



# *Eucryphia*

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Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson environment.  
PO Box 3045, Robertson NSW 2577 [www.reps.org.au](http://www.reps.org.au)

**YOU ARE  
ONE IN A  
THOUSAND!**

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS  
KOALA CONSERVATION PROJECT  
PRESENTS

# **KOALARAMA ROBERTSON**

FRIDAY • 12 APRIL 2019 • 6-8.30PM

ROBERTSON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SOCIETY MEETING  
ROBERTSON COMMUNITY CENTRE  
CAALONG STREET  
ROBERTSON

**RSVP BY 8 APRIL 2019**

ROBERTSONKOALARAMA.EVENTBRITE.COM.AU  
USE **PASSWORD "KOALA"** TO BOOK YOUR TICKET

OR CALL: MARGOT LAW ON 4868 0888

[WWW.WSC.NSW.GOV.AU/KOALAS](http://WWW.WSC.NSW.GOV.AU/KOALAS)

See over for details



# KOALARAMA

12 APRIL | 6PM - 8:30PM  
ROBERTSON COMMUNITY  
CENTRE

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**6PM**

ARRIVE

**6:15PM - 7PM**

PRESENTATION ON KOALA ECOLOGY,  
BEHAVIOUR AND HABITAT

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

HOW LANDHOLDERS CAN HELP

**7PM - 7:30 PM**

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

**7:30PM - 8:30 PM**

SPOTLIGHTING FOR KOALAS

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BYO TORCH, WARM CLOTHES AND  
STURDY SHOES

FAMILIES WELCOME

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The Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project is  
proudly supported by the NSW Government Saving Our  
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Environment Levy



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**REPORT OF TALK AT REPS MEETING  
FRIDAY 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2019  
THE BARREN GROUNDS-BUDDEROO  
'QUOLLIDOR' PROJECT**

President Peter Glass introduced the guest speaker, James Dawson, who is the Senior Team Leader, Ecosystems & Threatened Species, in the Illawarra Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Premier & Cabinet.



James Dawson  
Photo by David Mee

James began his presentation with a video of spotted-tailed quolls in the Budderoo and Barren Grounds National Parks. It showed how these animals are being monitored in order to understand more about their numbers, their range, and also their health and breeding behaviour. They are caught in traps, weighed and measured, then micro-chipped. In order to aid identification and tracking, the quolls are also photographed before being released, as the spot pattern on their flanks is unique to each animal.

James explained that there are 4 species of quolls in Australia:

- the western quoll, found in Western Australia
- the eastern quoll - surviving only in Tasmania, until recently reintroduced to the mainland at Jervis Bay
- the spotted-tailed quoll, which is the Australian mainland's largest carnivorous marsupial and is listed as a threatened species

- the northern quoll, whose habitat and numbers have been drastically reduced by the presence of cane toads.

There are also 2 species of quolls in Papua-New Guinea.

Other threats to the survival of quolls are road kill, predators such as foxes, protective owners of chicken coops, and bushfires. Fox-baiting is being used in national parks, and owners of adjoining land are encouraged to do the same. The 1080 baits are based on a certain Australian poison pea (*Gastrolobium*) species which native animals have a high tolerance of but foxes and dogs do not.

In the wild, quolls live for about 3-5 years only. They can climb extremely well and will climb trees to get away from foxes. Females range in size from 1 to 2.5 kg, with an average of 2 kg, while males range from 1.5 to 4 kg. The young are born extremely small, like jelly beans, and are then carried around by the mother in a rudimentary pouch. They have spots on their skin even before their fur grows. When they outgrow the pouch the mother places them in dens until they can survive independently. Their diet is very generalised and includes possums, rabbits and potoroos.

