



Wallumetta

The Newsletter of Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna
Preservation Society Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Recently the Federal government announced the five low-emissions technologies that it will prioritise for investment. Hydrogen is a technology at the centre of these priorities, but Mark Diesendorf in his article published in The Conversation, 23 September 2020 asks the question, 'Is hydrogen a Trojan horse?'

In the Government's announcement, "clean" hydrogen does not only refer to hydrogen produced using renewable energy. The government says hydrogen can be produced cleanly with coal and gas if resulting carbon is captured and stored.

Mark states that 'Carbon capture and storage is an expensive, energywasting technology. Despite federal governments having spent more than \$1.3 billion on the technology, a commercially viable plant has not come to fruition.'

The government proposes to establish Australia's first regional hydrogen hub, at a cost of \$70 million, to "scale-up demand and take advantage of the advancements in this low emissions, high powered source of energy". Almost all the proposed locations for the hubs are close to coal mines or gas field, suggesting the government is planning on hydrogen from fossil fuels. This would lock in fossil fuel use for decades and is completely at odds with what's needed to address the climate emergency.

Renewable energy cannot directly replace fossil fuel use in activities such as air and sea transport and industrial processes such as steel-making. It can be used to produce "clean" hydrogen and ammonia, which will decarbonise those areas.

Converting energy from one form to another form is inefficient and hydrogen should only be used where there is no other clean form of energy for air and sea transport and certain industrial processes. Hydrogen is not clean energy if it is produced via fossil fuels and should not be used to justify further investment in the fossil fuel industry.

The Society will be urging the Federal government to prioritise hydrogen produced from renewable sources.

Frank Breen,
President

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Clean Energy Funding:

“The Federal Government can’t keep their dirty hands off clean energy funding.”

– Ellen Roberts, for the Solar Citizens Team

Scott Morrison recently announced an alarming move that will force investment in expensive and polluting fossil fuels. There will be an overhaul of the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC)...

Environmental groups have been campaigning for the Federal Government to re-fund ARENA, and the government announced it would receive \$1.62 billion. BUT... ARENA is being required to support and prolong usage of fossil fuels by using this funding to prop up gas and unproven carbon capture and storage.

This comes at the expense of both energy users and taxpayers. Gas is not a renewable energy. **Renewable energy is more economical than gas.** Renewables already supply over 30% of power across Australia - comparing favourably with gas, which currently supplies only 5% of Australia’s energy needs and is best suited to direct industrial usage. So the move undermines Australia’s transition to a clean energy future.

Renewable energy is not yet able to be used in a commercial way for air and sea transport. However, a project fossil-free steel manufacturing plant (so called "green steel") has been constructed in Sweden which leads the way for further use of renewable energy in industries currently reliant on fossil fuels.

Investing in carbon capture and gas also diverts funding away from genuine clean energy projects. For example, funding in Australia’s CSIRO solar energy research is being further reduced. This isn’t the first time the Federal Government has tried to keep the fossil fuel industry happy by diverting clean energy funds.

The Government can’t pull off this dirty coup without passing legislation. These changes can be blocked in Parliament if we get enough of the other parties and independents onside. But we must act fast to get ahead of Taylor rushing through the legislation in the next Parliament sitting weeks.

Angus Taylor will be piling the pressure on all parties, especially the cross bench, to rush this legislation through. Parliamentarians from all parties need to know that they have the support of the community if they oppose spending clean energy funds on dirty fossil fuels.

Online Rally on Monday 28th September: Solar Citizens joined forces with several organisations including the Australian Conservation Foundation, Greenpeace, GetUp! and the Uniting Church.

Opening Speaker was Suzanne Harter of the Australian Conservation Foundation. She reminded us that:

- Australia still has no emissions target, and
- Carbon capture and storage is unproven, expensive and risky technology.

Professor Andrew Blakers then made the following points:

- Australia is a leading country with physical and intellectual resources for renewable energy.
- South Australia, whose consumers pay less for energy than NSW or Victoria, relies on wind and solar for 60% of its energy needs.
- Solar and wind energy generation will help stop land clearing.
- It is becoming increasingly possible to replace oil and gas for transport needs.
- To be honest and transparent, the government should separate gas from ARENA and CEFC.

Independent MP Zali Steggall and cross-party MPs also attended. Ms Steggall said:

- ARENA has directed funds to many innovative projects, but funding is dwindling.
- \$1.9 billion is insufficient; it should support emerging and future technologies, and not be used to prop up the gas industry. New gas projects are not needed.
- Battery technology is expected to be fully viable by 2030.
- See Zali’s website: <http://www.climateactnow.com.au>

Mark Butler M.P. (Australian Labor Party) supports extra funding for universities and CSIRO research to address efficient energy supply and clean energy for transport.

