



Eucryphia

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Number 90 – June 2007

Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson Environment
PO Box 45, Robertson NSW 2577 www.reps.org.au

REPS Meeting Friday 8th June at 7:30pm at the Robertson Community Centre

Biobanking

A talk by Jaime Hilbert

Jaime Hilbert has been the Biodiversity Conservation Officer at the Nature Conservation Council of NSW since September 2006. Since joining NCC, Jaime has been campaigning actively on recent changes to New South Wales threatened species law, engaging communities in the law reforms process, and increasing general community awareness of our biodiversity crisis. Prior to joining NCC, she held various positions in park management planning, environmental education, and forest policy development.

The most controversial of the recent changes to the threatened species laws has been the introduction of “biodiversity banking” (biobanking). Biobanking is a new market-based scheme being designed to allow for the trading of biodiversity values. The government rationale for the scheme is that it will provide a systematic and consistent framework for offsetting the impacts of development to achieve an “improve or maintain” outcome for biodiversity values.

Environment groups have made it clear that the scheme, in its current form, will lead to disastrous environmental outcomes. The good news is that the scheme is not finalised and there are still opportunities to provide comment to the government on the scheme’s development and implementation.

Jaime will discuss the proposed structure of the biobanking scheme, the history of its development, environment group concerns with the scheme, and opportunities to have your voices heard on the issue.

**All welcome - bring family and friends.
Lively discussion, light refreshments.
Entry with a gold coin.**



Jaime Hilbert

Upcoming Events

Fri 8th June – REPS Public Meeting including talk ‘*Biobanking*’ by Jaime Hilbert, 7:30pm, Robertson Community Centre.

NPA Bushwalks – June 9, 23, 24; July 2/3, 21, 22, 29; August 25, 29.

Tues 5th June – World Environment Day Address by Dr Mark Diesendorf, 5:30 pm, Wingecarribee Shire Council Theatre, Moss Vale. Followed, next door in the CWA Rooms, by John Kerin, Guest Speaker at the National Parks Association AGM (7.30pm-9pm).

WATER ISSUES

By Leon Hall (President)

1. Kangaloon Borefield Update

The Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) is now about half way through their six month pumping trial involving seven production bores along Tourist Road. A peer reviewed report has been completed with information about the first month of pumping. The Federal Department of Environment and Water Resources (DEW) will assess this report as part of the information to help determine if a permanent borefield at Kangaloon requires approval under the EPBC Act. Information has also come from REPS and the Save Water Alliance amongst others.

The Federal Minister, Malcolm Turnbull (DEW) will then decide if the borefield proposal warrants a “Controlled Action” and what the controlling action/s will be, using limited Federal powers (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)). Unless the borefield proposal is stopped for some reason, the SCA will then submit their Environmental Assessment (EA) to the State Government. This is probably the last chance that the general public has an opportunity to have a say. There is usually a 30 day period to comment.

“If we could get many more interested people making submissions at this time ... then the state government may take notice”

The last time this proposal went to public consultation (to the NSW govt.) was in August 2006. A number of SCA reports were also made available then. Approximately 70 submissions were received including a submission from the Upper Nepean Groundwater Community Reference Group (UNGCRG) and one from REPS.

If we could get many more interested people making submissions this time, (comments, have your say), then the state government may take notice.

Other Eucryphia newsletters supply some background information with submissions and articles. Previous reports may be still available from the SCA.

Eucryphia issue 87 (insert) - UNGCRG submission to SCA.

Eucryphia issue 86 - REPS submission to SCA.

Other issues - 84, 85 have articles and issues 88 & 89 relate to the EPBC Act.

Previous editions of Eucryphia can be viewed or downloaded from the REPS website (in progress), www.reps.org.au. We hope to have our past articles and submissions on our website in a more easily accessible form with links to other sites.

2. Shoalhaven Update - Water Supply Transfers and Environmental Flows

People may remember the public consultation period in September 2006 on the proposed changes to the operation of the Shoalhaven Scheme. 132 submissions were received including one from REPS. Anyone who made a submission will soon receive the public consultation report. Recently the State Government has made a number of decisions in regard to this.

These include;

- New environmental flows for the lower Shoalhaven River
- New infrastructure to be built at Tallowa Dam to allow fish passage past the dam. Construction planned to commence late 2007 and to be completed by the end of 2008
- Improvement to the temperature of water released from the dam
- An upgrade for Bendeela Camping Ground and Tallowa Dam Picnic Area
- A new pumping regime to start after the emergency drought pumping regime is over
- The transfer options proposed through the highlands have been reduced to three routes (see Eucryphia 84 & 86 for background information, www.reps.org.au).

