

colong bulletin

No. 275 | May 2019

Destination Pagoda – wins support

“In the race of life, always back self-interest — at least you know it’s trying.”

Jack Lang

BY KEITH MUIR

ON MONDAY APRIL 8, the Gardens of Stone Alliance, comprising the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation and Lithgow Environment Group, launched their *Destination Pagoda* visitor plan that details the economic and community benefits that a new Gardens on Stone reserve will bring to the Lithgow region.

Co-authored by Ian Brown and Beth Dudley-Bestow, *Destination Pagoda* was launched to a full house at the Lithgow Workers Club. Over the next ten years, it’s estimated the plan will generate an economic benefit to Lithgow of over \$10 million per year and more than 100 jobs. *Destination Pagoda* has already won support in Lithgow and will clearly benefit the local community.

A day earlier, Communications Manager for Centennial Coal, Katie Brassil, was quoted in the Sun Herald saying that the *Destination Pagoda* initiative “is something we can support” and “we believe it is a vision we can share”. Centennial Coal has the largest coal mining operations in the Lithgow area.

Reservation of the Gardens of Stone forests will complete Myles Dunphy’s visionary 1932 Blue Mountains National Park scheme. It’s also the last opportunity anywhere near Sydney to create a truly great nature conservation reserve that can also become a low-key version of Royal and Ku-ring-gai national parks with basic visitor facilities. *Destination Pagoda* will create appropriate visitor opportunities by upgrading existing road access to a select number of pagoda vantage points and sights close to Lithgow.

As to scenic views, Henry Gold OAM, the Colong Foundation’s Hon. Photog-

continued on p. 2

The Lost City ten minutes from Lithgow’s main street can be a tourist magnet with a lookout established above Marangaroo Creek. Photo: H. Gold



Destination Pagoda – wins support • 1

Rescuing the Wilderness, The History of Wilderness Conservation in Australia • 2

Raising Warragamba Dam wall has to be stopped! • 3

Giving a dam • 3

Guy Fawkes – featured wilderness • 4

Katoomba airfield development plans • 5

Stop logging public native forests • 5

Scientists stand firm on effective and humane culling of feral horses • 6

Milo Dunphy (1929-1996) • 6

Privatising national parks and the loss of wildness • 7

Monthly General Meetings will be held at our office at Level 2, Fortuna House, 332 Pitt Street, at 6.00pm on the third Wednesday of the month on May 22nd, June 19th, July 17th and August 21st. Members and visitors are welcome.

Nature Report NSW

continued from p. 1

rapher says, "Pagodas beat the Three Sisters by a mile", and "Katoomba has just Three Sisters, while Lithgow has 3,000 pagodas".

Ms Madi Maclean of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society believes: "Lithgow's pagoda landscapes can deliver economic, community and environmental benefits to the town." At the Katoomba launch Madi said: "The plan is a win-win-win for workers, community and the environment! And when diverse groups come together to find a common vision, history happens."

The pulling power of the pagodas' iconic beauty will grow tourism in Lithgow. In fact, it's the only attraction that will. Most visitors who come to enjoy the pagodas will be satisfied with the grand vistas seen from quality vantage points less than ten minutes from Lithgow town centre. They will then return to Lithgow and spend time and money in facilities there. This type of visitation is the 'bread and butter' of Katoomba's tourism economy, and Lithgow, with its internationally significant pagodas, can certainly have it too!

Visitors to Lithgow's pagodas are more likely to stay a night, and then visit other sights in the region, like those in Capertee Valley, before returning home, via the Bells Line of Road having had an authentic western Blue Mountains experience.

Dr Richard Stiles, President of Lithgow Environment Group considers that: "Diversity is the key to a healthy regional economy and with *Destination Pagoda*, the Gardens of Stone is now ready to play its part. This plan

ties in with Lithgow's unique heritage, and offers over 100 jobs in tourism and visitor management."

Many of the roads in the Gardens of Stone are in a ruinous state. *Destination Pagoda* proposes that key roads be upgraded for use by conventional vehicles. The reservation of the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area will help future proof Lithgow. It will help Lithgow become a thriving, diverse, healthy town that respects people, culture and country, in line with the vision of Traditional Owners.

Wiradjuri Elder Auntie Helen Riley, on behalf of Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation, has expressed support for the reserve proposal and said: "The respect for the land is paramount to ensure not only the protection of the environment but equally Aboriginal culture. Look after the land and the rivers and the land and the rivers will look after you."

Protection and effective management of the many natural heritage values in and around Lithgow will provide long-term employment benefits for the next generation, encouraging them to stay in Lithgow. The rehabilitation of the Gardens of Stone and the establishment of the reserve will provide medium-term jobs for older workers who find themselves unemployed. It will also contribute to Lithgow's lifestyle attractions and encourage new residents.

A Gardens of Stone Conservation Area allows both coal mining and protection of significant heritage values upon which future tourism industry jobs must depend. It will also help de-escalate political conflict over the future of the area.

Business, unions and political parties agree that a revival plan is needed for Lithgow that

protects all heritage aspects in the region, and builds its tourism economy. Coal mining jobs in the region may continue for some time, but coal is being worked out, climate change policy will take effect and robotics are being applied to mining technology. While these factors will reduce employment in the coal industry, coal is part of the community, culture and the Gardens of Stone story.

