



Eucryphia

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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 12th October 2007 at 7:30pm
at the Robertson Community Centre**

IBIS: Aussie Battler or Urban Pest ?

A talk by John Martin

John has a Diploma in Natural Resource Management (TAFE NSW), Bachelor of Science - Environmental (University of Wollongong) and is currently undertaking a Masters degree in Biology at UOW. He has experience in pest species management, bush regeneration, ecology of urban birds and ecology of island populations.

John is currently involved in research on the Australian White Ibis. Over the past thirty years cities appear to have become drought refuges for the white ibis. With the future health of inland wetlands no longer able to be taken for granted, responsible management of urban populations is imperative.

John's talk will focus on a new radio-tracking study which is discovering some surprising facts about the lifestyle of the Australian White Ibis.

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



Upcoming Events

Fri 12th October – REPS Public Meeting including talk 'IBIS – Aussie Battler or Urban Pest?' by John Martin, 7:30pm, Robertson Community Centre.

Fri 9th November – REPS Annual General Meeting

Fri 14th December – REPS Christmas Party. Details to be announced in Nov Eucryphia No. 93

NPA Bushwalks – Oct 7, Nov 3

REPS 2nd Motion to the NCC

Following is REPS second motion to the Nature Conservation Council of NSW for their Annual Conference in October (see prev. issue for climate change motion).

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE NCC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MOVED BY: Robertson Environment Protection Society Inc.

MOTION:

That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW oppose the Kangaloon Borefield proposal on nature conservation grounds.

BACKGROUND NOTES:

The NSW Government is investigating groundwater extraction as part of their Metropolitan Water Plan with the groundwater to be pumped when overall dam levels fall below 40% full. It is envisaged to extract 15GL per year from 3 separate areas (45GL/yr. total). These areas include Kangaloon, Leonay near Emu Plains and Wallacia. The Kangaloon area is located at the southern end of the Metropolitan Catchment Area (MCA), just north of Robertson in the Southern Highlands of NSW. This specially protected MCA is jointly managed by the Sydney Catchment Authority and the NSW NPWS. The SCA proposal is to have more than 60 large diameter production bores pumping 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 2 to 3 years with an estimated 5 to 7 year recovery period.

This catchment area has remained in almost pristine condition due to restricted access, the high water table and previous management for conservation. The area has become a refuge for large numbers of endangered plants and animals and supports extensive tracts of intact Endangered Ecological Communities including Southern Highland Shale Woodland and Montane Peatlands and Swamps. The Australian Government have declared the Kangaloon Borefield proposal a controlled action due to the likely significant impacts on federally listed threatened species and communities (sections

18 & 18A EPBC Act.). Also the Upper Nepean Groundwater Community Reference Group oppose the proposal at Kangaloon (submission to SCA, 2006).

The proposed pumping will lower the water table from near the surface to over 60 metres below, breaking any connection with groundwater dependent ecosystems in the area (for potentially 10 years or more). Many creeks will become a lot drier due to a lack of natural discharge (base flows) from this unconfined aquifer. Canopy trees in the area will lose any access to this groundwater potentially affecting whole ecosystems.

The proposed pumping will lower the water table from near the surface to over 60 metres below, breaking any connection with groundwater dependent ecosystems...

This natural area is also under threat of fragmentation and degradation due to infrastructure and increased access. The introduction of power to this area will dramatically increase the potential for bush fires (arcing of wires), especially with the general drying out of the natural landscape from pumping. The introduction of pests, weeds and diseases due to increased access into this restricted MCA is also of concern.

Recent discoveries of endangered species in the area highlight a lack of previous surveys. A full EIS needs to be carried out (over years) before any pumping degrades this important and diverse catchment area and so that appropriate management is forth coming. The Kangaloon aquifer water now naturally feeds the Nepean Reservoir, especially in times of drought, and maintains the natural ecosystems of the area.