Options 3 (A&B), 4 and 5 are still being considered and also option 6 in relation to options 4 & 5.

Option 3A - a new buried pipeline 4.2 km long from glenquarry cut (or its outlet) emptying into the Nepean River (1.8m diameter, up to 700 ML per day).

Option 3B - as 3A but emptying out further down the Nepean River (7.7 km).

Option 4 - a new buried pipeline, as above, except following Tourist Road east, then down to the Avon Dam (22 km long). These pipelines need a 20 to 25 metre clearance and, for example, would have a dramatic affect on Tourist Road.

Option 5 - drilling a 3 metre diameter tunnel from Burrawang Pumping Station to the Avon Dam. An expensive option, with the capacity of 1500 ML/day and hydropower potential.

Option 6 - The Illawarra Spur pipeline. May still be considered with option 4 & 5. An 8 km underground pipeline (0.9m diameter) connecting option 4 or 5 to the existing water supply pipeline into the Illawarra water treatment plant.

The SCA will conduct further technical investigations of these three options. These investigations will include, engineering concept development, geotechnical studies, Aboriginal investigations, environmental and socio-economic studies and hydropower feasibility studies. The SCA will report back to the NSW Govt. who will decide whether to proceed or with which option (probably in 2008). An Environmental Assessment will then be prepared for the preferred transfer option.

3. Emergency Water Pipeline for Goulburn

Another recent announcement is the plan for a new pipeline from Wingecarribee Reservoir to Goulburn. This relatively small diameter pipeline will supply Goulburn with 5 ML (million litres) of water a day. The water will come from Tallowa Dam to Wingecarribee Reservoir before being pumped to Goulburn. It will also be available to assist the 430 residents of Marulan. This project may be completed in 2008. This is a small volume of water compared to Sydney's requirements.

Wombat Talk

By Helen Tranter

At the meeting on 13th April, an enthusiastic audience filled the Community Centre to hear Gaylene Parker from WIRES, assisted by Judy McMaster, talk about koalas and wombats. Gaylene has worked for many years caring for injured animals and raising young orphans. Her knowledge and expertise in this field is impressive. She is careful not to let young wombats get attached to her and so she rears two of similar age together. Special milk formula and teats must be used and at any time there may be several to be fed. Older wombats are put into a bush enclosure, away from the house, and gradually released. New techniques have allowed some radio-tracking of the released wombats.

Members expressed their appreciation of the talk and the work Gaylene is doing. A donation of \$185 was raised for WIRES and we have received a letter of thanks from them.



Koala next to Butlers Swamp, Tourist Road Kangaloon. Photo Richard Jones.

Ground orchids in autumn

By Denis Wilson

Many of us are familiar with the wonderful display of Ground Orchids which occurs in the Robertson area in springtime. I say 'Robertson area', but it would be more accurate to refer to the sandstone plateau below Robertson. This includes East Kangaloon, but also the plateaux to the south and south-east, including Carrington Falls and Belmore Falls.

The basalt soil of Robertson does not seem to favour Ground Orchids, except the rather dull "Potato Orchid", but as an offset, we do have epiphytic orchids in the Robertson Nature Reserve. All are spring flowering plants.

I have been delighted to find that in the autumn season this year, we have had an abundance of Ground Orchids flowering. The autumnal orchids are far less highly-coloured than the bright yellow, pink or stunning blues of the Sun Orchids, their spring-flowering cousins. Their shapes are quite extraordinary.



Dark Mosquito Orchid (*Acianthus exsertus*)
Photo: Denis Wilson

Also, for an enthusiast, the difficulty in finding these flowers makes the challenge of the search all the more exciting.



Turtle Orchid (*Chiloglottis seminuda*)
Photo: Denis Wilson

Cryptic flowers

To me, the hardest of the Ground Orchids to see were the Dark Mosquito Orchids, (*Acianthus exsertus*) on their fine, dark stems. Coloured in grey and purple, they do not stand out, and to make matters worse, they grow in dark shaded areas in Eucalypt forest amongst the leaf litter.

For me, the most satisfying flower to find has been the awkwardly named "Turtle Orchid" (*Chiloglottis seminuda*). I found a number of pairs of leaves on the ground before I found any flowering plants. Then I found a bunch of them (a familiar story with Ground Orchids). Most of these flowers were closed into a vertical position, which apparently indicates that these flowers had been pollinated. Finally I found a few freshly opened specimens. What a bizarre flower. They are in a group of flowers known as "Wasp Orchids" because they have a structure of glands ("calli") on the lip (labellum) which resembles an insect sitting on the flower. These plants are pollinated by male thynnine wasps which are apparently deceived into attempting to mate with the flower – a process called "pseudo-copulation".