The tourism value of the Gardens of Stone region lies in its scenic pagoda landscapes of stone pinnacles, slot canyons, waterfalls and extensive cliff lines, associated with highly diverse plateau and tableland forests, rare plants, nationally endangered swamps and wind-blown sand dunes from the last ice age. These significant natural features make up a complex and stimulating natural wonderland just two hours from Sydney that can become readily accessible by conventional vehicle.

The area is already a magnet that attracts jaded city dwellers. Through *Destination Pagoda* Lithgow can become a mecca for family recreation, for those who wish to experience a bit of real Blue Mountains' bushland but are reluctant to step far from their car. These new visitor opportunities are also Lithgow's opportunity for a more sustainable future.

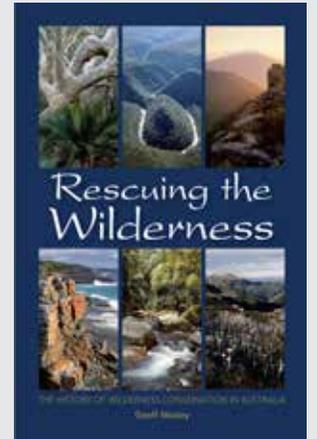
Rescuing the Wilderness, The History of Wilderness Conservation in Australia

Book Review by Keith Muir

Geoff Mosley is a committed wilderness campaigner, historian and geographer. In this book Geoff's prodigious memory and barn-sized filing system helps him relate Australia's wilderness conservation story in a brisk and stirring manner, state-by-state. For my part, the best sections are the introduction and preamble where Geoff's wilderness knowledge glows cogently.

Seventy pages describe the battle for Tasmania's wilderness which Geoff's previous books have not addressed at this detailed level. The state's conservation politics, successful World Heritage inscription and eventual wilderness protection, together with ongoing threats, are all covered in depth. For the rest of Australia, the histories of the other states and territories are covered in fewer pages, concentrating on key highlights and issues.

The section on Antarctica is more detailed, and reveals how technical issues can become quite complicated for those with bureaucratic and legal mindsets, when you would think a World Park for Antarctica and World Heritage listing would be a politically easy task for countries and leaders to



agree on.

The last chapter summarises various national wilderness conferences over the decades and some 'lessons from the past'. I found myself wanting to discover more about those lessons, but every book is a journey, not just a conclusion.

Rescuing The Wilderness, the History of Wilderness Conservation in Australia, by Geoff Mosley
234 pages, soft cover, 9 Henry Gold black & white photos and 7 locality maps.
RRP \$35 incl. postage within Australia
Available from the Colong on-line shop

We love Lithgow
Protect Gardens of Stone
GARDENSOFFSTONE.ORG.AU

THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS LTD
2/332 Pitt Street Sydney NSW 2000 (ABN 84 001 112 143)

TELEPHONE: (02) 9261 2400 **EMAIL:** foundation@colongwilderness.org.au **WEBSITE:** www.colongwilderness.org.au

PATRON: The Hon. Bob Carr, BA (Hons), Hon. LittD. • **DIRECTORS:** John Robens (Chair); Ian Tanner (Hon. Secretary);

Alex Allchin (Vice-Chair); Dr. Stephen Allen (Hon. Treasurer); Sierra Classen BA (Hons); Bob Debus AM;

Alan Dixon; Eugene Fernandez, M.Phil., EdD., GAICD., FIMCA; Alix Goodwin; Janine Kitson BA, Dip Ed, M Ed, Dip TEFL, MA, M Ed (Hons);

Robert Pallin; Pat Thompson, L.C.P.; Tim Vollmer; Haydn Washington, B.A., M.Sc., PhD.

DIRECTOR: Keith Muir, O.A.M., B. Nat. Res. Hons. • **HON. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:** Alan Dixon

WILD RIVERS CAMPAIGNER: Harry Burkitt • **NATURAL AREAS CAMPAIGNER:** Wilson Harris, B.A., M.A.

HON. PHOTOGRAPHER: Henry Gold, O.A.M. • **HON. FIRE OFFICER:** Ian Brown, O.A.M., BSc. • **HON. BULLETIN DESIGN & TYPESETTING:** Jenni Gormley

The Colong Bulletin • Editor: Bruce Diekman

ISSN 1325-3336 (print), 2207-6697 (online) • Printed by SpotPress, Marrickville

Raising Warragamba Dam wall has to be stopped!

BY JANINE KITSON,
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST AND
EDUCATOR

SYDNEY HAS ALWAYS been a city of secrets. But now we know a new secret, thanks to Sydney Morning Herald journalist Paul Hannam, (*SMH*, 16-17 March, 2019). If correct, the Berejiklian government may have misled the public and parliament over the height of the proposed raising of Warragamba Dam wall.

Documents seen by the Herald show operational plans to raise the Dam wall, not by the publically announced 14 metres, but by 17 metres! This revelation adds 'fuel to the fire' of growing concerns for the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area which will suffer as a result.

Perhaps it is time Premier Berejiklian realised that when Warragamba Dam was built half a century ago it was decided that the pristine wilderness catchments flowing

into it had to be protected. Yet these World Heritage valleys – part of one of the most protected natural landscapes in Australia – will be trashed if the dam wall is raised.

The Gundungurra People are shocked by the Herald's revelation. They have never stopped loving the southern Blue Mountains and its wild rivers that are a haven for turtles, native fish, platypus and long-finned eels. They know that if Warragamba Dam wall is raised – at least 5,000 hectares or more of their sacred heritage will be gone.

