



RHHFFPS

Wallumetta

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

Website: <http://rydehffps.org.au/>

Member of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC)
and founding member of the Powerful Owl Coalition

No. 296

OCTOBER

2022

We acknowledge the Wallumedegal, original inhabitants of the Ryde – Hunters Hill area.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Members will be aware that the Field of Mars Reserve includes salt marsh which is a coastal ecosystem in the upper [coastal intertidal zone](#) between land and open [saltwater](#) or [brackish water](#) that is regularly flooded by the tides. Salt marsh has been listed as Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) in NSW.

Following the recent salt marsh workshop conducted by the City of Ryde Council the Society organised an inspection of the salt marsh zone in the Field of Mars Reserve. We invited an officer from the Department of Primary Industry (DPI) and our knowledgeable friends from the Environmental Education Centre (EE Centre) to view and discuss the state of these zones. The DPI is a responsible NSW Government agency in respect of salt marsh and our friends from the EE Centre have expert knowledge of the salt marsh in the Reserve.

We noted that the salt marsh is under threat from the increased sedimentation filling Buffalo Creek following storms. This is in addition to the impact of rising levels of salt water entering the creek attributable to climate change.

Despite attempts to restrict sediment flowing into Buffalo Creek over many years, preventing such flows is an intractable problem. Efforts to mitigate these should continue and a strategy developed to protect the salt marsh, taking into account the likely impact of rising sediment levels and the rising saltwater levels.

Our inspection provided some very useful insights and we will continue to discuss the threats to the salt marsh with the DPI, the Environmental Education Centre and City of Ryde Council to develop the most environmentally sensitive approach for protecting the salt marsh in the Reserve.

Frank Breen,

President

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COMING EVENTS:

Nature Conservation Council (NCC) Picnic Day – Sunday 16 October 2022

People power made the federal election a climate election. It was a time of celebration for nature. To keep that momentum going, the NCC is planning a state-wide picnic day to bring people together to celebrate nature, grow the movement and talk about what we need to do next.

Groups and organisations have been invited to co-host a picnic in their area, and we will be doing just that! **We plan to celebrate around the Visitor Centre** with:

- bush walks,
- displays,
- fun activities for all ages,
- refreshments and a barbecue lunch.

The day will be about celebrating the natural beauty of our local area. And we will talk about what to do to win positive change, protect nature and take urgent action on climate change, especially coming up to the state election next March.

Sunday 6 November 2022, 8.30am and 10.30am:

Bird Walks by Cathy Goswell of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club.

Children aged 5-12 are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Booking is essential as numbers are limited: please phone or leave a message for Alfred on 9879 6067 or email alfred.vincent@bigpond.com, mentioning your preferred departure time.

Members' End-of-Year Get-Together – Sunday 4 December 2022 [Tropical Tree Day]:

Members, with family and friends, are invited to join us from midday at the Visitor Centre, when we will light the gas for a barbecue + salad lunch and chat.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE FIELD OF MARS

PAST EVENTS

Wildflower Walks – Saturday 6 August 2022

A group of 15 came on the morning walk, and 10 attended in the afternoon. All were impressed by the displays of *Boronia*, *Dillwynia* (egg&bacon) and *Pimelia* (rice flowers), among others. Along the Sand Track we were treated to a fairly close look at a swamp wallaby who didn't seem to mind our group stopping to take photos!

Grasses and Groundcovers – Saturday 3 September 2022

It was a very wet day and only 13 attended this workshop. After viewing and talking about 50 grasses, vines and groundcovers to be found in the Reserve, the group took a leisurely stroll outside and identified several plants around the mown areas. In particular, we discerned the difference between *Bindii* and the native *Cotula*. At the suggestion of one attendee, we intend to display some of the workshop material at our NCC Picnic Day.



