



GREENING OUR COMMUNITY

Funding from state and federal government grants has enabled OFF in recent months to help revegetate a number of Council reserves with native plants. Sites include Dairy Creek, Boorea Reserve near Oatley Railway Station, Moore Reserve, and land adjacent to Hurstville Golf Course at the rear of Ballantyne Street. The success of plantings in Gannons Park has impressed the new GRC Bushcare Senior Operations Leader, Erin Fardy.



Matt Allison has been instrumental in all these projects. He reminds us that our Society will be able to protect, enhance and maintain more of our green spaces if we all pitch in and do what we can. See BRIEFLY SPEAKING for opportunities for OFF members to assist in these revegetation efforts.

Until recently Matt was program officer, a position he held for 11 years. Still a committee member, he is taking a long-earned rest from arranging an impressive range of speakers. A big thank you Matt for the hard work you put into this role and continuing efforts you put into your main love, planting indigenous flora. (New comm member Adrian Polhill is now program officer.)

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2020, LIME KILN BAY, PEAKHURST

Alan Fairley registered a record 65 people (including 20 guides) at OFF's Clean Up Australia Day site and it was fabulous to see so many people of all ages taking part and leaving our waterways cleaner. The Georges Riverkeeper and the GRC Waste Education Officer congratulated our Society on a great effort.



It was hot and steamy work amongst the mangroves and the team, which included local member Mark Couré, collected about 45 bags of rubbish and 5m³ of large items, very little of it recyclable. The GPT in the golf course doesn't cope well with all the litter from a very large catchment that includes the Peakhurst Light Industrial Estate; all that rubbish drains into the Bay via a major stormwater channel. A network of GPTs further up in the catchment would be ideal to intercept the litter before it reaches the Bay. An environmental audit of the Industrial Estate would also help identify sources of litter, rubbish and other pollution and prevent them entering the channel in the first place.

PADDLE AGAINST PLASTICS

On Sunday 8th March OFF members helped the Ocean Crusaders clean up Salt Pan Creek at Lugarno and Beauty Point (Padstow Heights) on the Georges River. Among other groups participating were Georges Riverkeeper, Georges River Environmental Alliance and Bankstown Bushland Society. Over 10 tonnes of rubbish was removed by the Ocean Crusaders and volunteers over the past six days but sadly they are now moving on to clean up other waterways. OFF thanks the Crusaders and wishes them well.



TRANSITIONING TO SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Vince Heffernan is leading the way in Regenerative Agriculture, making a positive impact on our environment. He discussed how he converted his father's conventional sheep farm into a sustainable farm based on regenerative agriculture techniques using biodynamic principles. During the past 15 years he has managed his pasture land by constantly rotating his stock which graze the same paddock only 2-3 times each year. He enthralled the 55 members in attendance with his knowledge of indigenous culture and connection to country, as well as his understanding of the environment from micro-organisms in the soil to insects, small animals and birds which are co-dependent on each other. He has planted 1000s of indigenous trees and has seen some near extinct species return. Vince is also Chair of the Upper Lachlan Landcare Group, an ecologist and Regenerative Agriculture advocate. He is based in Dalton and comes to Sydney 1-2 times each month to sell his produce at Eveleigh Markets. He is a lamb producer, see www.moorlandslamb.com.au

GRC GREEN ADVOCATE AWARD TO GEORGE CARRARD

On Australia Day, George Carrard, an OFF member since 1982, received the Environmental Citizen of the Year 2020 Award from Georges River Council. George is passionate about increasing community awareness of the seriousness of global warming. For the sake of our children, he believes we must move away from the use of fossil fuels as fast as possible to mitigate the looming climate catastrophe.

Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) members meet with community leaders in business and government, including politicians at all levels of government and of all political persuasions. With the help of CCL, George has organised well attended monthly meetings since 2015 at Oatley RSL (meetings start at 2:30 pm usually in the Board Room – look out for George's advertising posters) and at the SMSA venue in Pitt St, Sydney. Meetings are well attended, especially those featuring guest speakers which have attracted audiences of up to 45. The most popular meetings have been a screening of a film about Adani, and addresses by Mark Butler and Chris Gambian. All MPs are invited to attend and/or address meetings. Attendees can talk with CCL members at meetings and be entertained by visiting speakers.