The Quollidor Saving our Species Project aims to improve the resilience and size of the Barren Grounds-Budderoo spotted-tailed quoll population, by creating a 'Quollidor' – a connected vegetation corridor that links the quoll's habitat from the South Coast escarpment forests through the Metropolitan Special Area water catchments across to the southern Blue Mountains. Priority sites for study include the Northern Tablelands, Kosciusko National Park, and the Budderoo and Barren Grounds National Parks which form a critical linkage area between the Snowy Mountains and the Blue Mountains. The co-operation of landholders whose properties adjoin the national parks is being enlisted to extend and link the vegetation corridor and enable quolls to move more freely from one area to another. A copy of a map showing how adjoining properties can help link the Barren Grounds, Budderoo and Morton National Park habitat areas, plus some beautiful photographs of spotted-tailed quolls, was published in the February 2019 edition of *Eucryphia*.

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Infra-red cameras have been placed in a grid pattern of 1-kilometre squares across the Barren Grounds and Budderoo national parks, with 29 in the Robertson area, to help discover the distribution, abundance and home range of spotted-tailed quolls. In the first year of the project (2016/7), an estimated 27 quolls were observed, while 46 were known to be alive in 2017/8. They have not been observed so much in the Belmore Falls area.

Maps of quoll habitats have been created by comparing past records with more recent observations. Spotted-tailed quolls can survive in a variety of areas of native vegetation, as long as the area is of sufficient size to support their large home ranges. One animal was photographed in many locations over a period of 18 months, showing a range of about 3,000 hectares. Females tend to stay in their main habitat, and hand over their home ranges to female offspring, while males often venture much further afield, and have occasionally been observed in areas as distant as Dubbo and Broken Hill.

Monica, a Ph.D. student, is currently researching genetic variation in quolls to find out what genetics can tell us about the connectivity and history of the local quoll population. She caught nine very healthy females in 8 days, showing that there is a thriving population in the Southern Highlands, although they are very secretive and good at avoiding observers.

The talk was followed by a period of questions and answers. James noted that the Robertson rainforest patches, including the reserve, are too small in area to support quolls. He also explained that quolls occupy an ecological niche similar to otters, badgers and weasels in other parts of the world.



Peter Glass then thanked James for his 'quollity' presentation.

Report by Judith Mee

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### VALE JOHN DORMAN



Photo: Anne Reeves

We were very sorry to hear that John passed away last December. He and Rona were regular attendees at REPS meetings and we will miss John's environmental contributions. Both were strong supporters of the need to protect our wonderful natural areas from over-development and poor planning. John became president of NPA NSW from 1972 to 1978, when the NPA was redefining its role after the creation of the NPWS. After moving to Bundanoon in 1995 John continued his NPA activities as president and vice president of the Southern Highlands Branch as well as contributing his wisdom and experience to State Council for as long as he was able. He made an enormous contribution to NPA NSW over a long period of time. He had strong opinions, thought strategically, and had the will and skills to act decisively in the interests of the natural environment and the NPA. In a gesture typical of John, he donated his body to science so there was a memorial service at Bundanoon instead of a funeral.

Our thoughts and well wishes are with Rona, a very valued past member of REPS.

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## THE KOALA

The koala (not a type of bear)  
Was once seen nearly everywhere  
Throughout the forests of our eastern states.  
But, sadly, now it's on the wane,  
Such numbers we won't see again  
Unless it, remarkably, proliferates.

In earlier years we had occur  
Mass slaughters for koala fur,  
The hunters' bullets many millions felt.  
Six hundred thousand of them died  
In 'twenty-seven, when Queensland tried  
An open season on koalas for their pelts.

The koala, when it's fully grown,  
Is quite content to live alone,  
Curled on a branch not far from the ground.  
It keeps away from strife,  
In this, its solitary life,  
Except when mating season comes around.

And then, if you've koalas near,  
Some fearsome bellowing you'll hear  
As males proclaim their presence in the night.  
And if you've never heard before  
The male koala's snorting roar,  
It will, most likely, give you a fright!

The mother bears a single child,  
(But rarely twins out in the wild)  
While father disappears to live alone,  
For, knowing that his job is done,  
It's back to sleeping in the sun,  
While mother raises baby on her own.

The baby will with mother stay  
Inside the pouch until another day  
It is too big to comfortably remain.  
It then rides round on mother's back,  
Until, six months along the track,  
The age of independence it attains.