Photo by Robin DeCrespigny

His old mound under the pittosporums by the Warada Track has been taken over by a new turkey we named Syd... because he is the subject of a Sydney University study:



BUSHCARE

Working eastwards from behind 36 Finch Avenue, the Strangers Creek bushcare group has made significant improvement to that area of bushland. And the Monash Road group has continued to eliminate weeds on the western front. At Cemetery Creek 2, work continues on recovery of the site after damage by the excavator, and by the building of a new crypt backing on to the Reserve.

At the Visitor Centre / Warada Track site (pictured above) we are assisted by the new resident turkey Syd, who eats weed seeds and scratches weeds and debris into his mound. Strangely, an unknown person whipper-snipped the open area within the site, spreading Ehrharta, Bidens and other weed seeds. Although it may have been well-intentioned, this action was very unhelpful!

VISITOR CENTRE

More visitors are appearing now the weather is more pleasant. In addition to our regular weekend roster, we managed to open for the special holiday on Thursday 22 September.

Over the past two months our volunteers intercepted 6 dogs brought illegally into the Reserve. This number is about average over time, and dog walkers usually turn back without fuss when we advise them of the No Dogs rule. But... one dog appeared recently without its owner and started chasing the ducks and other wildlife in the creek. We have been advised for this and any other dog-related issue, the correct action to take is a hands-off approach: phone the City of Ryde Council on 99528222 (a 24/7 answering service) and ask for a ranger to come and deal with it.

JOIN OUR VISITOR CENTRE TEAM! to keep the Visitor Centre open 9am-5pm on weekends and public holidays. Our roster of 4-hour shifts is negotiated according to members' availability. No specialised skills are required, and Alfred happily provides the training needed. Most visitors' questions are answered in the maps and range of free leaflets we have available.

WILDLIFE

With spring comes new life, and young animals are appearing. In Buffalo Creek near the Visitor Centre, a pair of dusky moorhens are being very protective of their three chicks, and a family of 7 teal ducklings has appeared.

Kunzea Track walkers reported seeing a swamp wallaby with joey in the pouch.

And the male brush turkeys have been working on their mounds. This year, Roast built a new mound behind the Education Centre building.

WILD KINDY

Society member Kelly Roberts conducts Nature Play sessions, mostly held on school holiday dates.



We recently asked Kelly to share the news of this work...

Wild Kindy offers nature immersion programs for children 2-12 years in both the Field of Mars Reserve and Bluegum Park, Chatswood. Following the ethos of forest schooling, we promote an outdoor childhood. We endeavour to educate children on their local environments, bush safety, connect with nature and develop life qualities such as resilience, confidence, problem solving, and environmental stewardship through our nature play programs. For more information on Wild Kindy visit: <https://wildkindy.com.au>

PLOGGING

The bushland in the Field of Mars Reserve is normally in an unspoilt condition but, unfortunately, there are careless people who do drop rubbish in bushland. Anyone who walks through the Reserve will appreciate that there is seldom any rubbish here. This is because bush carers and walkers (including visiting schoolchildren) often pick up rubbish and dispose of it correctly.

The habit of picking up as you walk along bush tracks is called “plogging” – a word which was coined in 2016 when the practice began in Sweden: it combines the Swedish words “*plogga*” (pick up) and “*jogga*” (jog). Most ploggers take their rubbish away but, for when there are too many items or they are too large, the rear of the Visitor Centre serves as an unofficial collection point.

Another source of rubbish is all the debris that washes down the creeks during heavy rain periods, and Society members often safely collect this by using our scoops and bags. Recently, Sandy Larson collected along Buffalo Creek in the lower end of the Reserve, and completely filled three large rubbish bags. We have progressively disposed of these.

All Society members and friends are encouraged to contribute to keeping our bushland clean, but please do so in a safe manner, using gloves and (if being more adventurous) the appropriate equipment available at the Visitor Centre .

VALE SYLVIA GREEN

We mourn the recent passing of Sylvia. She left us peacefully on 4 September 2022, after a sudden complication of a lengthy illness.

