

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]

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Rock Orchid Rediscovered in Bankstown

Society member and indigenous flora hunter and photographer, Karlo Taliana, has recently rediscovered one of Bankstown's most seldom seen plants, the Rock Orchid, *Dendrobium speciosum*. Probably not uncommon in days of old along the river fringe, only one plant was recorded during the surveys of Picnic Point orchid authority, Bob Fry, who found it the Blackwall area in the late 70s and early 80s. Attempts to find Bob's plant from then on were unsuccessful, till Darryl McKay found a single young plant in the

general area in July 2008; probably not the one Bob had seen.

However, within a few years, Darryl's plant mysteriously disappeared, and another was not found until the one pictured here by Karlo in 2018, which is from further down the river. The location has to be kept quiet because of the possibility someone might help themselves to it for their garden or to sell, which is an ongoing problem for some species in the area, notably Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoeas*).

Around the same time Karlo found this, he also found a single waratah plant growing in the bush at Picnic Point, another species which had not been seen for almost three decades since one young plant was found at Beauty Point Reserve, but not seen there since. Waratahs, still relatively common south of the river, were also probably once a lot more common on the north side, but hunted locally for their beautiful flowers they are now exceedingly rare in the area.



Dendrobium speciosum, north side of Georges River, pic by Karlo Taliana, 23-9-2019

BBS SUBMISSION AGAINST RAISING WARRAGAMBA DAM September 2019

Bankstown Bushland Society wishes to put on record its opposition to the raising of Warragamba Dam. The Society makes the following points:

The destruction of riparian wildlife habitat:

The river flats of the Coxs and Kowmung Rivers, and many of their tributaries, provide essential grazing and foraging opportunities for macropods and other animals in the confined gorges. They support an abundance of wildlife in a pristine landscape. Some of the most extensive grazing areas in the Burratorang Valley have already been submerged by the

this.

Aboriginal Heritage:

The local aboriginal people lost much of their heritage with the flooding of Burratorang Valley. However, the remote Coxs and Kowmung Rivers, where the landscape is largely unchanged since prehistoric times, still contain much that is important to them. Ancestor stories have been recorded that refer specifically to features in these valleys that can be identified today. These features include natural waterholes along the courses of the main streams. Raising the dam will further the destruction of aboriginal heritage and be a blow to their culture as well as to that of Australia as a whole.

European History:

The Blue Mountains defied attempts by Europeans to extend settlement for a quarter of a

century. For more than a century, cattlemen moved their livestock over remote mountain passes for the purposes of grazing and mustering. These rivers remain largely as the explorers and cattlemen found them and, as such, are monuments in the landscape to pioneer history, which raising the dam will degrade and destroy.

The Southern Blue Mountains is the heartland of bushwalking in New South Wales:

The Coxs and Kowmung Rivers lie at the core of iconic country frequented by generations of bushwalkers and nature lovers. The development of modern bushwalking has its origins in the Coxs and Kowmung Valleys where over 100 years ago men such as Myles Dunphy and Bert Gallop began refining the practice. Since then, countless numbers of bushwalkers have explored these valleys, learning much from their experiences. Out of appreciation for the beauty and wildness of the region came the drive for a Blue Mountains National Park with wilderness areas. National Park status has for 60 years prioritised management for conservation and aesthetic values: raising the dam is incompatible with this.

It is a World Heritage Area:

The secure protection of natural landscape, historical and wildlife values, and the international recognition of this, qualified the area for World Heritage classification. This has been a boon for conservation, local tourism, and a plus for the economy of the state. The Blue Mountains is without doubt one



Coxs River wilderness. Picture by Dave Noble

dam. Subsequent to its construction, the area backing onto the dam was dedicated as National Park to protect and conserve these habitat values. The effects of raising the height of the dam are incompatible with

century. The stories of men such as Bass, Wilson, Barrallier and Caley as they strove to unravel the mysteries of the Coxs and Kowmung Rivers, are deeply embedded in Australian culture. Pioneer settlers and cattlemen

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of the great tourist attractions of the world. The raising of the dam would destroy long sections of valley floors of the magnificent rivers, degrade the national park and put World Heritage status in jeopardy.