23 March 2020 - Presentation on Sir Joseph Banks – his life and legacy

Rhonda Daniels from the Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Group, will share the life and legacy of Sir Joseph Banks, Patron of the natural sciences. As a young man, in 1770, on Captain (then Lieutenant) James Cook's *Endeavour* voyage, Banks collected many plant specimens, followed by a long life supporting scientific discovery. In this 250th anniversary of the voyage Rhonda will highlight the botanical and scientific legacy of Banks, including being remembered in the *Banksia* genus and many place names including Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve at Kareela.

28 March 2020 – Field Trip to Dharawal National Park and to Koala habitat around Mt Gilead
Note change of date to Saturday 28th instead of Sunday 29th March

8.30 am start with a walk to the large and quite spectacular Jingga Pool, along O'Hares Creek, the major headwater tributary of the Upper Georges River. Walk is steep but relatively short (35 minutes to descend). A less challenging alternative walk to Stokes Creek is also on offer.

At 11 am we will meet Macarthur locals who will guide us around the remnants of the endangered shale-sandstone transition forests of Browns Bush and Beulah where they have been regularly sighting Koalas; this is outside the National Park. We could be lucky! This landscape is full of other surprises, with evidence of the frontier wars, and a settler history dating back to 1810.

Special access arrangements are necessary, so the number of participants is limited to 15-20. (If demand is high, we will endeavour to repeat the activity.) To book and for further details, please contact leader Sharyn Cullis in advance via email go_river@hotmail.com or mobile: 0421 714 391.

Advance Notice – Field Trip 3 May – change of location

This will be a 6-7 km walk in the lower Blue Mountains - Florabella Pass Walk from Warrimoo to Blaxland. More details in next OFF News.

Advance Notice – OFF Annual Dinner, 9 July 2020

Members and friends are invited to attend our Annual Dinner. The dinner will be held on Thursday 9 July 2020, in the Macquarie Room at Mortdale RSL, 6.30 pm for a 7 pm start. The cost is \$38 per person. Dinner includes a two-course meal with bread rolls, cupcake, and self-serve tea and coffee. Guests may purchase their own drinks at the bar. Donations for our annual raffle are most welcome. Contact: Sue Howard 9579 1718 or Vicki Bolling 9580 3107.

Meetings of the Society are held at the Oatley RSL Sub-Branch Hall, 25 Letitia St, Oatley) from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. Visitors and accompanied children are welcome at meetings and field days.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is on second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm. Meet at entrance on Oatley Park Ave. New participants welcome, contact John Kensett, GRC Bushcare Officer, 0435 963 643

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites on the fourth Thursday of each month (except December) from 8.00 am to 11 am. This month, on Thursday 26th, we will be working at Boorea Reserve (River Road near railway underpass).

MYLES DUNPHY STREAMWATCH details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings. New volunteers always welcome.

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings at Oatley RSL, held at 2.30 pm on the second Sunday of every month. All welcome.

EARTH HOUR is on again on Sunday, 22 March from 8.30pm. This is an opportunity to protect the future of the one home we all share by ensuring the environment is at the top of the global agenda.

THE FUNCTIONAL DIVERSITY OF STREET TREES – a talk by postgrad student (Biological Sciences) Sophie Moore to East Hills Group of Australian Plants Society, Wed 1 April, 7.30 pm at Lugarno-Peakhurst Uniting Church, Forest Road, opposite Chivers Hill shops. All welcome.

GLOBAL WARMING

During the next few months OFF will be updating its strategy and action plan on how the community can work towards minimising the impact we have on global warming and ways to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Inputs from members are critical in the formation of this strategy and action plan.

WATER FOR WILDLIFE - IFAW GRANT

OFF (incorporated) was approached by Peter Ridgeway from Water for Wildlife (non-incorporated) to accept a grant on their behalf from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). OFF also worked with Greater

Sydney Local Land Services to purchase water stations while numerous local community groups also purchased, installed and monitored water stations in fire affected regions.

To date 150-200 water stations for wildlife have been installed. IFAW funds directly purchased 120 water stations but many additional stations were donated by stores or groups who decided to buy extras of their own

A number of stations were co-located with cameras and results from 5% of those have been retrieved and analysed. Preliminary results show that the water station design is very effective. Already **at least 19 wildlife species** have drunk from the stations including **Kangaroos (three species), Possums, and numerous birds particularly Kingfishers, Ducks, Honeyeaters and Robins**. Importantly the **stations have helped natives, not pests**: out of hundreds of wildlife detections so far just one feral animal (a European Hare) has been observed but apparently not drinking from the station.



2020 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE Many thanks to OFF members who have paid their subs for 2020. OFF values your continued membership, please renew soon if you have not done so already. Subscription is still only \$25 per person or family living at the same address.