Having served with RHHFFPS from 2014 to 2020 as a volunteer at the Field of Mars Visitor Centre, Sylvia left a much loved and enduring legacy. Sylvia enjoyed working with the society volunteers and made many friends. She performed volunteer shifts as often as possible and was well regarded by the volunteers and visitors. Being a very clean and meticulous person, she could be relied on to keep the VC in spotless shape for the rest of us. Unfortunately an injury and subsequent ill health forced her to suspend volunteer work about 2 years ago.

Sylvia will be sorely missed.



*Sylvia recently:
smiling until the end.
Photo by Sandy Larson*

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR RAINBOW LORIKEETS?



there have been reports of rainbow lorikeets inexplicably dying in Ryde and elsewhere. Some clues to the cause are in this article, published by Stuart Layt in The Sydney Morning Herald, July 2021...

A bizarre disease is paralysing rainbow lorikeets, leaving experts in a flap and calling on the public to help them solve the mystery.

Lorikeet paralysis syndrome renders the birds nearly immobile and unable to fly or eat, resulting in many birds dying from the condition.

Scientists sounded the alarm because the disease seems to have only started affecting the birds relatively recently, but has quickly ramped up, with thousands now being found dead or severely affected in the past few years.

University of Sydney School of Veterinary Science Professor David Phalen said he and his colleagues had ruled out several possibilities for what might be causing the disease, and are closing in on a likely culprit.

"We ruled out the common things that might cause the symptoms that these birds have - we know it's not a toxin produced as a result of pollution, it's not a toxin associated with pesticides or anything like that," he said. "We also know it's not an infectious disease."

Professor Phalen said that narrowed it down to a plant toxin, which fit the seasonal nature of the disease - the birds were primarily found with the paralysis between October and June.

That suggested the birds were feeding on the flowers or fruit of a plant that caused them to get sick - but researchers did not know which one.

"We've worked up a profile, almost like for a human being who's done a murder," Professor Phalen said.

"We think it's a plant confined to a portion of the east coast of Australia, specifically north of Grafton in NSW and south of Noosa in Queensland.

"We think it's a plant predominantly in the coastal areas, and most likely not a native plant. It might be an ornamental plant that people are planting in their backyards."

Professor Phalen said researchers were calling for anyone who saw rainbow lorikeets feeding to take photos for them.

"We're asking people if they see birds feeding on a plant to take pictures of that plant and then upload them to our research website," he said.

"We'll get that information and we can start looking for which plants they are eating in the months the disease isn't a problem and which ones they are eating when it is a problem."

In particular, there seemed to be hotspots of the disease around Brisbane and Noosa, although birds with the condition have been recorded in increasing numbers across northern NSW and southern Queensland.

More than 1000 lorikeets which were taken to the RSPCA in 2017-18 were suffering from lorikeet paralysis syndrome.

People who find live birds suffering from the disease were asked to take them to their nearest vet or animal shelter for treatment, with a 60 per cent chance of recovery for mild cases.

The research has been published in the Australian Veterinary Journal:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/avj.13107>

MACQUARIE PARK PRECINCT AND BUS INTERCHANGE UPGRADE

In addition to changes previously reported for the Macquarie Park area, the Australian and NSW Governments are now investing almost \$200 million to upgrade the bus interchange in Herring Road outside Macquarie Centre. Herring Road will be closed to all general southbound traffic between Talavera and Waterloo Roads, to provide two dedicated bus lanes. There will be one lane available for general northbound traffic, thus maintaining access to the elevated ramp into the Macquarie Centre carparks, via a new roundabout to be constructed at Innovation Road. A bus layover area will be constructed between Talavera Road and the M2, north-west of Herring Road.

Most trees and vegetation at the bus interchange and bus layover will be removed, but, we are promised that they will be replaced by mature trees to be planted on both sides of Herring Road. Community feedback was invited but we were not notified in time for our previous newsletter, and community feedback closed on 8 September. See <https://macpark.ghdengage.com/> - it includes a 148-page Review of Environmental Factors (REF) document.