Hawkesbury – Nepean Floodplain:

Raising the dam is not a remedy for flooding in the Hawkesbury catchment as floods will continue to come down the Nepean arm of the river. In fact, the higher the dam, the greater potential flooding impacts will be. Water height levels would still have to be carefully controlled. The Hawkesbury floodplain is naturally adapted to receive floodwaters and river alluvium which have made it, since early days of European settlement, high quality farming land that has served Sydney well and enable it to flourish. This farming land should not be converted to urban sprawl, which is what lies behind the push for raising the dam. Sydney needs this land to continue to supply it with fresh food as it has always done.

Conclusion:

There are too many negative impacts of raising the dam for what is essentially a land grab on the floodplain for unrestrained development. Given the great environmental, cultural and historical significance of the landscape, Bankstown Bushland Society trusts you will consider carefully the points we have raised and decide against raising the dam.

#

Riverlands Update

by Col Gibson

In April this year yet another Ecological Assessment and Vegetation Management Plan was commissioned by the owner of Riverlands ahead of him resubmitting a revised Development Application in May, which the public then were asked to comment on. Subsequently the Land and Environment Court hearing of the case between Statewide Planning and Canterbury-Bankstown Council was scheduled to reconvene on 27th September, but ahead of this the developer pulled out and asked for time to submit yet another DA to bring to the court in about mid next year.

Then suddenly, in October, we learned that Demian and Statewide Planning had sold the site to Mirvac who now, presumably, will submit their own DA. Hopefully, also, a new Planning Agreement will be negotiated, and we are urging CBC to drive for one that includes more protections for riverflat vegetation and wetlands. We are yet to see, but Mirvac must address the environmental and biodiversity issues that led Statewide's plan to the Land & Environment Court, issues that Statewide apparently gave up on.

Put simply, Statewide's DA failed to give long term protection to biodiversity values on the golf course site as required by the Bankstown Local Environment Plan. About half the existing number of trees (including about one third of those with hollows) were to be destroyed. Of those retained, the great majority would be isolated

and not preserved in groups. This was a point raised by the Local Planning Panel last year when it criticised the development's "*failure to preserve trees in reserved plots*" (those being the High Local Conservation value tree groups identified by Clements in 2012).

Furthermore, the majority of trees to be retained were to be in sub-divided building lots with no building setbacks applied to give them any measure of long-term protection. The DA did include two proposed parks, but with their playgrounds, buildings, bicycle paths and sporting facilities, these were chiefly designed for recreational purposes, not for protection of biodiversity.

The plan as it was leaned heavily on replacing to-be-destroyed hollows with nest boxes. Nest boxes are short-lived, unreliable and have a high failure rate. The cutting out of hollow sections of trees after felling and removing them to the Riparian corridor was also proposed, but is a pointless exercise as once detached from the living tree encasing them, they will rapidly become uninhabitable. The function of hollows as habitat opportunities depends on the environmental factors that have formed them in situ. These cannot be replicated by transfer to another location. The Society believes that, due to their crucial habitat value, all 114 hollow bearing trees should be retained, each to be protected by a significant setback sufficient to protect the root zones of the trees to help ensure their long-term survival.

The Society also notes that

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Cumberland Ecology's Vegetation Management Plan (April 2019) incorrectly referred to the trees on the northern half of the golf course (approx. 50% of all trees on site) as having been planted. This is simply not true, and is at odds with all previous vegetation surveys of the area, notably Anne Clements (2012) whose report consistently refers to "remnant canopy trees" of "high local conservation significance".

BBS continues to have concerns for development of parts of the floodplain and adjacent bushland for road access and potential channelization of remnant wetlands, as was foreshadowed in the new Ecological Assessment. These would have disastrous effects. The natural function of the floodplain should not be re-engineered to accommodate further residential and other developments. The protection of these wetlands and significant bushland in the road corridor on the western side of the golf course should be incorporated in a new Voluntary Planning Agreement with Mirvac.