One reason for the use of groundwater was to put off building the desalination plant, which is now being built. An advantage of building the desalination plant could be to save this unique and diverse conservation area from degrading and unsustainable pumping.

ACTION:

That the NCC show their opposition to this Kangaloon Borefield proposal by writing to, and lobbying the relevant Ministers.

That the NCC help to inform the general public, especially Sydney Water water users, of the proposed degradation of their catchment area and of their right to comment with the imminent release of the Environmental Assessment.

AUTHORIZING OFFICER:

LEON HALL

President, Robertson Environment Protection Society - 7 September 2007

Poetry Corner

Edited by Jonathan Persse

Man affects the environment in many ways: not least by waging war, with dramatic consequences for himself and for the natural world.

In these two poems we see something noble, the appeal to courage and to patriotism, and something horrific, the destruction wrought by war.

In Act III, Scene I of Shakespeare's Henry IV, the young king is rallying the English in their long-running conflict with France. He is speaking to his soldiers, ready with scaling ladders for the attack on Harfleur. Here are lines 1-17.

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
Let it pry through the portage of the head
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height! On, on, you noblest English!

Shakespeare, Henry IV, Act III, Scene I

This poem was written by Jack Schmidt, a Year 10 boy at Shore, the grandson of members of REPS, Jack and Lynette Skipper.

INNOCENCE UNDER FIRE

The sleek majestic creature stands tall
Upon the muddy mounds of blood and pain.
Around it men of courage die and fall,
There's trodden earth entangled in its mane.

Gunshots crack, whilst red rockets squeal and scream.
Mud flies high, explosions leap like fountains;
The creature stays despite the bloody stream.
The lolling gas hides the silvery mountains.

A cursed bomb explodes beneath the beast,
Sharp fragments fly and pierce the perfect coat.
A chilling moan, for moments war has ceased
The men below cringe at the hellish note.

A creature as innocent as at birth
Is now a mangled heap within the earth.

Jack Schmidt

National Parks Discovery Program

Discovery is the National Parks and Wildlife Service's state wide, self-funding environment education program.

A variety of interesting walks and activities for both children and adults are offered in the South Coast Region during the October school holidays

For information and bookings please contact Fitzroy Falls Visitor Centre on (02) 4887 7270.

General information is available at

www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Click on the butterfly icon for the Discovery program.

NPA Bushwalks

Sunday 7 October

Starlight's Track Circuit.

16 km medium. 510 m descent/ascent. Joan Lowe 48612996. If interested, please phone before Thursday 4 October.

Sunday 7 October

Historic Passes: Down Parish's Pass, up Denners Pass Morton NP

Exploratory, assume 10 km, off-track, steep, wet, bushy. Jim Foran 4885 1081 or Jim.Foran@ThaiLang.com.au. CMA Map: Kangaroo Valley 1:25,000.

Saturday 3 November

Lake Alexander to Forty Foot Falls and return

10 km easy. Joan Lowe 48612996. If interested, please phone before Thursday 1 November. Map: Mittagong

Rubbishing the Countryside

By Denis Wilson

We in the Southern Highlands are lucky to live surrounded by beautiful scenery, creeks, cliff lines, and waterfalls.



Rubbish dumped illegally at the Mount Murray Powerlines, overlooking Macquarie Pass. Photo taken 18 August 2007.

People who treat the bush like this do not deserve to live in such beautiful surroundings.

Wake up, Australia. This is a disgrace.

It will take a mind-shift before our fellow Australians learn to do better than this. Clean Up Australia is on the right track, but when you see evidence like this, you realise just how far we still have to go.

Illegal dumping of rubbish can be reported to Vince Emmerick (a Robertson resident) of Council's Regional Illegal Dumping Squad on 4868 0504.

UNGCRG Update

By Leon Hall

At a recent Upper Nepean Groundwater Community Reference Group meeting (24 September) we were informed that a three month pumping test at Stockyard Swamp (north of Mt. Murray) would start in October with 3 large diameter production bores (2 new) and monitoring bores. A one month pumping test report will be given to the Commonwealth Government (DEW) as part of the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Please consider making a comment about this proposal and the associated EA report. There will be a 30 day period to comment.

