



Welcome to the newly elected OFF Committee for 2022. President, Kim Wagstaff, was re-elected as were Adrian Polhill and Graham Lalchere as Vice-Presidents. We welcome to the committee Sue de Beuzeville and Sue Howard who will jointly take over the Membership Officer role from Robin Dickson, who is retiring after 13 years in the position and 28 years on committee. Thank you Robin. Vicki Bolling will become Minute Secretary following Liz Cameron's retirement from the Secretary's position. Thank you Liz as well. However, we still require a member(s) to undertake the remaining duties of the Secretary's role. Please consider.

SECRETARY'S REPORT, SUMMARY: Liz Cameron

Highlights:

- Revegetation of parks & reserves - 950 native plants, over 140 hours of labour; collaboration with GSLN's Creating Canopies program & GRC.
- Signage installed on Headland Track in Oatley Park and linked to OFF website, interpretive brochures printed.
- Council adopted two place names OFF proposed – Boorea for Oatley reserve that OFF has revegetated, and Myles Dunphy Creek.
- Membership grew to 312.
- \$6,000 in research grants disbursed to three postgraduate students.
- Objections lodged to DAs for properties in Foreshore Scenic Protection Area – including 'Glenlee', Lugarno.
- Submissions on GRC Management Plans for Oatley Bowling Club site and Oatley Flying-fox Camp.
- Submissions on Draft PoM for Royal NP, Kosciuszko NP Wild Horse Heritage, Warragamba Dam Raising Project.
- Successful bid to hold nature photography exhibition in Hurstville Museum and Gallery next June.
- Propagated casuarinas, shrubs and trees to revegetate rural properties; planted eucalypts at Kurnell Desalination Plant.

Campaigns:

- Repair damage to Oatley Park and other bushland from unauthorised bike tracks, unregulated parking in OP; requests to Council to rectify damage, suggestions for mitigation. Supported dedicated bike facility.
- OP Plan of Mgt & Master Plan – Council invited OFF's feedback.
- Loss of trees in LGA – lobbied for creation of Significant Tree Register and for all tree removal applications to be posted on GRC website.
- Mine threats to water resources - opposed Wongawilli Colliery - Modification 2 Proposal - under Sydney Water Catchment.
- Koalas – supported funding for "Koala Corridor" documentary; attended Koala Day of Action; petitioned Minister for Environment to save Menangle Creek Koala Corridor from development.
- Promoted Save Glenlee (Lugarno) campaign
- Health hazards of wood heaters – lobbied local and state governments.

Maintenance and Monitoring

- Bushcare at four sites (140 hours); Streamwatch and rubbish audits in Dairy and Myles Dunphy Creeks (60 hours). Clean Up Australia Day with Oatley Lions in Poulton Park (27 registered). Georges River Paddle Against Plastic, Graffiti Removal Day
- New focus on pollution by microplastics from synthetic turf playing fields

Membership and Activities

- Eleven issues of OFF News published, Facebook page continues to promote activities
- Ten meetings held, four in person with simultaneous broadcast via Zoom; six on Zoom only. Average audience 35; 56 for Richard Kingsford's presentation on Sturt NP. Four recipients of OFF research grants gave talks. Up to 14 visitors logged into individual Zoom broadcasts. Most presentations uploaded to OFF's YouTube channel.
- Only three field activities, average of 11 participants; 18 joined Sharyn Cullis's trip to SW Sydney where a Koala population is threatened.
- Three pre-Christmas street stalls with OHHS and Oatley Lions in Oatley and Mortdale. Annual Dinner cancelled but 31 attended Annual Picnic in Oatley Park Castle in December.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, SUMMARY: Kim Wagstaff

As we can see from Liz's report, OFF covered a lot of territory not only in terms of issues but also ranging from local to state and national. We have put in a huge effort towards delivering our mission. Recent successes include:

Tree/shrub planting: In 2017, OFF members committed to various 're-greening' events and on-going maintenance in an effort to reverse the impacts of development on local habitat. Over 5 years in excess of 8450 plants were planted and maintained at 6 sites: Boorea and Moore Reserves, Gannon's Park, parts of Hurstville Golf Course and 2 sites in Peakhurst. More than 1290 volunteer hours were contributed. These re-greening events represent wins for the community, wildlife and the environment.