Today's global community too, acknowledges that these valleys are irreplaceable and are as valuable as America's Grand Canyon, China's Great Wall and Australia's Great Barrier Reef. They have been World Heritage listed for nearly two decades.

For generations, bushwalkers have walked these secluded and pristine valleys. In 1968, the Kowmung River became the focus of a

conservation clarion call. Plans were afoot to mine the Colong Caves which would have polluted and destroyed this southern Blue Mountains river valley. It had to be stopped. Milo Kanangra Dunphy, the architect son of Myles, stepped in. Milo held a meeting at Sydney University to bring the conservation elders together. The Colong Caves campaign had begun. Then with the help of Henry Gold (NSW's own Peter Dombrovskis) a stunningly beautiful photo of the Colong Caves was captured for posterity and led to this spectacularly beautiful place being saved.

The Burratorang Valley has recently been discovered as a favourite place for one of our most beautiful and rarest birds – the Regent Honeyeater. As urban development spreads across Western Sydney's forest remnants, they feed their young in the valley's remnant forests.

If Warragamba Dam is raised by 14 metres – and



now a possible 17 metres – it will flood, bury and scar these beautiful valleys with sediment, weeds and water. Majestic old growth trees will become stark, dead wood.

Urban over-development is the driver putting pressure on these southern Blue Mountain valleys. Downstream corporate profits and political donations are demanding they be flooded.

The developers believe that: "Building on Sydney's flood plain is good for the economy, good for jobs and good for

growth".

The authorities echo this sentiment with righteous sounding voices, "Raising the dam by 14 metres will save human lives".

But if they really cared why would they allow houses to be built on the floodplain in the first place?

Now for the first time, the government is using the convenient excuse of climate change as a weapon to destroy World Heritage.

Raising Warragamba Dam wall has to be stopped!

Giving a dam

BY MORGAN BURNSIDE,
YEAR 12

I RECENTLY DID a week of work experience with the Give a Dam campaign. From my vantage point from within the campaign, in the time before the recent State Election, I had a ring side seat to the State Government and the campaign's inner workings that made it tick. I helped co-ordinate volunteers for campaign events and assisted in the screening of the Give a Dam documentary.

This emersion in the activities and the ideas driving the campaign helped me hone my own ideas about what path I am going to pursue once I start my tertiary education. I think it's very important for young people to get the broadest understanding possible of the world around them before they make a decision that

will dictate a large part of their future. Work experience opportunities such as the one given to me by the Give A Dam campaign help people like me, who can be overwhelmed by the possibilities, to find their passion and direct their focus. Not only should young people gain a greater understanding of their surroundings, they should also increase their involvement in making sure that the same landscape that they are able to enjoy now should still be there to be enjoyed by their children.

It is my observation that an alarming percentage of my generation deliberately disengage themselves from the on-going political conversation or are simply not interested. What this majority does not understand is that by opting out of the discussion they are opting out of any say they might have in their own



School students giving a dam at a protest before the NSW election.

futures. The decisions made now and their consequences are things that we will inherit in the coming years. Those in charge of making decisions impacting our welfare and the welfare of the environment will most likely not be around to see the devastating cost of their decision-making. For this reason it is vital for the youth of Australia to involve themselves in this process to ensure the preservation of

natural, untouched and wild places before they are gone. At the moment we are seeing natural assets slip through our fingers and failing to ensure that they will be around for those who come after.

If I take one thing away from my time at Give A Dam, it is the understanding that once a mistake regarding the environment is made it is almost impossible to reverse, so what we do now

regarding the conservation of our National Parks needs to be done with the utmost care, consideration and urgency. I'd like to thank the team at Give A Dam for the opportunity they helped organise for me and the confidence it has given me regarding the decisions that I will soon begin to make in my approach to Uni. I look forward to continuing to volunteer for this vital campaign.

Guy Fawkes – featured wilderness

BY KEITH MUIR

THE 134,000 HECTARE Guy Fawkes wilderness in the headwaters of the Clarence River comprises a large gorge network that runs generally south to north, guided by the Demon Fault, a major landform controlling geological feature on the NSW North Coast. Following the geological weaknesses created by this fault, the Guy Fawkes River along with its major tributaries, the Aberfoyle and Sara Rivers, have cut gorges up to 1,000 metres deep into the Dorrigo Plateau.

The Demon Fault system is located on the junction of two major geological blocks. The older western sedimentary and metamorphic rocks located to the west of the fault consisting of greywacke, slates, siliceous argillite and mudstones. To the east are younger Carboniferous turbidite sediments, intruded by Chaelundi adamellite, a granitic igneous rock. It is a wild, rugged landscape.

This dramatic topography, geology and east-west rainfall gradient have produced an extremely varied mosaic of vegetation types, with diverse dry sclerophyll forests on the steep gorge slopes being the major vegetation type. Areas of dry rainforest are found in protected gullies and gorges of easterly and south easterly aspects. Above the gorge to the east, dry and wet sclerophyll forests of various associations dominate, with sub-tropical and warm temperate rainforests found in protected gullies.

Of particular interest are the tall forests in the north-eastern corner of the wilderness, in the former Chaelundi State Forest that is now mostly reserved. These are well-developed, nutrient rich, old growth forests, including rainforests with high mammal diversity. Trees commonly found in 35 different kinds of old growth forests include Tallowwood (*E. microcorys*), New England Blackbutt (*E. andrewsii* ssp. *campanulata*) and Silvertop Stringybark (*E. laevopinea*).

