



STATEMENT TO MEMBERS RE CURRENT COVID -19 CRISIS

Dear OFF Members,

I hope you are all well and are able to deal with the difficulties of daily living during the current serious and restrictive COVID -19 situation. The speed with which it has developed has caused our whole nation to change and change rapidly.

Although we cancelled the general meeting scheduled for 23 March and the field day for 28 March, the OFF committee met (quite successfully via the 'Zoom' conferencing app) recently and decided to try to keep OFF operating to the greatest extent possible. We believe it is important to keep members informed and involved during this difficult period.

In this regard we will continue producing this newsletter as long as it can be done remotely and in compliance with current COVID-19 movement restrictive rules and with everyone's safety uppermost in mind. And of course we can post items on the OFF website and Facebook page for those who can access them.

General meetings in the RSL sub-branch hall have been cancelled at least until June when the latest situation will be reviewed. However as an alternative offering we will try to arrange for the scheduled speakers to deliver their talks over a suitable internet function. This may or may not include the ability to interact with the speaker remotely. We will also endeavour to record the proceedings for later viewing by those who could not access it on the night. If we cannot facilitate the speaker delivery on the scheduled date we will try to arrange it at an appropriate time later in the year when hopefully things might return to normal operations.

Likewise field days have been cancelled at least until June when the latest situation will be reviewed. Unfortunately we cannot arrange a virtual field day but we will again try to arrange the field day when and where feasible at an appropriate time later in the year.

I'm pleased to also say OFF will be undertaking production of the Oatley Calendar for 2021 as we have generally done on alternate years with the Oatley Heritage and Historical Society (OHHS). A call for submission of photos for potential inclusion is in this edition of the newsletter. We will be ensuring once again that OFF members' and the wider community's safety is highest priority in the process of delivering this project.

I look forward to your continued participation in OFF 'activities' over these difficult times. As you can appreciate this will be an evolving process over the coming months. If you have any concerns or queries or would like to provide feedback feel free to email or call me or other committee members.

With kind regards and please stay safe.

Kim Wagstaff
President



GRANTS

* The new brochure describing the Headland Track in Oatley Park has been finalised and will be available soon. A big "thank you" to Shaun Keyes-Byrne for guiding this project to completion.

* Planting has taken place around the Hurstville Golf Course/Ballantyne Road thanks to a \$3000 **Minister's Conservation Fund** grant via Mark Couré.

SALE OF LUGARNO WATERFRONT LAND

OFF is concerned about the loss of waterfront access if the sub-division of Glenlee (80 Boronia Pde) goes ahead. Current and draft Foreshore Scenic Protection Zones are 60 metres from the water's edge, so there should be no development on the slope up from the river.



COAL MINING PERMITTED UNDER WORONORA DAM

The Berejiklian government has approved the extension of coal mining under Woronora reservoir. The last time such mining was allowed was under the Cataract Dam in 2000. This caused subsidence and cracks reaching the surface which resulted in leakage from the reservoir. OFF has joined other conservation bodies in opposing this policy

GRC DRAFT LEP

This is on display at Council until 15 May. It involves extensive changes to harmonise the two former council's LEPs. The increased density planned under the revised Foreshore Scenic Protection Areas is a worry and we encourage members to view the plans and comment on them to council.

See: <https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/lep2020>

SUBMISSION ON MOORE RESERVE DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

OFF's submission to GRC emphasised the need to strengthen volunteer bush care and increase contractor bush regeneration, supported by undertaking a biodiversity survey, develop a stormwater management plan, install a leachate treatment facility, implement an education campaign for nearby residents to assist them in understanding the importance of the bushland and opposed any additional developments which would reduce open space



OATLEY CALENDAR 2021

OFF is calling for photos to be used in the 2021 calendar, highlighting natural images of Oatley and the Georges River. A limit of 5 entries per person is allowed with 1 photo per person published in the calendar. Entries should be taken within the Georges River Council area and emailed to OFF2021calendar@outlook.com with the photographer's name, image title and short description of when and where the photo was taken.

Entries close on 15th August 2020.