How fortunate it is that we  
Have wild koalas still to see,  
Not just in zoos or as a furry toy.  
But we must take especial care  
To see koalas will be there  
For future generations to enjoy!

Phillip R Rush.

Poetry Corner is edited by Peter Glass.

Original poems are welcomed.  
Please contact Peter on 4885 1921.

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## ROBERTSON RAINFOREST PLANTS

### *Helicia glabriflora*

This shrub or small tree is a member of the Proteaceae family. It is not common in the region and, some years ago only one plant growing beside Vandenberg Road was known in the Robertson district. Except for some at Minnamurra, no others were known to occur until hundreds of kilometers north. Diligent searches by the late Anders Boefeldt revealed just a few more on the plateau, one just across Vandenberg Road, two further west, and some on Knight's Hill. Seedlings near an older plant have lately been seen. It has not yet been reported in the Nature Reserve. Propagations given decades ago by Anders are thriving.

Some plants are currently flowering. The flowers can be seen to be mostly in pairs.



The leaves are alternate and their shape is variable, some having smooth edges, others with a few serrations, while some have many serrations with sharp points. Because of this, could some plants have been mistaken for another species? Bearing this in mind, more may yet be noticed in Robertson rainforests. One distinguishing characteristic is that the veins on the underside of the leaves have looping connections.



Leaves with smooth margins.



Underside of leaf a without serrations showing looped veins.



Leaves with a few serrations



Underside of a serrated leaf. Note looped veins.



Bark

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**FIVE-LEAVED WATER VINE**

*Cissus hypoglauca*



This common woody vine is now in fruit in our rainforests. It has compound leaves that usually bear five leaflets and climbs by tendrils that are opposite the leaves. It is in the family Vitaceae that includes grapes.

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**REPS RESPONSE to draft document entitled:**

**“Draft Conservation Advice for Robertson Rainforest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion.”**

This advice is being prepared by a group in the ACT called The Threatened Species Scientific Committee, set up under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of*

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the Commonwealth Government (EPBC Act) (s.266B). The advice is directed to the Minister for the Environment, to be submitted in 2019. A short time window was allowed for public comment, and some members of the REPS committee responded.

**Here is the original invitation to comment:**

“For response from you or other appropriate officers in your organisation before 13 February 2019.

The national Threatened Species Scientific Committee invites comments and submissions on two proposed listings for nationally threatened ecological communities under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The Committee is undertaking scientific assessments for the:

**1. Illawarra-Shoalhaven subtropical rainforest of the Sydney Basin Bioregion ecological community.**

Proposed Conservation Status: likely to be Critically Endangered.

Distribution: from the Royal National Park to the Milton-Ulladulla district, south of Sydney, New South Wales; and the

**2. Robertson Rainforest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion ecological community.**

Proposed Conservation Status: at least Endangered  
Distribution: from Kangaroo Valley to Mt Kembla, in the Southern Highlands of NSW, with most patches occurring around Robertson.

Invitation to comment: The EPBC Act requires the Threatened Species Scientific Committee to undertake public consultation on nominations that are prioritised for a full scientific assessment. The Committee particularly seeks comments on whether the nominated items are eligible for listing and whether the proposed conservation status for each is appropriate. Any other relevant comments and information about these communities also are invited.

Draft assessments (known as a conservation advices) have been completed and are now available for public comment and can be downloaded from the Department of the Environment and Energy’s website at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/two-ecological-listing-assessments-2018>

The Committee welcomes the views of experts, land managers, Traditional Owners, other stakeholders and the general public on the draft Conservation Advice for the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Subtropical Rainforest ecological community and the draft Conservation Advice for the Robertson Rainforest ecological community.

Questions are available online on which the Committee particularly seeks advice. These may help frame any comments you wish to provide. However, feedback to the Committee does not need to be limited to these questions – the Committee welcomes, and will consider, any constructive comments received about the ecological community and its eligibility for listing as nationally threatened.