PIDDING PARK DOG OFF-LEASH AREA

For some years now, the sportsground section of Pidding Park (adjacent to the western boundary of the Field of Mars Reserve) has been a designated off-leash area for dogs. It has proven to be popular for local dog owners and commercial dog walkers. Now, the City of Ryde Council has plans to move the dog area off the sports oval and into a smaller area between the oval and adjacent bushland of Pidding Park and the Field of Mars.

Our Society is concerned because the proposed location is adjacent to the natural bushland of the Field of Mars Reserve and the natural bushland on the south-western side of Pidding Park. These bushland and natural habitat areas form a valuable wildlife corridor.

Many scientific studies have found that natural wildlife is sensitive to the presence of dogs; their scent leads native animals to avoid the area, and even abandon their young.

At Pidding Park these issues would need to be addressed:

1. The natural drainage of the proposed area is into the natural bushland
2. Dog scent would pervade the natural area
3. High, strong fencing is required to ensure that dogs do not stray into the bushland
4. Clear signs are needed to effectively alert dog owners and walkers that the bushland areas do not form part of the dog park.

Since the Pidding Park oval was declared a dog off-leash area, a majority of dog walkers have acted in a responsible manner. However, some allow their dogs to roam off-leash outside the designated area and on occasions owners actively encourage their dogs to chase wildlife into the bushland, both at Pidding Park itself and into the Field of Mars Reserve via the Wellington Road entrance.

We suggest these solutions:

1. Provide funding for dedicated patrols by rangers, to effectively enforce the dog laws and protect native wildlife.
2. Consider locating the dedicated area and infrastructure at North Ryde Common. This would also serve to address the issue of off-leash dogs running, as some do, across the adjacent Twin Road and Wicks Roads which are currently unfenced.
3. Simply retain the current arrangement for the oval itself to be the off-leash dog area at Pidding Park. Being a landfill area, the ground there naturally absorbs run-off containing dog odours.

CITY OF RYDE GREENLINKS – A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

At its meeting on Tuesday 26 July 2022, the City of Ryde Council adopted the Green Links Masterplan as its vision for the three corridors, but excluded the works within the Sydney Water lands between Quarry Road and Blaxland Road. They yielded to pressure from a few residents who did not wish to have a shared user path in their vicinity. Unfortunately, the possibility to dedicate this land as a wildlife corridor anyway was not considered, so this has been a missed opportunity.

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PART OF BLENHEIM ROAD, NORTH RYDE

As part of its redevelopment plans for Blenheim Park, the original section of road from the corner near Morshead Street to the Blenheim Park entrance is to be closed and added to the park. We hope this will facilitate integration of the park with existing bushland to the east.

DRAFT PROPERTY POLICY

Submissions to <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/HaveyourSay> close 13 October 2022.

The Strategy will guide and align property outcomes wherever relevant for Council operations, including, among other things, all types of operational, administrative, community, parks, and private property identified in planning instruments that create a financial liability for Council.

DRAFT SPORTS FIELDS ACTION PLAN – TOWARDS 2036

Submissions to <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/HaveyourSay> close 13 October 2022.

In 2021 Council reviewed the capacity of Council's sporting infrastructure to cope with current and future demands. As a result, Council adopted the Open Space Future Provision Strategy (OSFPS) to provide a road map for enhancing both the capacity and accessibility of the City's open space to meet recreation and sports facility needs to 2036.

The draft Sports Field Action Plan – Towards 2036 outlines an approach to implement the full-size sports field components of the OSFPS. The Action Plan recognises that to meet the future active sport and recreation needs of the community, a mix of infrastructure upgrades will be required. The recommended options and opportunities include:

- Sports field lighting
- Sport field layout optimisations
- Synthetic conversions
- Gaining access to school fields
- Rezoning opportunities to create new fields and synthetic surfaces

The Plan prioritises projects based on their cost effectiveness and weighted according to how the different enhancement options increase capacity. This includes some projects to enhance capacity for mid-week winter night training (i.e. sports field lighting) and other projects to increase capacity both for training and weekend sports competitions (i.e. synthetics and creation of new fields).