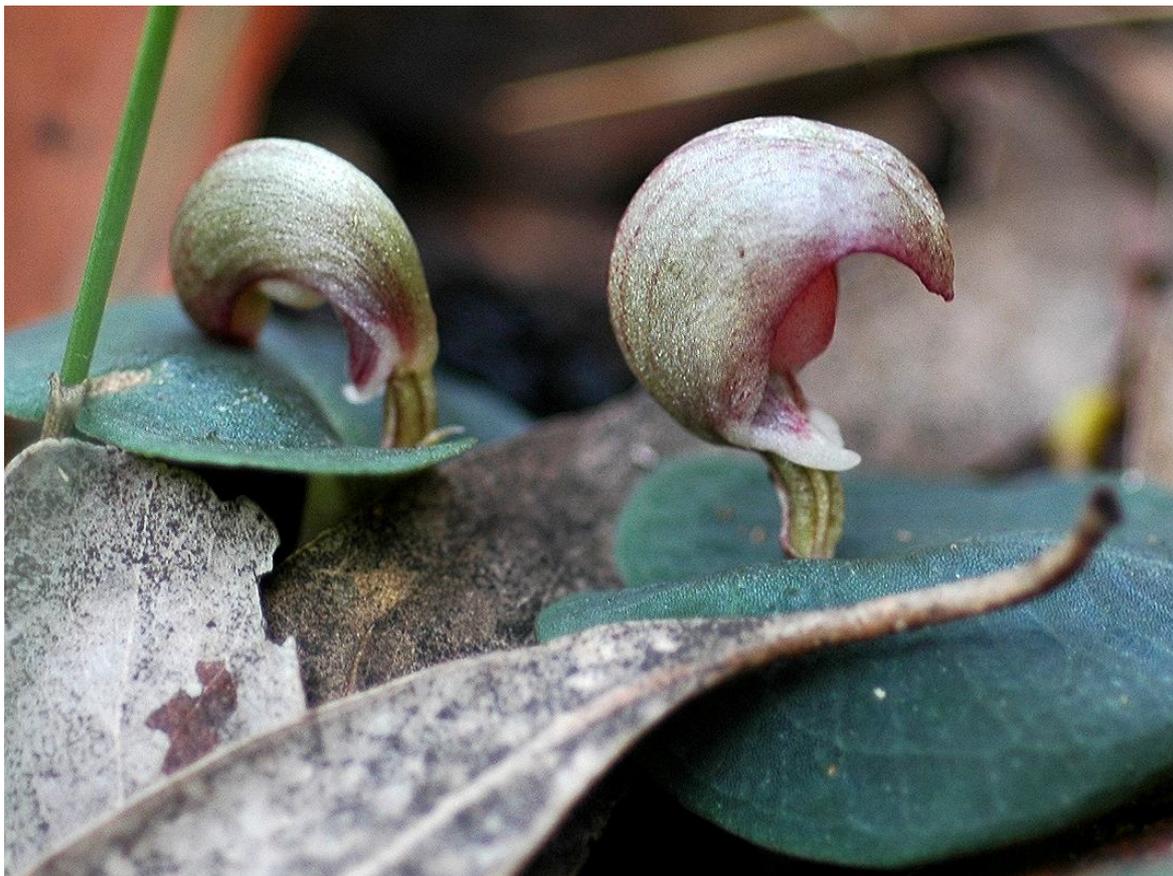
The last group of Ground Orchids I wish to write about is the group known as "Helmet Orchids" (*Corybas aconitiflorus*, or a related species).

Precisely which species these flowers are to be classed as, is currently under review by the Australian National Herbarium in CSIRO, Canberra. The first ones to come into flower this season were in a patch of *Melaleuca* scrub, growing in constantly dark and wet conditions near Belmore Falls. More typically, there is another group growing in the tall Eucalypt forests in East Kangaloon. As with many of these autumn-flowered Ground Orchids, the colours are dull, and their size small. So, one would best describe them as “cryptic”.

For me, it is the thrill of finding something which is so difficult to spot which makes the chase so satisfying, when eventually one does locate something. And, of course, when one does find a plant in flower, it is not unusual to realize that there are a dozen or more plants within a metre or so. It is a question of “getting one’s eye in”, learning to spot these little flowers. In some cases, one might suddenly find fifty or more flowers within a few square metres. What a thrill!