We are contacting a range of people and organisations about the opportunity to provide comment on this proposed listing. The Committee also appreciates any help you may be able to provide to spread news about the proposed listing and opportunity to comment through your networks, for instance through any newsletters, bulletins and meetings, or please forward this email as you see appropriate to relevant officers or groups.

If you have any questions about the draft assessment or the process for listing threatened ecological communities under national environmental law, please contact the Department of the Environment and Energy using the contact details on the website, or reply to this email.”

**REPS Response description:**

You will note that there are two draft documents, the first being the Illawarra rainforest, proposed to be classified as critically endangered, and the Robertson Rainforests, proposed to be classified as endangered. These classifications are already existing under New South Wales state classification. REPS only provided comments for the Robertson Rainforests.

The draft document for the Robertson Rainforest is 42 pages long. It is a very comprehensive document and is not reprinted here. It provides the aims of the document, leading to a classification by the minister. The draft gives descriptions of the location and physical environment. The document describes vegetation and fauna, included in the various tables at the rear of the document. The document notes that much of

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the remaining rainforest on private land is in small patches, and notes the difficulty of preserving such patches from weed infestation and animal grazing. The document is worth reading in detail, especially if you are the custodian of such a patch.

In conjunction with Allan Stiles, a response was drafted. It consists of a general introduction to REPS, its aims, its publications, its field work and other activities. It describes the Yarrawa Brush booklet. Following that, an itemised list was supplied with extra information and corrections to their document, including updates to flora and fauna lists.

Two email replies were sent, the main one and a second, the update, to include further information on reptiles supplied by Ray McGibbon. Both were sent before the above deadline date. An email has now been received from the Canberra team acknowledging our submission and thanking REPS for it. Further, a request was made by them to visit us at Robertson to inspect the Rainforest Reserve and other local examples of remnant patches. That visit will take place on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. A group will drive from Canberra, arriving around 10:00am and leaving at 4:00pm to return. We are planning to visit the Rainforest Reserve initially in the morning. After a lunch (probably at the Pie Shop) we will visit Peter and Lyn Glass's property to inspect their rainforest gully and other interesting rainforest patches on their property. Time permitting, we could also visit other places for which suggestions are invited.

David Mee, Vice President, REPS.

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### **CAALANG CREEK WORKING BEES**

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 at 9:30 am.

The next working bee will be on Saturday 27th April at 9:30am onwards, subject to the weather.

Later these will be on 25th May and 29th June.

There will be no working bee in July.

Steve Douglas 4271 4957 or Leon Hall 4888 2222

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

### **HELP CARE FOR OUR NATURE RESERVE**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month from 9:30am -noon.

Meet at the South Street Carpark. Please bring garden gloves. More volunteers would be greatly appreciated. Everyone is welcome. It is not necessary to stay for the full time.

Contacts:

\* NPWS in business hours: 4887 8253.

\* Cathryn Coutts at: [cathryn.coutts@gmail.com](mailto:cathryn.coutts@gmail.com)

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### **REPS MEMBERSHIP**

Membership is from November to November. We have had a great year in 2018. If you are not yet a member, please consider becoming one.

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### **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. Further info and subscriptions please contact:

President – Peter Glass on 4885 1921,

Vice-President – David Mee on 4885 1483

or PO Box 3045, Robertson 2577

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Articles for *Eucryphia* may be sent to the editor, Allan Stiles. [eucryphia@reps.org.au](mailto:eucryphia@reps.org.au)

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### **FURTHER MEETING DATES FOR 2019**

#### **Friday 12 April Early start 6pm & spotlighting**

Joe Stammers, the Environmental Projects Officer at the Wingecarribee Shire Council, will give an update on work with local koalas.

#### **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June**

John Marsh from Merimbula will be speak on Echidnas. If you google "Potoroo palace echidnas" and click on the video you will see him in action.

#### **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August - TBA**

#### **Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October - TBA**

#### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November – AGM and presentation**

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### **VISIT THE REPS WEBSITE**

[www.reps.org.au](http://www.reps.org.au)

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