Sixteen threatened plants have been recorded within

Guy Fawkes Wilderness. Surveys have recorded over 150 species of birds, 43 species of native mammals, 16 species of frogs and 42 species of reptiles, but more animals are likely to be discovered. Data collected by State Forests estimated that three unlogged coupes of the former Chaelundi State Forest contained an estimated 399 to 2,857 arboreal mammals per square kilometre, the highest density of arboreal mammals ever recorded in NSW, and possibly in Australia.

Two dozen threatened animals live in this wilderness, including the Koala (*Phascolarctus cinereus*); Yellow-bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*); Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*); Spotted-tail Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*); Brush-tail Rock Wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*); Rufous Bettong (*Aepyprymnus rufescens*); Parma Wallaby (*Macropus parma*); Eastern Great Pipistrelle (*Falstistrellus tasmaniensis*); and Little Bent-winged Bat (*Minioteris australis*). Endangered bird species present include: the Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*); Masked Owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*); Sooty Owl (*Tyto tenebricosa*); and the Glossy Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*). Seven threatened amphibians, including Fletcher's Frog (*Lechriodus fletcheri*) and a White-crowned Snake (*Cacophis harriettae*) have been found. The Eastern Freshwater Cod, an endangered fish occurs only in Guy Fawkes River, the longest wild river system on the NSW north coast.

The size of the original of 29,625 hectare wilderness protected in 1994 has since been quadrupled with 45,000 hectares added by Dunphy Wilderness Fund land acquisitions and 20,000 hectares of old growth from state forests. The North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) fought hard for these additions. In 1990 a court injunction brought illegal logging to a halt but logging of old growth recommenced after due process. A series of forest blockades were undertaken culminating in further successful legal action by NEFA to protect what Justice Paul Stein



The Guy Fawkes River valley. Photo: H. Gold

described as a “veritable forest dependent zoo”. One consequence of the case was the establishment of threatened species legislation for NSW and a further delay of logging plans through special legislation that placed a logging moratorium on wilderness and old growth logging. These tactics helped ensure important old growth forests were reserved as wilderness.

The initial wilderness area omitted Sara River and travelling stock routes. While a gold mining venture on Sara River failed, the presence of stock and stock routes from pastoral use ultimately led to a growing feral horse presence.

When Guy Fawkes wilderness was expanded in 1999 it was claimed that “part of Australia’s living heritage will die” with the last cattle muster (*Good Weekend* 22/1/2000) – and then 23 spot fires were deliberately lit in the park. Many feral horses were left behind, and some say the poor mustering was deliberate, as most of the valuable cattle were removed.

Local landholders had been illegally running horses in the park and using it as a breed-

ing ground for brumbies (*Daily Telegraph*, 1/11/00). As feral horse management mustering efforts failed, and wildfires had stripped the fragile gorge soil of cover, the horses were starving and so the National Parks and Wildlife Service aerially shot 617 horses that would have otherwise wrecked the environment and suffered cruel deaths by starvation.

As reported in *Bulletin* 273 this cull was subsequently vindicated in a review by Dr English of Sydney University who found it effective, efficient and humane, yet the media beat up that followed triggered a ban on aerial culling. Shooting horses from helicopter is, however, far less stressful and dangerous than chasing them down on horseback across the rugged wilderness.

From 1992 until the cull in 2000, only 156 horses were captured and removed from the park by local horsemen and NPWS staff using trapping and mustering, and a number of horses were killed and injured in the process (English 2000).

Sadly, effective conservation for the outstanding natural heritage values that should be

assured for this 98,000 hectares wilderness is stymied. This magnificent wilderness has become part of the collateral damage thanks to those who claim feral horses are a heritage priority in national parks.

The Colong Foundation strongly supports a policy of total eradication of horses and cattle from the park. The 2006 wild horse management plan repeats the errors made in the 1990s and makes a mockery of park management, rendering feral horse control impossible through its complex and expensive mustering and relocation strategy. This is a wasteful, time consuming and misleading political exercise to appease the small, local anti-conservation lobby. NSW environment groups maintain that the government must restore humane aerial culling of feral horses in national parks to protect natural heritage values.



Katoomba airfield development plans

THERE IS CURRENTLY an application for a long-term commercial lease over Katoomba airfield at Medlow Bath which will allow for frequent helicopter flights over the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Katoomba airfield is a small parcel of Crown Land located near the end of Grand Canyon Rd Medlow Bath, totally surrounded by the National Park, and adjacent to the Grand Canyon bushwalk.

The Department of Industry (Crown Land and Water) is about to commence a community consultation process.

Previous government assessments of Katoomba Airfield consistently recommended that the site be added to Blue Mountains National Park and used for emergency and bushfire air operations only. Recommendations from these assessments in 1999, 2000 and 2008 were supported by Council and relevant state government agencies. Despite these outcomes, community consultations and ongoing communi-

ty concern, an interim licence was issued for use of the airfield in late 2017 with neither consultation nor discussion.

The risk of intrusive aircraft noise from joy flights over wilderness and the Blue Mountains community is significant, especially if the airfield develops into a major operation for helicopter joy flights. Past plans were developed in the 1990s to run 400 helicopter joy flights a day. In all probability commercial operators using the airfield will operate in the most profitable manner, with short repetitive joy flights over the most scenic areas.