Adam Bandt M.P. (Australian Greens) reiterated that a plan is needed to phase out coal, but the present government wants to support and maintain the coal industry.

A petition with over 70,000 signatures was handed over, asking to keep ARENA and the CEFC clean.

For more information see <http://www.solarcitizens.org.au/>

We are urged to phone and write to:

- our local members of parliament (for the Ryde - Hunters Hill area this is John Alexander M.P.),
- Angus Taylor M.P. Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, and
- Anthony Albanese M.P. Leader of the Australian Labor Party

Koalas at Brandy Hill are in the political spotlight right now

While the NSW Coalition Government is tearing itself apart over koala planning policies, there's an important patch of bush that needs help. Hanson Heidelberg Cement Group operates a quarry at Brandy Hill, near Port Stephens. They have applied to clear another 50 hectares (100 football fields) of core koala habitat to double its production rate.

This forest is an area of regional koala significance and breeding koalas were recently seen in the area. NSW Minister for Environment and Energy Matt Kean publicly supports its preservation.

But in July, the NSW Government approved the clearing.

Now the decision is sitting on the desk of the Federal Environment Minister, Sussan Ley.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) is asking members to contact Minister Ley and ask her to save this koala forest and protect NSW koalas from extinction. NCC knows that Minister Ley cares about koalas and that, right now, she's considering new expert evidence that the site is breeding habitat and an important connecting corridor for koalas.



*Koala on a property near Brandy Hill quarry.
Photo: Marina Neil, courtesy of the Newcastle Herald*

Minister Ley has deferred her decision until October 13, giving a short window of time to show her the community wants her to save this koala forest and protect NSW koalas from extinction.

Society members are urged to write individually to Minister Ley, your local member (for the Ryde - Hunters Hill area this is John Alexander MP) and Anthony Albanese, leader of the Federal Opposition.

Win this bright Yarnknit* rug!

Tickets \$2 each / 3 for \$5

available at the Field of Mars Visitor Centre.

* **Hand-knitted and kindly donated to RHHFFPS by the Holy Spirit Yarnknit Group of North Ryde.**

Raffle will be drawn at our next Annual General Meeting.



WHAT'S IN A (SCIENTIFIC) NAME: 9. FRUITY FAMILIES

Oleaceae, the Olive family, includes wild plants in several continents. Believe it or not, privet, jasmine and ash are all genera (plural of *genus*) within this family. The type genus, which gave its name to the family, is *Olea*; this is not modern pseudo-Latin, but is the genuine Latin word for “olive” (tree or fruit). *Olea europaea*, the European olive, received its scientific name from the pioneer taxonomist Linnaeus. The tree has been cultivated for thousands of years and is an introduced plant in Australia. Pressing for oil is one of the oldest food-processing technologies.



Notelaea longifolia, Mock Olive, Large Mock-Olive or Large-leaved Olive, is a family member common in our area. The genus name consists of the Greek word *elaia* (Latin spelling *elaea*), “olive”, preceded by Greek *notos*, “south”; the southern-hemisphere olive, in other words. As for the species name, *longifolia* simply means “long-leaved”. There are naturally occurring varieties or subspecies, whose nomenclature has varied.

The family **Elaeocarpaceae** also has a name based on the word for “olive”; *karpos* is “fruit” in Greek, so the family name means “olive-fruited”. Their fruits do somewhat resemble olives, even if the rest of the plant is different.

Elaeocarpus reticulatus, the Blueberry Ash, is a common local member of the family. Its species name means “netted” or “reticulate”, referring to the pattern of the prominent veins on its leaves.

The family name of **Pittosporaceae** is based on that of the type genus, *Pittosporum*, meaning “sticky-seeded”, from *pitta*, ancient Athenian Greek for “pitch”, and *sporos*, “seed”. Their seeds have a resinous coating.

Pittosporum revolutum, Yellow or Rough-fruited Pittosporum, another familiar local plant, got its species name from Latin *revolutum*, “turned back”, referring to the margins of its petals. The fruits were eaten by indigenous people.

Billardiera scandens, Apple Berry or Apple Dumplings, belongs to the Pittosporaceae family. Its genus name is nothing to do with billiards; it commemorates yet another long-forgotten botanist, Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière, who visited Australia in 1791-93 on the voyage in search of the ships of La Pérouse. The species name simply means “climbing”, which it does very strongly. Its small, torpedo-shaped fruits are nothing like apples, except in colour, a Granny Smith green when unripe. As they ripen they turn from purple to yellow, and are said to be very tasty. In the ABC’s Organic Gardener magazine for August/September 2020, Helen McKerral includes them in a feature on climbing food plants, and informs us that when unripe they can be eaten roasted.



