Spotted-tailed quoll *Dasyurus maculatus*
Vulnerable in NSW

And for Christmas

NSW Christmas Bush
Ceratopetalum apetalum



Giving and receiving

Christmas
Culmination of giving and receiving
Everyone's birthday all at once
Some acknowledge another

The art of giving
Is a part of yourself
Not a response to demand
Sensitivity and knowledge of another
Mixed with the essential you
Making a unique gift
No matter if repeated

Receiving
Much harder
Wrapped in deserving
Expectations, disappointments, joy

Equality in giving and receiving
Attainable
Know yourself, others
Let them know you

Lyndy Scott



WILLIAM WOOLS' VEGETATION REPORT: some remarkable omissions.

Following my recent article about the visit in the 1860s by William Wools to The Sassafras (now Robertson) and his description of the plants he found, one wonders why two of the now most common trees were not included: Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and *Pittosporum undulatum*, both of which are now ubiquitous. Could it be that he failed to mention them because they were not present or rarely seen?

Both species are widespread away from the rich volcanic soils upon which most of the other plants in the Yarrowa Brush rely. Sassafras, Coachwood, Lilly Pilly, Possumwood, and many others only grow in the rainforest conditions of fertile soils and more moisture than most Australian habitats. Not so with Blackwood, scrubby examples of which line the roadsides further west. *Pittosporum* grows abundantly in many other places as an understory shrub or small tree. In rainforest environments, however, both grow far larger than elsewhere.

More than thirty years of study of our rainforest flora, particularly on our property but also in the district, have revealed some pertinent observations. Blackwood and *Pittosporum* seeds germinate in huge numbers on cleared land, rapidly forming closed forest dominated by Blackwood. Thirty years ago the land to the west of Mauger's Road was open paddock with just a few trees; now it is closed forest. Other examples can be noticed by comparing what now exists with what can be seen on the earliest aerial photographs taken in 1949.

At our place *Pittosporum* germinates so frequently that it is weed-like. Where once was cleared land we now see large Blackwoods only thirty years old. Being a wattle, it grows more rapidly than Lilly Pilly, Sassafras, etc. In three decades we have, however, witnessed most of the large old Blackwoods in our forest die and fall; most of the rest are showing their age and will do so soon. This is typical of wattles, which grow fast and die early, as seen with the exotic *Acacia* species that were planted beside the highway west of the Robertson village only a few decades ago. In stark contrast, no seedlings of either species can be found under the closed canopy; they seem to need bright light to germinate. They are, however, dominant on the edges of our regrowth rainforest. The slower growing species have gradually taken

their place below the canopy. Free-standing multi-trunked Sassafras may well have resprouted from below the surface, as they have been observed to do even after years of grazing and slashing. We have some examples of this on our property. Rarer species, some of which Wools mentioned, have yet to appear in regrowth.

What can be deduced? Commencing in the late 1800s most of the Yarrowa Brush was cleared for agriculture. It is likely that some steep and stony parts were left, although disturbance by farm animals was certain to have occurred. Most of the rainforest that we now see is regrowth, demonstrable by the presence within of examples of the pioneer species – Blackwood and *Pittosporum*.

What is not realised by many is that the Robertson Nature Reserve is far from pristine. Much of the northern half was cleared for a park and exotic trees, some of which survive, were introduced. The canopy of the northern part is lower and the pioneer species are more common. The southern part has not been disturbed so much, as can be concluded from the presence of some rarer tree species, however in limited numbers, and the larger size of others. Treeferns were once harvested and rocks probably removed. Were nest ferns once present? They are elsewhere.

It can be reasonably concluded that Blackwood and *Pittosporum undulatum* are not trees of mature rainforest but pioneer species that took advantage of changed circumstances. What has been observed in the forest on our property shows that, given time, rainforest without these species will return.

It also is pertinent to note that the Brown Barrels (*Eucalyptus fastigata*) that can be seen in places such as near the Showground, is also a similar pioneer species. Eucalypts, like wattles, grow very fast and, even though impressively large, these must have invaded after the rainforest was cleared. The rainforest species that are now beneath them will prevent the germination of further seedlings. Eucalypts are not rainforest trees in NSW, although there are some atypical species in the tropics. No Eucalypts are included in the authoritative book, *Rainforest Trees and Shrubs – A field guide to their identification* by Gwen Harden, Bill McDonald and John Williams. Of Blackwood in rainforests, the same volume reports that it is “common on their margins and in regrowth.”

Allan Stiles

REMAINING REPS MEETINGS 2017

Friday 10th November
AGM with speaker Dr. Karen Guymer



Friday 8th December

Christmas Party at
6.00pm in the home of
Peter and Lyn Glass,
65 Vandenberg Road,
Robertson.

Tel: 4885 1921

A finger-food plate would be welcomed.
A great opportunity to catch up with old friends
and enjoy the views over the ocean.

NEXT YEAR – 2018 Dates for your diary

Friday 9th February at 7.30pm
Dr Tom Grant, Platypus expert

Friday 13th April
Dr Simon Robinson
Disappearance of many small birds

Tentative dates
8th June
10th August
12th October
9th November AGM

CAALANG CREEK WORKING BEES

Saturday 25th November
is the next working bee, weather permitting.
No working bees in December or January

Please come and join us for as long as you are
able. Don't forget water, hat and gloves. We have
tools available, but bring your own if you can.
Caalang Creek volunteers meet at the footbridge
in Hampden Park.

Queries to Steve Douglas 4271 4957 or
Leon Hall 4888 2222.

HELP CARE FOR OUR NATURE RESERVE

1st Wednesday of each month from 9:30am -noon.
Please bring garden gloves.
More volunteers would be greatly appreciated.
Everyone is welcome.
Details: Helen Tranter 4885 1394 or
NPWS in business hours: 4887 8253.

See an update on Burrup Rock Art at
www.chuffed.org/project/save-murujuga-rock-art

REPS MEMBERSHIP

Membership is from November to November
We are having a great year in 2017. If you are not
yet a member, please consider becoming one.
Helen Tranter phone 4885 1394

CONTACT REPS

Those who are interested in supporting our aims
are welcome to join REPS. Our aim is to promote
the preservation and enhancement of the
Robertson environment. We welcome contact
with individuals and other community groups.
For further information and subscriptions please
contact:

President – Peter Glass on 4885 1921,
Vice-President – David Mee on 4885 1483
or PO Box 3045, Robertson 2577

This newsletter is named for the beautiful local
tree, *Eucryphia moorei*, known as Pinkwood or
Plumwood. The REPS logo includes a drawing of
leaves of this tree.

Articles for *Eucryphia* may be sent to the editors:
Allan Stiles, Sheila McInnes and Lynn Stevenson.
eucryphia@reps.org.au

VISIT THE REPS WEBSITE

www.reps.org.au

Disclaimer: The views expressed in *Eucryphia* are not necessarily the views of the society.