Joy flights place the pleasure of a few tourists in helicopters and light planes before that of the thousands who wish to enjoy the Blue Mountains wilderness unspoiled by mechanised intrusion. Mount Solitary is one of the most popular destinations for day walks in the Blue Mountains National Park. The famous Blue Gum Forest, was the site of the first conservation battle in Australia. The Forest was acquired by

members of the Sydney Bush Walkers in 1931 for public benefit.

Approval of a long-term airfield lease could see planes and helicopters circuiting the Grose canyon lands, Wild Dog Mountains, the Blue Breaks and perhaps travelling to Yerranderie airfield. These flights will significantly compromise the Kanangra wilderness, birth place of Australia's wilderness conservation movement, amount to an attack on this integral part of our cultural heritage, a cynical *volte-face* to park management, as well as abuse of the World Heritage Area. Permitting flights is a 'Disneyland' approach to park management, and an anathema to wilderness.

There is no regulation of the airspace above any National park or World Heritage Area. Aircraft noise is only guided by the 1994 Blue Mountains Fly Neighbourly Agreement (BM-FNA). Under this voluntary agreement, aircraft operators 'should' fly above certain operating heights in environmen-



Developers have big plans for rough dirt airstrip near Katoomba.

tally sensitive areas of Blue Mountains National Park and local communities. There is no compliance monitoring other than by residents and park visitors, and the mechanism to lodge complaints is ineffective.

Previous use of the airfield for commercial joy flights was controversial and strongly opposed by the community, with residents in Medlow Bath, North Katoomba and areas adjacent to scenic lookouts in Leura, Katoomba and Wen-

tworth Falls being particularly impacted by noise. Walkers in remote parts of the national park also complained about aircraft noise. The imposition of Badgerys Creek will affect Katoomba Airfield and may force local aircraft further into remote wilderness and require lower flight ceiling heights.

The Colong Foundation and Blue Mountains Conservation Society are pursuing addition of the airfield to the surrounding national park.

Join the campaign to include Katoomba Airfield in the Blue Mountains National Park and to ensure it be managed for fire and rescue emergency use only

It's likely that the Department of Industry's 'community engagement' process will limit discussion to the specific commercial plans of a developer with no consideration of the option of adding the area to the National Park. The community has a right to have a say on the future use of OUR public land.

Participate by emailing or ringing and ask to be included in consultations. Contact:

Mr Mark Maloney, Crown Property Services, NSW Department of Industry- Crown Lands & Water at mark.maloney@crowland.

nsw.gov.au or phone 9842 8346

Also write to the two relevant State Ministers at GPO Box 5341, Sydney NSW 2001 and email, Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains and ask her to forward your concerns to both these Ministers - email Ms Doyle at bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing , and

The Hon. Matt Kean MP, Minister for Energy and Environment

Please make these points:

- Object** to any plan to lease Katoomba Airfield for commercial purposes;
- Ask** that the process of issuing a lease be stopped immediately;
- Ask** that you be considered a key stakeholder in the upcoming community consultation;
- Ask** that the consultation considers the option of incorporating the airfield into the surrounding National Park.

Stop logging native forests to curb global warming

NORTH EAST FOREST ALLIANCE (NEFA) MEDIA RELEASE, 9 OCTOBER 2018

IN RESPONSE TO the alarming report from the IPCC on the impacts of global warming and the necessity of urgent action, NEFA is renewing its call for a rapid phase out of logging of public native forests to allow them to take up ever increasing volumes of atmospheric

carbon, as they recover from past logging, and to warn against the push to substitute native forests for coal in electricity generation as this will increase carbon pollution.

The IPCC report identifies that human emissions have already increased global temperatures by 1 degree, and that at current rates temperature rises are set to reach 1.5 degrees by as early as 2030. In order to limit global

warming to 1.5 degrees the IPCC identifies that we need to cut net carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and reduce net carbon emissions to zero by 2050.

Forests are the lungs of the earth, they take in our carbon dioxide, storing the carbon and giving us back oxygen. Left standing they are part of the solution to climate change, cut down they become part of the problem, according to NEFA

spokesperson Dailan Pugh.

"The reality is that logging has run down the carbon storage in vast tracts of NSW's forest by 40-60%. As logging intensity increases, the carbon stored in the trees and soil, along with the forest's structure and biodiversity, is further diminished.

"It has been estimated that globally, wooded areas soak up a third of the fossil fuels released into the atmosphere

each year. If we were to stop deforestation tomorrow, the world's established and regrowing forests would remove half of fossil fuel emissions.

"For south-east Australia, it has been estimated that allowing logged forests to realise their sequestration potential would be equal to 24 per cent of the 2005 Australian

continued on p. 7

Scientists stand firm on effective and humane culling of feral horses

A CONFERENCE HELD in Canberra last November on Feral Horse Impacts in Kosciuszko National Park attracted over 130 scientists. The conference was convened by the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian National University. It enabled scientists to present the latest evidence on the damage caused by thousands of feral horses to the water catchments, stream water, and flora and fauna of Kosciuszko National Park and other parks in the Australian Alps.