NB: Please don’t try any bush food unless you are absolutely sure you have identified it correctly and know it is safe, or have direct advice from an expert.

We thank Society member Dr Alfred Vincent, Honorary Research Associate, University of Sydney, for the “What’s in a (Scientific) Name?” series of articles.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD OF MARS

Ducks, Ducklings & Dog Disaster

Since the Field of Mars Reserve / Wildlife Refuge was recently declared a Wildlife Protection Area Category One, we expect members of the public to recognise that it is unacceptable for our native wildlife to be threatened by domestic animals there. Indeed, over recent months there had been an apparent decline in the number of dogs being seen within the Reserve. However...

On Saturday 22 August around 9.15am a young golden retriever dog arrived off leash and ran into Buffalo Creek near the Visitor Centre, splashing around and chasing the ducks and ducklings. The result was that both parent ducks took off and flew upstream, leaving the ducklings alone with the dog. A few minutes later a group of walkers came by over the bridge and headed up the Warada Track; one turned out to be the dog's owner as the dog bounded off after them.

High up along the Warada Track they encountered two Society members who told them the dog should not be there and asked them to put it on leash and take it out of the Reserve... so some time later the dog reappeared (still off leash) and went back into the creek, this time chasing some other ducks, ibis and the little pied cormorant. When the owner appeared, we told her it had scared the ducks away from the ducklings, but it took another minute or so until she finally got the dog to come out of the creek and put the leash on it, as clearly she had no control.

And then, on the Sunday afternoon, another dog came along to chase the one remaining family of ducklings. Its owner put it on a leash and we believe the second family of ducklings survived. Some of about the right age have since been spotted in the creek near the Monash Road bridge.

These incidents were publicised widely in the TWT newspaper and in social media. The East Ryde, Gladesville and Mayor of Ryde Facebook pages generated a significant sympathetic response. Along with our letters to the City of Ryde Council, these encouraged positive action from Council staff who are now employing wildlife monitoring cameras in the Reserve and have increased both signage and ranger patrols.

But the issue is not resolved. Signs are very clear at the chain gate to the Reserve behind the Field of Mars Cemetery, yet in the photo (taken on 17 September) you can see dog faeces on the Fire Trail. There are more on other tracks as a few dog owners ignore the rules. Some signs are often removed, presumably by dog owners, but we ensure that these signs are quickly replaced.



And More Troubles for our Waterbirds...

On Friday 25 September, the Hills Bushcare group spotted the little pied cormorant with a piece of plastic rubbish around its neck – presumably picked up while it was diving in the creek. Attempts to capture the bird will stress it out so we are hoping the plastic will not disable the bird too much and eventually work loose.

Anyone who sees this or any other creature in distress is advised to call Sydney Wildlife Rescue. Phone 02 9413 4300; website <http://www.sydneywildlife.org.au/>

Bushcare

All sites are back to normal, latest being Monash Road where the volunteers returned last Tuesday to find an unimpressed nesting butcher bird.

At Cemetery Creek 2, our presence has been noticed by the staff of Northern Cemetery and the contractors who are installing more crypts to the eastern corner of the cemetery. We chatted with them and are hoping that they will be mindful of the necessity to avoid damaging the Reserve.



The Kennedy Street site behind the Visitor Centre has an extra volunteer: “Roast”, the brush turkey, who has built a mound near the Environmental Education Centre carpark. He industriously scratches weeds all the way along to his mound. Damage to native plants appears minimal.

A fallen tree near the Visitor Centre site (alongside the Warada Track on the flat grass area) has now been tidied up. There are many weeds to be removed but this area seems to be improving.

Visitor Centre

We still see large numbers of people passing by, with the daily count often over 100. Many come to the Centre for information but usually remain out on the veranda because, in accordance with our Covid Safe Procedures, visitors must write down their contact details if they venture inside. We often replenish supplies of track notes and maps; over 200 maps were taken in two months.

Gardens at the Visitor Centre

The Rod Wallace Garden and the RHHFFPS memorial garden have been largely restored after the damage reported in the August 2020 Wallumetta. Whippersnipped plants in the Rod Wallace Garden were replaced with *Hakea sericea* and *Einadia hastata* seedlings supplied by The Habitat Nursery.

Poppie, a Cub Scout from 1st East Ryde Scout Group, has contributed several hours' work in the memorial garden. She removed weeds including some very long Pampas lily-of-the-valley runners and helped plant



Photo used with parent permission

edible native “bush tucker” plants including Mat rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), Blueberry lily (*Dianella revoluta*), Warrigal greens (*Tetragonis tetragonoides*) and Native mint bush (*Prostanthera rotundifolia*). Meanwhile, staff of the Environmental Education Centre agreed that we may use the woodchip pile dumped nearby in error, so we hope to have this garden in good shape ready for the City of Ryde Spring Garden Competition (Native & Habitat-friendly category).