It is anticipated that the EA will be available for public comment in late January or early February 2008. The UNGCRG will be making a submission about the borefield proposal to the Department of Planning. Please consider making a comment about this proposal and the associated EA report. There will be a 30 day period to comment.

The groundwater proposal now needs 70 bores (prev. 50-60) to extract the required amount of water (at greater spacing, maybe 750m). Planning for infrastructure is progressing, including looking at access routes for power and buried water pipes.

Butterfly Talk in August

By Leon Hall

It was another wintery night when we had our first introduction to spring with a talk about butterflies by Steven Brown called 'A Fluttering Passion'. Steven, a local of the area, is extremely knowledgeable about both our local species and exotics. His excellent photography complemented this attention-holding subject.

He began his talk with a recent expedition to the Torres Strait where his group discovered a new subspecies of butterfly, ('a 3 year detective story'). This species employs ants to care for their caterpillars and pupae. The caterpillars supply the ants with amino-acids and sugars. The ants in return supply protection for the caterpillars. Other butterfly species also use this method. The local butterflies include the Silky Hairstreak, a rare species with limited distribution (Mittagong area, also seen at Belmore Falls and East Kangaloon) and the Imperial Blue. Both these species employ ants and the caterpillars can feed on Blackwood trees (*Acacia melanoxylon*).

The talk covered a broad range of topics including the different butterfly species, their physiology, habits and life cycles.

A series of slides showed the changing colour and shape of an emerging butterfly from the pupa form. The pictures of this home-reared butterfly showed its exquisite detail and vulnerability at this time. A compound is pumped into the wings to harden them and the proboscis curls up.

Some of the other local species mentioned were the Macleay's Swallowtail, a green butterfly whose larvae feed on sassafras, the Jezabels with red and yellow markings (larva- mistletoe) and the skippers (native grasses, lomandra).

This talk was a great insight into the life of the butterfly and introduced the audience to the identification of some of the local species. Thank you Steven for sharing with us your great knowledge and enthusiasm in this talk.

Echidna Crossing

By Denis Wilson



This Echidna decided to go for a wander along the footpath of Hoddle Street, Robertson (the Illawarra Highway) on what was probably the busiest day of the year, for road traffic in Robertson - the Sunday of the APEC long weekend (in Sydney). There were cars everywhere.

On that account, several of us decided to move this creature away from the busy road, to the back of Hampden Park.

Subsequently I was advised by Barry Lee, the Minister from St John's Anglican Church, that there had been an Echidna as a more-or-less permanent resident at the back of the Church property. Perhaps that Echidna had developed a wanderlust (or other lust). Anyway, it was clearly very unsafe where it was, so we moved it about 200 metres away from the road, beside Caalang Creek, in a place where there was good "cover" for it. It would be no problem for it to find its way home again, without crossing any busy roads.



REPS Meetings for 2007

There are two public REPS meetings remaining this year. Each meeting will include a talk that will be publicised in the Eucryphia prior to each meeting.

Friday 12th October

Friday 9th November (Annual General Meeting)

Caalang Creek Working Bees

Last Saturday of each month 9:00 am

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.

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

**Visit the REPS website
www.reps.org.au**

Eucryphia via email

Thank you to those members who have advised me of their preference to receive Eucryphia via email.

If you would prefer to receive Eucryphia electronically please let me know by emailing your contact details to ponto2@optusnet.com.au

Receiving Eucryphia by email reduces production costs and allows you to forward the newsletter to any interested people. Also photographs are available in full colour!

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

Thank you to those members who have provided articles and photographs for Eucryphia during 2007.

If you have an article, poem or photograph that you would be happy to share with other REPS members please contact Lynn Stevenson at email: ponto2@optusnet.com.au

All contributions will be most welcome.