The new research provided unequivocal scientific evidence that feral horse populations are severely compromising the natural heritage of the Australian Alps. A brief statement from the Conference reported that the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018 was "the greatest attack on the conservation of Kosciuszko National Park in its 75 years of history. At a holistic level, it undermines the concept of national parks as protected areas and the integrity of Australia's National Heritage."

The 130 scientists at the conference signed an accord that called on "the NSW Government to:

1. Acknowledge the extensive, serious, and potentially irreparable damage being done to Kosciuszko National Park by feral horses;
2. Recognise that NSW national parks are extensive natural areas gazetted for conservation of natural ecosystems under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act, with obligations for their management also arising from a number of international agreements;
3. Repeal in its entirety the NSW Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018, and restore the protected status of Kosciuszko National Park, its 2006 Plan of Management and implement the 2008 Horse Management Plan;
4. Co-operate with Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory to remove feral

horses from the protected areas known together as the Australian Alps national parks, through aerial culling and other effective means;

5. Restore systematically the mountain catchments, wetlands and the Byadbo-Lower Snowy lands in the Kosciuszko National Park which have been extensively damaged by feral horses; and
6. Use scientific evidence as the basis for management that strives to protect the native Australian species, ecosystems and water catchments."

This Kosciuszko Science Accord followed representations of serious concern last June to the NSW Government by the Director General of the IUCN Inger Andersen and the Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, Dr Kathy MacKinnon, about the damage that the heritage horse legislation would cause to Kosciuszko National Park through inappropriate management.

Now, to further underscore the state government's mismanagement, at the end of November, the NSW Scientific Committee listed feral horses as a key threatening process under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act. The listing confirms that feral horses cause significant harm to threatened species.

Reclaim Kosci* co-ordinator, Richard Swain, has asked Premier Gladys Berejiklian to reign in her Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, and put the Environment Minister back in charge of Kosciuszko National Park.

"The new scientific listing states that feral horses are transforming the ecosystems of Kosciuszko National Park. They trample and kill plants, destroy wetlands, degrade water catchments and drive species towards extinction", Mr Swain said.

Twenty-three threatened plant species and eleven threatened animal species, ten of which are critically endangered, are being driven

to extinction by feral horses in NSW. This includes the northern and southern corroboree frog, mountain pygmy possum, broad-toothed mouse and the stocky galaxis. This listing reiterates the peer-reviewed findings of the Kosciuszko Science Conference.

On the same day as the listing, the NPWS began inviting conservation group representatives to a Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel, to provide advice to the Minister for the Environment on the preparation of a wild horse heritage management plan under the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018. Conservation groups have decided to boycott this panel as it has no credibility.

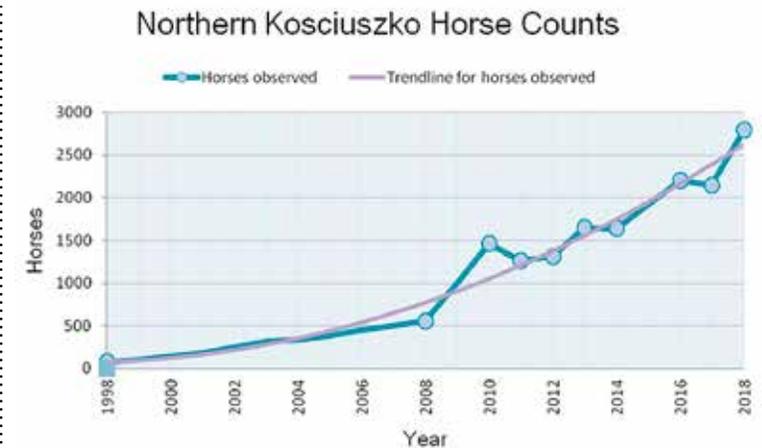
Skyrocketing horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park

Freedom of Information documents obtained by the Invasive Species Council reveals that the feral horse population in Kosciuszko National Park has risen dramatically since all horse control was halted in the park 20 months ago.

Invasive Species Council CEO Andrew Cox said "It has been almost a year since the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act went through NSW Parliament and we've seen absolutely nothing but excuses for inaction from the NSW government. By refusing to implement a horse management plan Deputy Premier John Barilaro and the NSW government are only making the problem bigger. How many more hundreds of unwanted foals are going to be born before they decide to act?"

The horse count data shows the number of horses sighted from the air over the northern end of the park doubled in just six years. In the past year alone since trapping stopped there has been a 30% increase in horses observed.

Only 75 horses were observed in the northern end



when aerial counts began in 1998. In 2018 there were 2,791 horses counted, a 34-fold increase in twenty years. Horse counts in the Big Boggy area in the southern end also show a doubling of horse numbers over six years. This growth is corroborated by a similar increase in horse dung counts in the same area. "The population is out-of-control," Mr Cox said.

"Feral horses are trampling and destroying the springs and waterways of the high country. There are endangered species such as the broad-toothed mouse losing their habitats because of this damage.

"Feral horses have no predators in Kosciuszko, and their numbers will continue to rise until they reach a limiting factor, most likely starvation or malnutrition. Many native animals will suffer a similar fate as the horses remove their food sources and shelter.

"The NSW government needs to act now and take a stand to reduce the horse population, for the protection of the park and the welfare of the horses. The time for delays is over."

The horse count data was supplied to the Invasive Species Council after an application under the NSW Government Information (Access to Information) Act. No aerial horse count data had been publicly released since 2015.

The NSW Government should abandon its Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act and take urgent action to cull horses in our iconic Kosciuszko

National Park.