Dark Mosquito Orchid (*Acianthus exsertus*)
Photo: Denis Wilson



Corybas Pale (*Corybas aconitiflorus*). Photo: Denis Wilson

NPA Bushwalks

Saturday 9 June

Carrington Falls to Kangaroo Valley via Osbornes Pass

Hard, minimum 10 km, steep descent, off track. Liz Thompson 4869-1483. Contact by 7 June. Walk will involve a car shuffle.

Follow this route into Kangaroo Valley from the Carrington Falls area. This walk is exploratory and if you know the area please come along and help.

Map: Kangaroo Valley

Saturday 23 June

Lees Road to Tongarra Lane via Butter Track Pass

Hard day walk, steep descent, minimum distance of 6 km. Off track. Liz Thompson 4869-1483. Contact by 21 June.

Final section of the Highlands to Coast Walk. This walk is exploratory and if you know the area please come along and help.

Sunday 24 June

Bungonia Creek, Morton National Park

Medium day walk, on and off track. David Carmichael 4822-2466 or dtccarglbn@optusnet.com.au

Experience the delights of the Shoalhaven River, Bungonia and Jerrawa Creeks, including the famous Bungonia Slot Canyon (involves boulder hopping to negotiate) and scenic waterfalls.

Map: Caoura 1:25000

Monday/Tuesday 2/3 July

Budawang N.P. Pack Walk

Medium walk, mostly on track, undulating. 36 km. Martin Mordy 4883-6057 or mmordy@bigpond.com

Pack walk from Wog Wog car park to Bibbenluke Mountain via Corang Peak and return. The walk could have several variations, e.g. cave camp and/or a walk into Monolith Valley, subject to walkers and leader discussion. Classic Budawang scenery.

Map: Corang 1:25 000

Saturday 21 July

Historic Passes: Walsh Pass and Cox Pass

Hard, steep, minimum 10 km, off track. Jim Foran 4885-1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au

Descend Walsh Pass into Upper Kangaroo Valley, exit via Cox Pass. Map: Kangaroo Valley.

Sunday 22 July

Budderoo National Park

Grade: Medium, Limit: 8 David Carmichael 4822-2466 or dtccarglbn@optusnet.com.au

A walk in the upper Kangaroo River valley - starting at Carrington Falls. Follow Stevo's track and descend Missingham Pass then pick up track to Missingham steps. From near Steps traverse through scenic rainforest towards Carrington Falls. Exit via an unnamed pass approx 400m from Carrington Falls. Maps: Robertson & Kangaroo Valley 1:25,000

Sunday 29 July

Historic Passes: Ulrichs Pass to Brogers Creek

Hard, steep, minimum 10 km, off track. Jim Foran 4885-1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au
Walk may involve a car shuffle.

Descend this historic pass from Budderoo Plateau to Brogers Creek; exit same route or another pass or via previously positioned car.

Map: Kangaroo Valley.

Saturday 25 August

Upper Brogers Creek

Hard, minimum 10 km, steep, off track. Jim Foran 4885-1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au
Walk may involve a car shuffle.

Explore upper Brogers Creek from its headwaters at Jamberoo Mountain Road down as far as we can last. Creek crossings, steep, thick bush.

Map: Kangaroo Valley.

Wednesday 29 August

Budderoo N.P. Discovery Tour

Easy, medium plateau walk, mostly on track, 5 km min. Denis Wilson 4885-2725 or 0413-056-431

See interesting plants and birds guided by local naturalist and photographer, Denis Wilson. Visit Osterhaus self sufficient property with hand built house surrounded by Budderoo N.P. with great cliff top scenery. Not to be missed. Bookings essential. Access restrictions apply. 10:00am assembly.

Map: Kangaroo Valley.

World Environment Day Address

Tuesday, 5th June 2007 at 5.30pm

Wingecarribee Shire Council Theatre,
Moss Vale

Dr. Mark Diesendorf

A leading sustainable energy analyst and campaigner

Dr Mark Diesendorf teaches and researches on sustainable energy and greenhouse gas reduction strategies at the Institute of Environmental Studies, University of New South Wales. He is an expert on renewable energy sources and ecologically sustainable development. He has presented the case for sustainable energy on ABC national radio and television programs, such as "Difference of Opinion", "Four Corners" and "The Science Show". He is author of the new book *Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy* (UNSW Press, 2007). Dr Diesendorf will speak for 45 minutes and take questions from the audience for the next 45 minutes. Come prepared. Invite all your friends.