We are concerned that there is no consideration of environmental impacts.

In previous editions of Wallumetta, we have highlighted the negative impacts of artificial lighting and synthetic surfaces. Our Society will be making a submission. We urge members to see <https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/HaveyourSay/Have-Your-Say/Draft-Sports-Fields-Action-Plan-%E2%80%93-Towards-2036> and make your own private submissions about the Plan.

FERAL HORSE SHOOTING ABANDONED

*Breaking news from the
Invasive Species Council...*

**Recently, the NSW
government stopped all feral
horse shooting in Kosciuszko
National Park.**



It's a knee-jerk reaction
pandering to shock jocks and

vested interests who want to slow down action on feral horse control. This could be just the start of long delays to getting the job done - the park and its wildlife can't afford it, especially now that we're entering the breeding season. We need to ensure feral animal management is back on track.

The NSW Invasive Species Council is urging that we take urgent action. Kosciuszko is a national heritage listed park and the Premier needs to hear that people from his state and across the country care deeply about its unique nature and wildlife.

The noisy minority of feral horse advocates who don't accept the science, will stop at nothing to prevent removals of feral horses from Kosciuszko. The excuse for stopping the shooting stems from allegations and hysterical rants, laden with inaccuracies, on Ray Hadley's 2GB radio show. The first allegation was that 11 horses found dead in the park had been killed inhumanely. This was blown up in the media by feral horse advocates who had photographed the carcasses claiming the culls were inhumane. **The RSPCA reviewed that operation and confirmed it was conducted in accordance with welfare protocols and laws.**

This clearly wasn't enough to get the desired outcome, so a few days later a caller on the show claimed an aerial deer cull occurred close to some park users and they feared for their lives. Shock-jock Ray Hadley went on to conflate this story in a hodge-podge of misinformation soup, then ranted on air calling on the Premier to stop the horse cull.

The alleged incident occurred 6 months ago in an area of the park more than 100 kilometres away from where feral horse control activities took place last month. National Parks prepared a report on the incident back in February and March.

This didn't stop the Perrottet Government from using this caller's story and Ray Hadley's relentless pressure as an excuse to shut down all feral animal shooting in the park while an investigation is undertaken... **not only feral horses, but feral deer and pigs too!**

What this signals is the Premier is clearly willing to make the decision to allow the wildlife in Kosciuszko National Park be ruined in order to please a vocal minority.

This is why we need to act! Please send an email to the Premier asking him to make sure investigations are fast-tracked. Yes, the safety of staff and park visitors should be paramount, but we don't want time wasted due to trumped up complaints. It is critical that urgent action is taken to protect the environment in the Snowies.

Please write an email to the NSW Premier using the Invasive Species Council's email writing guide. You don't have to be an expert.

But letters and emails are taken seriously – for everyone who takes the time to write a personal email, the Premier's office knows there are many more people who feel the same way.

See the Invasive Species Council website: <https://invasives.org.au/how-to-help/take-action/>

SKINK, COCKATOO ADDED TO AUSTRALIA'S OFFICIAL THREATENED SPECIES LIST

From Matthew Agius, published by Cosmos 16.8.2022

Black Summer bushfires, plus land clearing and climate change pose threats to species.

The mountain skink (*Liopholis montana*) is now listed as endangered, while the south-eastern glossy black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*) is listed as vulnerable.

It follows the listing or changes to reflect the worsening status of 16 other threatened species under Australia's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act this year.

Both species' habitats were badly damaged in the [Black Summer bushfires](#) of 2019/2020.



Mountain skink (*Liopholis montana*) – photo by Owen Lishmund

Mountain skinks and south-eastern glossy black cockatoos are hit hard by shared threats

The mountain skink is a solidly-built species which typically grows to a maximum size of around 11 centimetres and lives across the subalpine and mountain regions of Australia's eastern states, stretching from the Australian Capital Territory through Kosciuszko National Park towards Wombat State Forest and the Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne.