Field of Mars Plan of Management

City of Ryde Open Space Plans of Management are being reviewed and updated. For most of the City of Ryde, generic plans are being made. Sportsgrounds and natural areas are differentiated. Stand-alone plans are being done for areas of significance, including Field of Mars. Some land is City of Ryde and some is crown land; the latter requires sign-off by the NSW State Government. The process is now underway for the Field of Mars Plan of Management with consultants doing:

- Fact finding
- Review of previous Plans of Management
- Liaison with stakeholders, to develop first draft
- Sign-off by the minister
- Public exhibition - comments - adjust - finalise.

A Master Plan is developed for the overall concept of land use and lasts 20 years; Plans of Management are in accordance with Master Plan and last 5-10 years. They include action plans; available money to be spent on environmental protection, access, signs, equipment, etc. This must all be in accordance with E2 land zoning and Wildlife Refuge requirements.

The new Field of Mars Plan of Management should be finalised by 30 June 2021.

EVENTS

Landscape and Built Heritage Enthusiasts Gather



Members and guests socially distant at the Centre

The barbecue lunch at the centre was prepared by our indefatigable Phillip. Two visitors, not members of either group, attended. Phillip stated,



Eying off the kookaburras eyeing off our repast

On Wednesday 15 July 2020 Phillip Ward, John West and I, as members of the Society, hosted 20 members and guests of Ryde District Historical Society at the Visitor Centre. This was the second open air meeting held by RDHS during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.



A delicious lunch

'One was the granddaughter of the Mansfields who owned a farm in Wellington Rd until sometime in the 1930s, most likely called *The Cascades*. This property became Foote's electrical component factory which I recall looking out over from my home in Higginbotham Rd (across the Buffalo Creek gully). Ultimately it was a council works depot'.

Article and photos contributed by Lyn Langtry

2020 Annual General Meeting

On 15 August 2020 the Society held its open-air, socially-distant AGM in front of the Visitor Centre. Reports previously circulated were spoken to and discussed and a treasurer's report was presented. Despite the unusual conditions, the industry and conviviality of those gathered was unchanged.



Coming Events

SPRING BIRD WALKS

On Sunday 18 October our resident bird expert Cathy Goswell will be leading COVID-safe birdspotting walks at 8.30 and 10.30 a.m., starting from the Visitor Centre. The route will be planned to facilitate social distancing while keeping everyone within hearing range.

Numbers will be limited to ten in each group; first come, first served. To register, email Alfred (alfred.vincent@bigpond.com) or leave a message on 9879 6067. Please give your contact phone number, and state the number of persons registering and your preferred time.

Do not turn up without registering, as there probably won't be any spare places.

Bring water, a hat and closed shoes.



Join Jo Taranto from Good for the Hood, resident of Ryde and supporter of RHHFFPS, as she explains her involvement with the popular ABC series, which has explored the community's role in tackling emissions from energy, transport and food.

<https://events.humanitix.com/fight-for-planet-a-bennelong-s-climate-challenge-2020-10-13>

Not a member? Would you like to join us?...

<p>New members always welcome!</p> <p>Financial members enjoy active involvement in our Society's activities to protect natural environments both locally and beyond, and receive "Wallumetta", our bi-monthly newsletter with news about environmental issues and events.</p> <p>Please pay by direct transfer to our Commonwealth Bank account: RHHFF PS INC GENERAL ACCOUNT 062171 - 0090 1574. Include your name in the transaction description, and email your name, address and phone number to rhffps@gmail.com</p> <p>Alternatively, you may pay by cash or cheque: Complete and hand in this form with payment in a sealed envelope at the Field of Mars Visitor Centre or post to: RHHFFPS, PO Box 552, Gladesville 1675.</p>	<p>RHHFFPS Membership Application:</p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Phone:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Annual Membership:</td> <td>Discount if receiving newsletter by email:</td> <td>\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Individual</td> <td>\$ 25 (-\$ 10)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family</td> <td>\$ 45 (-\$ 10)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concession</td> <td>\$ 20 (-\$ 10)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Students/Pensioners)</td> <td>Donation</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Total Payment:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic transfer</p>	Annual Membership:	Discount if receiving newsletter by email:	\$	Individual	\$ 25 (-\$ 10)		Family	\$ 45 (-\$ 10)		Concession	\$ 20 (-\$ 10)		(Students/Pensioners)	Donation	
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