Research Grants OFF Research Grants have proved to be very successful. Many of the winning recipients from previous years have given presentations at OFF meetings. Those of you who have seen them I'm sure would be very satisfied that our consolidated, donated funds are going towards significant research projects enhancing our knowledge of Australia's flora and fauna. In 2021, from 11 applications, 3 were chosen to receive \$2000 each. We look forward to hearing about their research in the coming year.

Membership numbers - have been maintained if not increased slightly and we are forging and leveraging connections and partnerships with other local organisations and umbrella environmental groups. Working together certainly energises us all and increases our influence and the likelihood of positive outcomes from our combined effort. OFF continues this successful strategy.

The year ahead –

Nature photographic exhibition – This initiative pursues OFF's core business of raising awareness of our native flora and fauna. To be held in May/June at Hurstville Museum and Gallery, using exhibits of local photographers, OFF seeks to highlight the biodiversity that makes our bushland rich and special – the beautiful, unusual and overlooked plants and animals that live around us. I encourage all members to spread the word.

Oatley Park Plan of Management and Masterplan - OFF was started by local residents defending the local bushland from pillaging and has defended the integrity of the iconic Oatley Park ever since. Council is seeking local users' views for new plans. We must contribute strongly and comprehensively to this process to ensure the high value of the Park's flora and fauna is acknowledged with the top priority for management actions.

Georges River Council relations - I believe we can look forward to much better communication with GRC and greater acceptance of our objectives for the local environment, with the recent election of 7 new councillors, in particular those from Georges River Residents and Ratepayers including Oatley resident and OFF member Peter Mahoney. The group's statement of environmental initiatives aligns well with OFF's aims in its activities.

Vote of Thanks I'd like to thank all the OFF committee members for their support, contributions and hard work in keeping OFF running effectively and efficiently, in particular two members who are retiring from their current roles. Special thanks to **Liz Cameron** for her huge effort in the role of Secretary for 13 years. You have heard, in Liz's report, all the activities that we have undertaken in the year. This level of activity has been increasing in the last decade of OFF's existence which would not have been possible without Liz's tireless contribution to OFF's work. Supporting and keeping track of the range of projects has really kept OFF up to date with current issues and has underpinned the achievements of the whole Society. Thank you so much Liz! **Robin Dickson** is retiring from the committee after 28 years, filling the role of Secretary for 11 years and that of Membership and Welfare officer for 17 years. Robin's good-natured dedication to the role of chasing up and recording memberships as well as following up member welfare issues has really contributed to the high and increasing membership numbers by filling that vital role of two way communication, keeping members in touch with OFF and OFF in touch with members. Thank you very much Robin.

Finally, **thank you all OFF members** for your support and participation. Please continue providing feedback on our activities, events and campaigns – improvements and suggested new ones. Together we can work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment – locally and globally.

Both addresses will be published in full on the OFF web site

Coming OFF Events in February/March 2022

OFF Full Year Events Calendar will be at: <http://www.oatleyflorafauna.org.au/index.php/progam/>

Due to uncertainty with COVID, we will continue with on-line meetings only for the time being. Meetings will be held using the video conference application Zoom. You will receive an invitation prior to meetings or use this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_daK5memiUveVb7bERqr5WgKybi2w. Note that some earlier presentations can be found on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd_PLK8og40D0eKuYAys3IQ

28 February 2022 — Effects of reintroduction of Western Quoll on prey species, and Refuges for Crest-tailed Mulgara after drought.

These topics will be presented by UNSW postgraduates who were OFF 2021 grant recipients.

Ben Stepkovitch will present his findings from investigating both positive and negative effects on the ecosystem of reintroducing a native predator, the western quoll (*Dasyurus geoffroii*), inside the Arid Recovery fenced reserve, South Australia. Ben is a Research grant recipient studying for his PhD at the UNSW Centre for Ecosystem Science, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences. He also studied urban red foxes in Sydney for his Master of Research.

Dympna Cullen will tell us about her research to determine the attributes and connectivity of ecological refuges for the crest-tailed mulgara following a prolonged period of drought. Dympna is a PhD candidate at UNSW and works as a Casual Senior Field Ecologist for the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) on various translocations and surveys, and as an independent Wildlife Biologist on various projects. Prior to commencing her PhD, Dympna worked and did research at Scotia Sanctuary and researched Koalas on Kangaroo Island.