It appears that Mirvac still intends preparing a bicycle path along the river corridor, a pre existing proposal intended to partly compensate for the loss of trees, tree hollows and habitat within the golf course. The bicycle path is designed to cut through the Swamp Oak Forest listed recently as an EEC under the Federal EPBC Act. In no way does the bicycle path or the landscaped plantings make up for the loss of biodiversity on the development site. We await details of the Mirvac plan. #



Norfolk Road Bush cleanup by BBS in 1991

Impacts of redevelopment of Woolworths Chullora on Norfolk Road Bush *by Col Gibson*

The planned conversion of Woolworths Chullora (now owned by Henroth Pty Ltd) into a combined residential and retail complex causes concerns for adjoining bushland at Norfolk Reserve which the Society fought hard to save in the early 1990s. The chief concerns we have raised with Council regarding possible are overshadowing, security fencing and the forecast upgrade of playground facilities fronting Norfolk Road.

With regard to overshadowing, the development will allow for heights of up to six storeys. It is difficult to say exactly what impacts this will have, but we have seen the negative effects of overshadowing and changes in soil profile by factory construction at Deverall Park which seems to have caused the death of an adjacent stand of Scribbly Gums. As Norfolk Bush

is an Endangered Ecological Community, we have asked Council to consult with the Office of Planning, Industry & Environment for advice in regard to appropriate setbacks and height limits.

At present there is a 2-metre-high cyclone wire fence along the shared boundary, but as the development will open up the area to a much higher permanent population, a stronger security fence will be needed to protect the bushland. A cyclone wire fence in this situation will be very vulnerable to vandalism and potential intrusions having negative impacts on the bushland.

The long-standing use of the area adjoining the bushland as a loading bay for the supermarket meant that access was restricted and controlled to a fair extent. Even then, however, there have been problems with holes being cut in the cyclone wire fence: on one occasion, in 1998, a section of fence wide enough for a truck to drive through was cut so that it

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could deposit a load of spoil on top of the bush. At the Society's urging, Council acted to have Woolworths remove the material and rehabilitate the damage at its cost. We do not want to see this sort of thing repeated when construction gets underway for the new development.

We note that Council has already installed a weld mesh security fence along the southern perimeter of the bushland adjoining the playground area. This fence has endured well and done a good job of protecting the bush on that side. It seems a natural course of action now to continue security fencing along the western boundary.

An upgrade of the Norfolk Reserve playground is forecast in the Assessment Findings for the development. The playground area presently contains some very fine examples of native woollybutts, ironbarks and paperbarks, which give it a unique setting and make it so attractive. In whatever way the existing playground facilities are to be reconfigured, we expect that all these trees and shrubs will be accommodated and not removed.

In July, Council voted to send the development plans to a New South Wales Government Gateway review, after which it will be put out for public comment before going back to Council for final determination.

#



Abuse of bushland at Fairfield Showground by Fairfield City Council, August 2019

Onslaught on bushland at Fairfield Showground

by Col Gibson

In August, members of the Society and others were taken on a tour of the Fairfield Showground bushlands, including Deerbush Park, by Fairfield flora expert Daniel Smart. This was in response to a letter (22-8-2019) we received from Fairfield City Council ensuring us that it: *"has in place a range of controls to protect Cumberland Plain Woodland"* in the area. However, what we saw on the day in various parts of the Showground were examples of lack of consideration for protection of trees and bushland from impinging developments including car parks and sports field.

In one stand of remnant Spotted Gum Forest, convenience dumping and development intrusions were evident at every turn. Earth fill has been pushed into the bush well beyond

perimeter fences where erosion controls are either inadequate or completely absent. Developments have been allowed to intrude into bushland with no protections in place, the very worst practice. We saw many trees with fill that will kill them piled up around their bases. This abuse had evidently been going on for years.