Ecological research suggests that the Australian Alps hold the highest number of threatened squamates – an order of reptiles that includes skinks, snakes and lizards – on the continent. Logging and habitat clearing, invasive predators and the increasing threats of climate-related hazards like bushfires are all considered major threats to the species' survival.



A glossy black cockatoo sits in a hollow – photo by Daniela Parra

The south-eastern glossy black cockatoo has been similarly impacted. BirdLife Australia found 38% of the species' habitat was impacted by the Black Summer bushfires.

Their range is concentrated along Australia's east coast from north of Brisbane to the Dandenong Ranges. Loss, fragmentation and degradation of this habitat presents the primary high-impact threats to this species, with increasing climate events like droughts, heatwaves and bushfires.



Professor Brendan Wintle, a conservation ecologist who has previously headed-up the Australian government's [Threatened Species Recovery Hub](#), says many species in the range of the Black Summer fireground are dealing with a "cocktail of threats" putting their survival at risk.

Wintle said "Climate change, the increased frequency of large, catastrophic wildfires and any other form of habitat loss and habitat fragmentation – whether that's timber harvesting, clearing for urban development – any of these things are basically going to take away the homes and food for these species. Then of course you also have cats in particular – feral predators."

Endangered listing doesn't lead to habitat protection

The addition of a species to the EPBC Act provides a clear scientific focus on its current situation in Australia and includes assessments of populations and threats and should inform strategies to minimise the risk of further decline. Wintle would like to see further reforms pointing out that, unlike the United States, Australia's laws don't require habitat protection for listed species.

"The problem with Australia is that endangered species' listing actually doesn't demand the identification and protection of critical habitats, and we have seen animals listed as endangered having large habitat losses approved," he says.

CARBON STORAGE STARS

From an article originally published by Deborah Devis in Cosmos as [Carbon storage stars](#)

Mangrove forests could be a key to reducing carbon.

Researchers studying mangrove forests on Hainan Island, China, found that diverse species in these forests enhanced both the quantity of organic matter and storage of carbon in soil.

According to Guanghui Lin, of Tsinghua University, “Our findings suggest that mangrove forests with greater diversity also have higher carbon storage capacities and conservation potential. Thus, mangrove biodiversity conservation is crucial for ensuring mangrove forests are able to mitigate climate change. We can increase mangrove diversity through restoration and conservation projects, especially those that promote local native species.”

Mangroves are a carbon-rich ecosystem that grows well in tropical regions. There are over 70 species of mangroves worldwide; the area – which was studied during 2017–18 – contained 26 of the 27 Chinese species and accounts for 20% of China’s mangrove forest.

The study, published in *Functional Ecology*, showed that the island’s east side had highest mangrove biomass and diversity, and carbon storage was around 547 tonnes per hectare (measured as Mg C ha⁻¹). The remainder of the island stored 328 Mg C ha⁻¹, below the world mangrove forest average of 386 Mg C ha⁻¹.

By comparison, carbon storage in Australian pasture sites across Victoria have been measured from 15 to 165 Mg C ha⁻¹.



Mangroves are efficient at storing carbon, and diversity increases that efficiency.

The research also found that areas with high soil nitrogen and rainfall had a higher potential for carbon storage, which suggests both soil and climate affect capacity to store carbon in the ground.

Potentially, higher mangrove forest diversity also leads to a more complex ecological community, which requires more carbon resources and thus more storage.

“Worldwide... mangroves have been lost or degraded over the last several decades,” said Xiaoshan Zhu, also of Tsinghua University. “Restoration of mangrove forests and their habitats are urgently needed – not only for preservation of biodiversity, but also to increase carbon storage potentials.”

NEW SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY

The new State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings SEPP) 2022 encourages the design and delivery of more sustainable buildings across NSW. It sets sustainability standards for residential and non-residential development and will help NSW progress net zero goals and work towards low energy buildings. The SEPP will ensure new developments:

- minimise the consumption of energy and potable water
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy use
- monitor the embodied emissions of building materials
- deliver buildings that are comfortable in summer and winter

For more information see

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Buildings/Sustainable-Buildings-SEPP>

THE BIG STORY OF TINY HOUSES

The tiny-house movement is one way how regional Australia is responding to climate change. Could they also provide affordable housing in suitable locations on the fringes of big cities, thus reducing the perceived need to build in fire- and flood-prone areas?