**Reclaim Kosci is led by the Invasive Species Council and is supported by the National Parks Association of the ACT, National Parks Association of NSW, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Nature Conservation Council of NSW.*

Milo Dunphy (1929-1996)

You shouldn't compromise. We don't have to make the decisions, the government has to make the decisions and live or fall by them. We should say what the government ought to do, that is right for it to do, and the budgetary implications have to be worked out by the government through a system of priorities over which the conservation movement will have no control. But we have to exert our grass-roots strength because most of the people in Australia are essentially conservationists these days, thanks to the marvelous educations they've been given through the media. They understand that all these things are at stake and the conservation movement has got to give the people of Australia hope that A, they can be solved and B, it's got a clear idea of what's to be done.

Privatising national parks and the loss of wildness

BY KEITH MUIR

THE RETENTION OF nature-focused national park management requires Australians to be grounded in natural landscapes. Essentially this is a practical way of understanding Henry Thoreau's somewhat arcane message that wilderness or wildness lives inside us. Modern society has the unfortunate habit of dragging its trappings into wilderness, even when protected.

Back in 2011, then Liberal Environment Minister, Robyn Parker stretched the definition of self-reliant recreation to encompass horse riders in some NSW wilderness areas. A few years later the Hodgeman Liberal Government of Tasmania decided to pervert common understanding of self-reliance so as to include a helicopter accessed luxury resort in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. Despite state and federal government approvals for this proposed privatisation of rare wilderness in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park, the local Central Highlands Council rejected it. The proposal is now subject to appeal. The Wilderness Society has joined the case and will argue legal errors made in the environmental assessment of the proposal including its inadequate consideration of wilderness, and that no conditions have been imposed to protect wilderness values.

Stop Logging...

continued from p. 5

net greenhouse gas emissions.

"Stopping logging of public native forests will allow the recovering forests to take up and store huge volumes of atmospheric carbon as they age. This will help buy us time while we reduce emissions from other sectors.

"Burning forests to generate electricity doesn't make sense – we lose the tree's ability to take in and store carbon, and when they are burnt they release more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than burning coal.

"We are facing a climate emergency. Continuing to cut



All season operation is planned for resorts in Kosciuszko National Park.

Meanwhile Senator Eric Abetz has handed out \$2.9 million to help build private commercial cabins on the South Coast Track in another part of the South West World Heritage Wilderness Area in Tasmania. And at Lake Greeves at the foot of Federation Peak, a federal grant of \$70,000 from a regional development fund has been used to propose another resort and connecting 'iconic' walk.

Tourism development of national parks is not just a Liberal Government agenda, 'glamp-

down our terrestrial carbon store-houses and burning forests for electricity is sheer madness.

"If we want to address the climate chaos caused by rising atmospheric carbon we need to quickly move to obtaining our energy from non-polluting sources, such as wind and solar, while restoring the ability of our forests to take-up and store increasing volumes of carbon as they age.

"We need to stop logging of public native forests not increase it" Mr. Pugh said.

A 2017 review by Chatham House concluded that since "woody biomass is less energy dense than fossil fuels, and contains higher

ing' in wilderness also threatens Hinchinbrook Island, the Whitsunday Islands and Great Sandy National Parks. Commercial cabin development and 60-year leases are proposed by the Queensland Labor Government. Not to be outdone, the Victorian Labor Government has approved commercial cabin development right on top of Mt Feathertop, the second highest mountain in Victoria. Approval came with a \$34 million dollar subsidy to build a track up Razorback Mountain, spoiling one of the only true

quantities of moisture and less hydrogen, at the point of combustion burning wood for energy usually emits more greenhouse gases per unit of energy produced than fossil fuels."



peaks in Victoria. Now South Australia is getting in the game with proposals for two resorts in Flinders Chase National Park.

The pretend you're in nature lobby

The prime mover behind tourism developments is the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF), a lobby group which claims it generates \$110 billion a year. Its pre-budget submission last year recommended that "the NSW Government consider working with the private sector to develop visitor facilities and accommodation in and around national parks to grow domestic and international visitation."

As per the examples above, partnerships are translated into government subsidies for wilderness development. Commercial developments in national parks tend to have the effect of transfer payments where visitors who would have stayed in nearby regional communities adjoining national parks are diverted into remotely located resorts in parks where the developer takes all the money. It's a classic government subsidy/privatisation model, with 'transfer payments', where the commu-

nity and environment loses – there's no real economic benefit, just smoke and mirrors.

An amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park plan of management that proposes to relocate the Australian Alps Walking Track to pass through the ski resorts of Charlotte Pass, Guthega, Perisher and Thredbo, is on public exhibition in NSW now. The new route will be called the Kosciuszko Iconic Walk. The walk diverts off the scenic Main Range to an arduous and mountainous new path intended to funnel walkers through the failing ski resorts that are losing snow cover. This so-called 'iconic' walk will be completely unworkable and attempts to consolidate year-round resort operation through the development of bushwalking between resorts.

A new 'visitor services zone' on the Thredbo River complete with roofed accommodation and sewage treatment plant is also proposed – it's a big development for skiers and bike riders that will obliterate the Kosciuszko bed limit cap that has to this point controlled resort development.