Heritage listed Deerbush Park, where threatened species *Acacia pubescens*, *Marsdenia viridiflora* & *Parsonsia lanceolata* occur, in the south western corner of the Showground site was in better condition. This remnant stand of Broad-leaved Ironbark has for some years been managed for passive recreation and ecological values; the majority of the park is designated Natural Area zoned Environmental Conservation. The park also contains a low impact children's playground. However, after years of good management Council now proposes to convert the modest

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playground into a full-scale Adventure Playground which will transform the entire park.

The design for this fun park is packed with thrills and spills including trampolines, a carousel, climbing net fort and slide, sand pit, riding track, river bed crossing, water pump, nest swing, flying fox and gym equipment. None of these things bring any benefits in themselves to a Critically Endangered Ecological Community, but will instead cause further fragmentation of habitat, a recognised Threatening Process. This is unjustifiable.

When the Showground was remodelled in the early 2000s, much of the area next to Deerbush Park contained fine stands of ironbark trees that were cut down to make way for what is now the main car park. It is our understanding that to compensate for loss of a great many trees, Deerbush Park was designated a Natural Area in which all trees would be protected and conservation values given priority. How can an area long managed sympathetically for conservation purposes be now seen as an appropriate site for, as FCC refers to it, “an exciting new playground”?

Alternative sites exist at Fairfield Showground where an Adventure Playground and associated facilities could be constructed without compromising any ecological values. In November we will present a motion to the NCC Annual Conference to the effect that EECs should not be selected as sites for fun parks and other destructive facilities.

#

Lot 5 Milperra Bushland Trashed

by Col Gibson

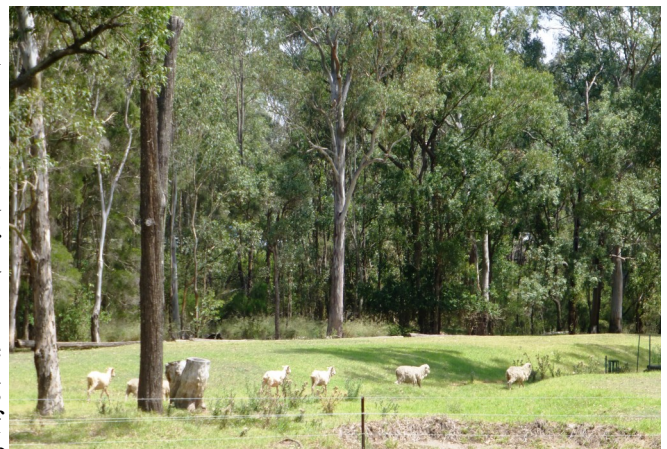
Local residents have reported adjusted livestock grazing freely over the Council-owned bush block known as Lot 5 adjacent to the former Riverlands Golf Course. The Society successfully campaigned to have Lot 5 protected from proposed development early in the 1990s; our efforts in this were assisted much by the mayor of the time, Ian Stromborg. A number of locally rare species occur here, the survival of which must now be threatened. Since the site was removed from a plan to build a golf fairway over it, ownership was transferred from state government to Council, and on the back of this the Society has undertaken both grant-funded and volunteer bush regen work there up until Demian locked access.

Last year the Riverlands cattle escaped into Deepwater Park where they did considerable damage to rare flora, including almost eating out of existence one of our rarest species, *Solanum lineari-folium*, only one plant protected by a fallen dead wattle escaped their attention.

This raises the question about bushland and wetlands in general at Riverlands, for which, in our past

submissions, we have asked for livestock access to be excluded. While we fully support Council’s defence of the biodiversity values of the site in court, I find it paradoxical that Council has not insisted on any in-the-field measures, such as fencing, to protect these values from being impacted by livestock. Surely the wetland margins, and significant stands of hollow bearing trees deserve better protection than they currently have.