19 March (Saturday) – Shorebirds of Boat Harbour walk, Kamay-Botany Bay NP and Boat Harbour

Walk approx 2.5 km each way from Voodoo Point carpark; fairly flat terrain along beaches, sand dunes and intertidal rock platforms, some scrubbing and short bush bashing through low shrubbery to sandy track, down rough rock steps to Boat Harbour beach and intertidal rock platform. View migratory and resident shorebirds, perhaps Red-necked Stint, Ruddy Turnstone and Pacific Golden Plover coming into breeding plumage before they head off on migration to Arctic breeding grounds- Also resident Sooty Oystercatchers, terns and cormorants. Possible picnic lunch in Kamay-Botany Bay NP on the hill above Captain Cook obelisk and later optional swim at Silver Beach. Meet 8:30 am, Sir Joseph Banks Dr, Kurnell, opp entrance to the Desal Plant where we can rationalise cars as restricted parking at Voodoo Point carpark in Kamay-Botany Bay NP where walk starts. Medium difficulty, slippery rock platform, danger of snakes, exposure. Wear sturdy bushwalking sandals, sneakers or bushwalking shoes you don't mind getting wet. Hats, sunscreen, general sun protection. Bring water and snacks (morning tea) Leader: Debbie Andrew 0490 172 501 or email for more details: debA55@tpg.com.au Notify if going at least 2 days prior, limit 20.

6 March 2021 (Sunday) – Clean Up Australia Day. (CUA) <https://www.cleanup.org.au/cleanupaustaliaday>

OFF will have two sites this year, one in the morning and one in the afternoon

Lime Kiln Bay Wetlands, Peakhurst 8.30 – 11.30 am. Event No. 26817 on Clean Up Australia website. Meet: Jinna Reserve, at the bottom of Pamela Avenue, Peakhurst Heights. Gumboots recommended; low tide at Oatley will be around 6.00am and high tide about 12.20pm.

Kyle Williams Reserve, Blakehurst 1.30-3.30 pm Event No. 26823 on Clean Up Australia website. Meet: Junction of Aveling Street and Wentworth Avenue, Blakehurst.

Wear covered-in footwear, hats, gloves; preferably long-sleeved shirts and long pants; bring sunscreen, insect repellent & water bottle. A pair of tongs is handy. Sign in using QR code provided by CUA; sign-in sheet and pens will also be available

Advance Notice – Dharawal National Park, 27 March (Sunday)

COVID-19 information. As noted above, the next meeting will only be held on-line.

Members who have not renewed their 2022 membership are reminded that fees are now due. See the November/December 2020 edition for payment details or the membership form on the OFF website...

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is normally held on the second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm, except January. Next month it will be held on 12 March. Meet at the entrance on Oatley Park Avenue. New participants welcome, please contact John Kensett - GRC Bushcare Officer, m: 0435 963 643.

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites each month on the Thursday after general meetings (except December) from 8.00 am to 11 am. This month we will be back on 24 Feb at Boorea Reserve (near Oatley Station) supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer. We would welcome new bushcarers. Just contact: <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering> website and volunteers will be notified via email.

STREAMWATCH Details Heather Stolle 0425 291 879. This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Dairy Creek on 1 March.

CITIZENS' CLIMATE LOBBY meetings are held at 2:30 pm on the second Sunday of every month at Club Oatley (RSL) and are also on-line at zoom.us/j/2023151151. Details text George on 0467004892.

OATLEY PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT. Georges River Council is currently planning for the future of Oatley Park. They are developing a Plan of Management and Master Plan, which will help inform Council upgrades over the next 10 years. They are seeking input from the public and interested groups on how the park is currently used and accessed to help them reach inclusive and community-driven decisions on the future vision for the space. OFF encourages its members to participate in this process and emphasise members' interests in ensuring that the natural environment is uppermost in the minds of the team developing the plans. You can complete a survey on the council website or submit a submission, either on-line or as a hard-copy **by 28 February**. <https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/oatley-park-plan>

PHOTO EXHIBITION – LOCAL BIODIVERSITY. Don't forget to enter your photos/videos in OFF's exhibition. **DEADLINE EXTENDED TO 11 MARCH.**