What do we do about all of this? Remember first that NSW conservationists have largely held back this tide of national park development. So a campaign to again reclaim national parks back for nature is necessary. Such efforts will only be stop-gap measures, for we must never forget future generations and heed the following (paraphrased) thoughts of Blue Mountains' conservationist, Andy Macqueen:

When many people have the ability to connect simply and in depth with wilderness, to find meaning and humility, to see themselves in perspective, there'll be many to defend it. At the cultural level there'll be wilderness, even if there's no legislation to define its limits.

A wild place that can be valued, in its own way, by all Australians can be protected forever. So that, in a hundred years, in a thousand years, people may still have large intact natural areas and value them deeply—in sharp contrast to the rest of a world which may be ruled by robots.

THE COLONG FOUNDATION

SUPPORT THE COLONG FOUNDATION!

To: The Treasurer, Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd., Level 2, 332 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
The enclosed remittance or advice covers the item(s) indicated by a tick. (One cheque payable to the Colong Foundation is sufficient to cover subscription and donation.)

- Membership application for individuals or households (\$30) to 31 December 2019
(NB Membership application covers Bulletin subscription)
- Colong Bulletin Subscription (\$15) to 31 December 2019 (non members only)
- Membership renewal to 31 December 2019 (\$30) Life Membership (\$550)
- Tax deductible donation of \$ _____ to the Colong Wilderness Fund
- PLUS \$ _____ being for publications as indicated on the reverse side of this form.

NAME (Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss)

ADDRESS

PHONE

PCODE

DATE

EMAIL:

SIGNED

AMOUNT

Payment by credit card. Mastercard Visa Expiry date ____ ____

Card # _____

Payment by EFT. Account: The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. Bank: Westpac Mortdale, BSB: 032 268 Account number: 26 0221

Please include your full name to help identify your payment. So we can mail you an official tax deductible receipt, and for our accounting purposes, please also inform us when you have made a payment by emailing your name, address and donation details to foundation@colongwilderness.org.au

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION Why not join or invite a friend to join?

- Yes, I wish to become a member of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. I subscribe to the Foundation's aim of preserving Australia's wilderness remnants. I accept the liability provided in the Colong Foundation's Articles of Association to guarantee \$20 should it be needed in the event of the winding up of the Foundation. Signed

A BEQUEST

Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording... "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd.

for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd. shall be complete discharge to my

executors in respect of any sum paid to the Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd."



ABOUT THE COLONG FOUNDATION

The Colong Foundation, the successor to Myles Dunphy's National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, is Australia's longest-serving community advocate for wilderness. Its proposal for a Wilderness Act was accepted in 1987. To supplement this legislation, our Red Index, audits NSW wilderness areas; identifies threats and formulates site specific protection remedies. There are now 2,100,000 ha of protected wilderness in NSW. However, many beautiful and environmentally highly significant wilderness areas are not protected, such as the Pilliga and Goonoo on the north west slopes, the Deua Valley on the South Coast and the Tabletop and Main Range in the Snowy Mountains.

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness has had a long and successful history. From its foundation in 1968 until 1975 it was the fighting force that prevented limestone mining and the destruction of native forest for pine plantations in the southern Blue Mountains. The Foundation not only played a leading role in realising Myles Dunphy's plan for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park, it pushed for its World Heritage listing, as well as the reservation of a Border Ranges National Park and Kakadu National Park. It has initiated successful campaigns for the protection of over a million hectares of wilderness in NSW. The realisation of Myles Dunphy's vision of a comprehensive system of national parks with protected wilderness areas remains the primary objective of the Colong Foundation.

Now, more than ever, the Foundation needs your support. Well financed and powerful rural interests, miners, loggers, resort developers, as well as four wheel drive enthusiasts, horse riders and others, have greatly increased the threats facing Australia's wild places.

Only with your help, through continued membership and donations, can the Foundation continue its campaigns for the preservation of the natural environment and effective nature-based national park management, and by concentrating on wilderness, these rare areas can be kept safe from development and misuse.

SENDER: THE COLONG FOUNDATION FOR WILDERNESS
Level 2, 332 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE COLONG FOUNDATION

CELEBRATING WILDERNESS

60.00 Edited by Ian Brown, this spectacularly illustrated book with 46 full-page colour wilderness photographs by Rob Jung, David Neilson, Rob Bakers and Ian Brown is essential reading for wilderness supporters (120pp)

WILD PLACES

27.50 The meticulously researched, beautifully written book on wilderness by Peter Pirneas with photographs by Henry Gold (285pp)

BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE

50.00 Alex Colley and Henry Gold's description of the 67 year campaign culminating in World Heritage listing. (136pp)

SUSTAINABILITY

20.00 Alex Colley provides his vision on a sustainable future. (90pp)

REPAYING MY DEBT

30.00 A Conservationist's Tale. Geoff Mosley's memoir

10.00 THE GARDENS OF STONE VISITORS MAP
A full colour double sided touring map and guide to the attractions of the Gardens of Stone reserve proposal

THE BATTLE FOR THE BUSH

27.50 Geoff Mosley's account of the genesis of the nature conservation movement and saving of the Blue Mountains environment (174pp)

39.95 MYLES DUNPHY (SELECTED WRITINGS)

10.00ea CLASSIC BUSHWALKING MAPS by Myles Dunphy (Gangerang and Kowmung Maps)

LIVING WITH THE DINGO

19.00 by Adam O'Neill (107pp)

WAYFARING IN WOLLEMI

40.00 by Andy Macquern (352pp)