As Council-owned Lot 5 is not part of the proposed Riverlands development, we believe Council should take appropriate action to protect the site and make sure privately-owned cattle do not have access to it. Any damage to the site caused by the cattle should be compensated for by their owner. #



Lot 5 in 2013



Lot 5 in September 2019



***Check out BANKSTOWN
BUSHLAND SOCIETY on
FACEBOOK***

The BBS Facebook page provides us opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment and flora and fauna of our bushland regeneration projects, nature walks and such. Anyone interested in the Georges River and bushland generally is welcome to join our page.

ELECTRONIC BULLETINS

The Bushland Bulletin is available to subscribers in hard copy or digital form or both. To obtain a digital copy all you have to do is send your email address to the Editor (see front cover).

Bushland Society meetings are held at Padstow Progress Hall, Ryan Road, Padstow, on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except December & January), in the **WAL BROWNING MEETING ROOM** at rear of hall.

Time: 7.00pm.
Tea and biscuits provided.
All welcome.
Further enquiries ring Col or Skye (see numbers at right of page).

BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY NOTICE of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

**to be held at 7.00 pm on
Wednesday 20th
November, 2019, in the
Wal Browning Meeting
Room at Padstow Progress
Hall, Ryan Road, Padstow.
Election of office bearers
and committee members
for 2020.**

With CBC BUSHCARE:

**Bush regen at Monash
Reserve, East Hills, off
Henry Lawson Drive,
from 9.30 am to 12.00
noon, Tuesday,
26th November 2019.**

END of YEAR PICNIC:

**at Monash Reserve,
East Hills. Picnic lunch at
our regen site on the
riverflat at Monash
Reserve, East Hills, off
Henry Lawson Drive, from
11.00 am, Saturday 30th
November 2019.
All welcome.**



BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY COMMITTEE for 2019

President:

**Skye Virgin
0411584295**

Vice President:

Brian Shaw

Secretary:

**Colin Gibson:
9788 6232**

Treasurer:

**John Gibson:
9772 3549**

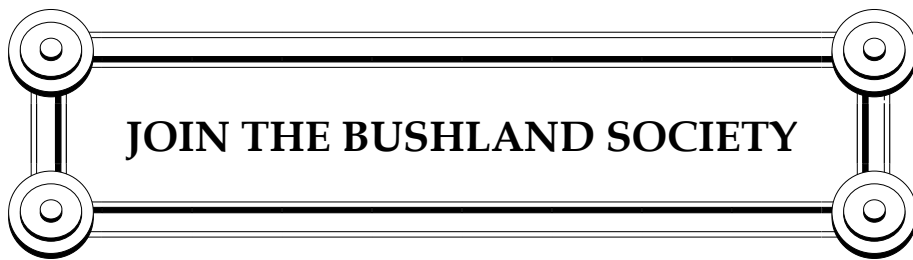
Committee Members:

**Darryl McKay
Chris Brogan
Erica Brogan
Wal Browning
James Deli
Peter Mahoney
Ian Bailey**

Bushland Bulletin

Editor:

Colin Gibson



Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

We are Bankstown's only incorporated association dedicated to protecting our City's environment.

The Society's objects are:

- To protect the environment of Bankstown
- To assist other persons in the protection of the environment in Bankstown
- To foster better community awareness of environmental issues
- To lobby through Government, commercial and other persons for the maintenance of a high quality of life through the progressive improvement of the environment

Bankstown Bushland Society has lobbied effectively for the protection of bushland and the natural environment since 1988. With your support we can continue the work. By joining the Society you can make an important contribution to our local environment.



I wish to join

Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone No. _____

Email: _____

Attached please find my payment of:
_____ (\$.00)
(amount in words)

Membership fees

Family/Group - \$20

Ordinary - \$15

Concession - \$10

“student/unwaged/pensioner”

Send payment to:

**The Secretary,
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

Or pay by direct transfer to

**BSB 512 170 Account Number 100087319, AND put
your name on the transfer form.**

Enquiries: greenaissance1@gmail.com



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