Abstract

Global warming from the human-induced greenhouse effect is accelerating. To avoid some of the worst consequences, Australia and other developed countries must reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases by 30% by 2020 and by at least 80% by 2050. This will involve a complete transformation of our energy system. Neither coal with the capture and burial of carbon dioxide emissions nor nuclear power can make a significant contribution before 2020. Fortunately, sustainable energy - that is, efficient energy use, renewable energy and natural gas as a transitional fuel - can do the job, provided all levels of government cooperate. The barriers to sustainable energy are neither technological nor economic, but rather are the political power of the big greenhouse gas emitting industries.

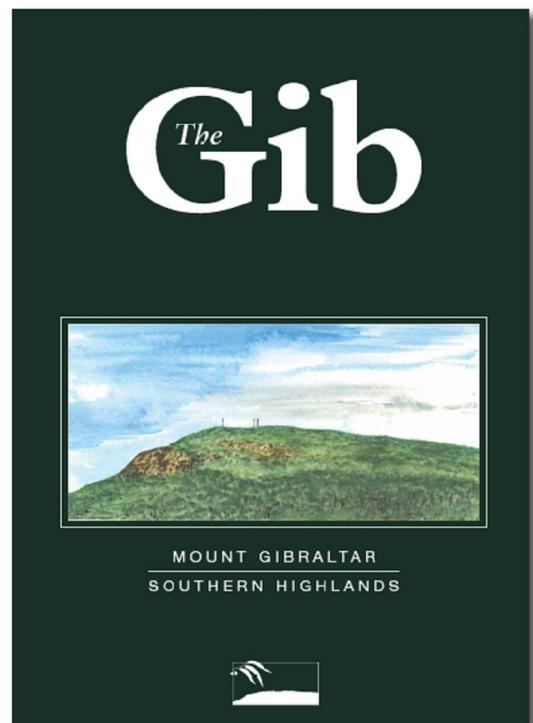
For more information, contact David Tranter on 4885-1394.

**A CANWIN EVENT
(CLIMATE ACTION NOW,
WINGECARRIBEE)**

.....
This address is followed, next door in the CWA Rooms, by John Kerin, Guest Speaker at the National Parks Association AGM (7.30pm-9pm)

The Gib

This book is now available from the Council and some local bookshops at rrp \$49.95. There are now only a limited number available due to the interest in this outstanding community project. It is a scholarly study of the social, industrial and natural history of Mount Gibraltar presented in an attractive and readable 264 page, full colour hardback book.



Poetry Corner

Edited by Jonathan Persse

Poetry Corner will return in the August edition of *Eucryphia*.

In the meantime, please send a poem- your own, or one by someone else which you have enjoyed reading - on the environment, to me, Jonathan Persse, Sallyhill, Burrawang 2577.



Caalang Creek Working Bees

Caalang Creek Working Bees are held on the last Saturday of each month from 9:00 am onwards subject to the weather. Please come and join us for as long as you are able.

The next Working Bees will be on the 26th May and the 30th June

Meet at the Community Centre. If in doubt due to inclement weather or for more details, please contact Sandy Morse on telephone 4885 1905. Please bring along a hat, gloves, shovels, watering cans etc.

Help Care for Our Nature Reserve

**1st Wednesday of each month
10:00am to noon**

All welcome. Please bring garden gloves. For further information, phone Helen: 4885-1394

Without fear or favour

Seventeen years ago REPS was formed to protect and enhance the Robertson environment. Over the course of that time the membership of the Society has increased to over 100 members drawn from all walks of life and all political persuasions. The Society has engaged in a number of campaigns in its short history, taking political action unhesitatingly when needed. However, in deference to its members and to maintain its credibility in the longer term, REPS has consistently abstained from favouring one political party over another, encouraging its members to take whatever individual action they may choose as is their independent right and knowing that at heart they are motivated by the same aspirations as REPS.

- David Tranter

REPS Meetings for 2007

Please make a note in your diary of the following dates for this year's REPS Public Meetings. These meetings will include a talk that will be publicised in the Eucryphia prior to each meeting.

Friday 8th June

Friday 10th August

Friday 12th October

Friday 9th November (Annual General Meeting)

Welcome New REPS Members

Mary Kidner, Nic and Daphne van Oudtshoorn

Contact REPS

All those who are interested in supporting our aim - 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:

The Secretary – Jill Keft
PO Box 45,
Robertson NSW 2577

or President – Leon Hall on 4888 2222

We are always looking for new contributions to Eucryphia. If you have an essay, article, poem or photograph that you would like to share with other REPS members please contact Lynn Stevenson email: ponto2@optusnet.com.au

All contributions will be most welcome.

Visit the REPS website

www.reps.org.au