Coming OFF Events in April/May 2020

OFF Full Year Events Calendar at: off.oatleypark.com/program

OFF will continue with the monthly guest speaker program for 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we must conduct these meetings on-line. The meetings will be run using the video conference application Zoom, which you can download for free via this link: <https://zoom.us/> or from the Google Play Store or from the App Store for Android and Apple devices. You should run a test before the meeting to ensure you can connect on the presentation night. You will receive an invitation prior to meetings with the Meeting Id and Password.

27 April 2020 – Longwall mining under Sydney's water catchment.

Aquatic Ecology Specialist Catherine Cunningham from Sydney Water will share her knowledge of longwall mining within Sydney's water catchment areas and the potential impact on drinking water supply infrastructure. This is very timely as the NSW Government has recently approved the extension of coal mining under the Woronora reservoir. *Note: As there was no meeting last month due to COVID-19, there is no report. Perhaps we can hear about Joseph Banks later.*

3 May 2020 (Sunday) – Lower Blue Mountains - Florabella Pass Walk from Warrimoo to Blaxland. Leader: Adrian Buzo. **Cancelled due to Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic**

Advance Notice – Field Trip 31 May – Lime Kiln Bay – Cryptogam field trip and workshop (limit 15).

Leaders: David Eldridge and Heather Stolle. (Cryptogams are algae, lichens, mosses and ferns, but also include non-photosynthetic organisms traditionally classified as plants, such as fungi, slime moulds and bacteria.) **Cancelled due to COVID-19 as will all field trips until June, unless otherwise notified.**

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.

Note that the dinner may be postponed or cancelled depending on the outcome of the coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic. Watch future Newsletters for updates.

Meetings of the Society are normally 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.

However, until the restrictions of the COVID-19 Pandemic are lifted meetings will be held digitally using the Zoom application.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is normally on second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm. However, due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic, these groups are cancelled until further notice.

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can usually assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites on the fourth Thursday of each month (except December) from 8.00 am to 11 am. But these sessions are cancelled until further notice due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic

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, but are cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings at Oatley RSL, held at 2.30 pm on the second Sunday of every month. These meetings are also cancelled due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE EPBC ACT 1999. OFF has lodged a submission to this important review.

GLOBAL WARMING

OFF has formed four teams which will research specific topics and formulate a suggested strategy and action plan on how the community can work towards minimising greenhouse gas emissions. The scope of each team is:

1. Food: Reduce Food Waste / Plant rich diets / Regenerative Agriculture
2. Energy & Buildings: Roof top solar systems / Green energy sources / Refrigerant Management / Building automation / LED lighting
3. Country: "Re-greening" of country / Afforestation
4. Transportation: Bike infrastructure / Electric vehicles / Ride sharing

The major outcome of this strategy, is to provide solutions on how the community can work towards minimising the impact we have on global warming and ways to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

OFF is requesting any interested members to contact Adrian Polhill (0424 478 498). He will be delighted to share more details with you, and receive your valuable inputs which are critical in the formation of this strategy and action plan.

WATER FOR WILDLIFE - IFAW GRANT

Water for Wildlife have now purchased additional cameras with the IFAW funds that OFF had accepted on their behalf. This completes OFF's Involvement in this wonderful project.

SNOWY 2.0 STORAGE PROJECT IN KOSCIUSZKO NP

OFF has joined other environmental organisations to sign an open letter to NSW MPs Rob Stokes (Planning) and Matt Kean (Energy and Environment) appealing for them **not** to approve the Environmental Impact Statement for the main works of Snowy 2.0 project located in Kosciuszko National Park at least until a full independent review has taken place. The letter points out that approving the plan would endorse the construction of a massive development, extending over thousands of hectares (construction "project area" reportedly up to 1/3 of the NP area – the Australian, 15/04/20), with unparalleled adverse environmental impacts. It would mean the dumping of 14 million cubic metres of excavated spoil, much of it contaminated with asbestos, in the Park. Hundreds of hectares of alpine habitat would be destroyed, threatening already endangered flora and fauna.



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.

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