Précis of an article by Marie Low, published by Cosmos, 3 June 2022:

In Australia, a tiny house is defined as a moveable dwelling of less than 50m², and they are split into three categories: on wheels, on skids and shipping containers.



According to Wayne Reid, the state planning lead for the Australian Tiny House Association, statistics for the exact number of tiny houses in Australia are hard to come by. “Most tiny houses are being occupied without a formal permit,” he says. “Anecdotally – and if social media is an indicator – there are many, many more who would like to live in a tiny house.”

How “green” are tiny houses?

In 2019, Maria Saxton in the United States studied the environmental behaviours of residents in tiny homes, and found that, on average, people who downsized into a tiny home reduced their energy consumption by 45%.

Reid agrees that they make an environmental difference. “At less than 15% the size of an average Australian house, a tiny house requires less resources to construct, heat, cool and maintain.”

“Most tiny houses are ‘under the radar’, meaning that they are being occupied without a formal permit... Many are off-grid, with solar PV and batteries and composting toilets. With a small roof area, rainwater collection is generally inadequate, so an alternate water supply is usually required from local shed roofs, mains, or carted water.”

With efficient lighting and appliances, tiny homes can readily be powered by roof-top solar with battery storage. This off-grid capability makes tiny houses a significant alternative to traditional housing in regional and rural areas.

How affordable are they?

Reid says owner-builders could spend as little as \$20,000 to \$30,000 to construct their own tiny house. Off-the-shelf, fully complete tiny houses range from \$60,000 to \$180,000. Australia now has a significant number of businesses specialising in tiny homes, ranging from budget models to options with multiple bedrooms.

What’s the catch?

Local and state government rules put a stranglehold on the growth of the tiny-house movement.

House prices are expensive and we have a huge homeless crisis. It is very frustrating.

A simple legal process for council approval to locate and use a tiny house on wheels would likely see a surge in the movement. Tiny houses are not for everyone but they could, with minimal red tape and additional costs, be a great way forward.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE AT THE END OF THE YEAR!

Typically, payments and donations from members account for 30% of our total income, half of which is used to pay for our Society's membership and support for other environmental organisations. Most remaining funds are used for our own operating expenses and insurance.

We invite you to renew your membership and consider making a donation towards your Society's activities for 2023. All members may enjoy active involvement in our Society's activities to support the protection of our natural environments both locally and beyond, and receive this "Wallumetta" newsletter.

See below for details of fees payable and payment methods; note our **new bank account details!**

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

Please pay by direct transfer to our Bendigo Bank account: RYDE HUNTERS HILL FLORA AND FAUNA PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC, BSB 633-000, Account number 190716589. Include your name in the transaction description; and email your name, address and phone number to rhffps@gmail.com

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.

NAME:

Address:

Phone:

Annual Membership (add \$10 for newsletter to be sent via Australia Post):

\$

Individual \$ 15 (+ \$ 10)

Family \$ 35 (+ \$ 10)

Concession \$ 10 (+ \$ 10)

(Students/Pensioners) Donation

Total Payment:

Email address - please print clearly:

WIN THIS YARNKNIT* RUG

IN COOL NATURAL COLOURS!

Tickets \$2 each / 3 for \$5 – at the Visitor Centre...



or pay to Commonwealth Bank account:

RHHFF PS INC GENERAL ACCOUNT 062171 - 0090 1574

Put "Raffle" + your name and phone number in the comment, and we will then make the tickets for you.

Proceeds support the work of our Society.

The winning ticket will be drawn at our Society's next Annual General Meeting.

* This new rug was handknitted and kindly donated by members of the Holy Spirit Yarnknit Group.