



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS OF HAZARD REDUCTIONS

Speaker – Scott Deller, the Operations Response Coordinator, RFS.

Our October speaker was Scott Deller from the Rural Fire Service (RFS). He spoke about the Black Summer Bushfires and its impact. He then outlined the process of carrying out prescribed burns or as we know them, “burning off”. It was quite surprising to hear how much planning they have to go into before RFS can carry out a prescribed burn. However, prescribed burns are very dependent on favourable conditions and often, after RFS staff have spent considerable time preparing for a fire, the weather intervenes with either rain or strong winds and the whole process is cancelled.

One of the other interesting aspects of his presentation was that prescribed burns are good for protecting areas from moderate fires but not from wild hot fires. There is no mechanism for controlling extreme fires and evacuation is then the only strategy available. Scott also stated that protecting wildlife, particularly koalas, is also a high priority when fighting fires. One interesting point he made was that small urban forest patches such as Poulton Park and Oatley Park are too small to become major fire threats.

Scott's talk can be viewed on OFF's YouTube channel. [here](#).

GLENLEE UPDATE

Some hopeful news! Recently Friends of Glenlee attended a community forum in Riverwood with Chris Minns, NSW Labor Leader, and Penny Sharpe, Shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

When questioned, Penny Sharpe said that she was well aware of the importance of protecting Glenlee and dismayed at the lack of progress made by the government. She committed that, if Labor are elected, they will work with all stakeholders to find a way to protect Glenlee for the community.

Chris Minns also endorsed what Penny had said.

FORESHORE SCENIC PROTECTION AREA (FSPA)

The Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA) is again under threat from Georges River Council (GRC).

In 2020, just two years ago, the communities of Oatley West, Mortdale, Peakhurst, Peakhurst Heights and Lugarno soundly rejected GRC's attempt to drastically reduce the area of the FSPA in the Georges River Local Environmental Plan (LEP). We wanted to retain and protect the green and leafy nature of our suburbs.

Since that time, GRC engaged consultants to carry out a Biodiversity Study and a Foreshore Scenic Character Study (FSCS). Council are now calling on residents for feedback before the recently extended consultation period which now closes on 30th Nov 2022, to have 'Your Say' on these 2 [studies](#). The Character Study calls for a significant reduction to the FSPA (over 3,300 lots) in western parts of the Local Government Area (LGA) while only partially substituting it with potentially less protective “Unique Character Areas” (UCA). It is proposed that 1,049 lots currently in the FSPA will not be included in either of the proposed FSPA or UCAs.

The studies also propose that FSPA zone controls in Georges River LEP 2021 be weakened to exclude environmental values when considering a Development Application (DA), and recommends moving and rewording these key biodiversity protection objectives from the FSPA section to a new separate biodiversity section which covers the whole LGA.

We are urging residents to again write a submission to GRC before the new closing date 30th Nov'2022.

The key points for any submission are:

1. For GRC not to alter or reduce the areas covered by the FSPA in Oatley West, Mortdale, Peakhurst, Peakhurst Heights and Lugarno as it provides a low density buffer zone around creek lines and waterways to maximise infiltration rather than run-off for stormwater and protect our leafy suburbs.
2. Retain the existing zoning objectives for the FSPA as stipulated in GRC LEP'2021 Cl. 6.6(1), which places greater emphasis on

environmental factors as well as scenic characteristics when GRC considers a DA.

3. Retain the 7 paragraphs as detailed in Cl. 6.6(3) of GRC's LEP, which also places an emphasis on environmental factors as well as the built environment, which must be considered by GRC prior to issuing any development consent for a DA within the FSPA. See objectives in Cl.6.6 <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0587#sec.6.6>
4. In light of GRC's tree canopy study, no consideration should be given to reducing lot sizes or other measures which could result in loss of biodiversity. Tree canopy cover is currently 29-33% and the target is 40.4%. Bushland areas have an average cover of 79% while other areas have coverage ranging from open space (26%), low density (16%), medium density (13%) to high density (12%). This indicates that most of the additional 10% or so of canopy cover required must come from the non-bushland areas, including low and medium density, most under threat from reduced lot sizes and losses for new housing.
5. That GRC retain the controls within its LEP of 700sqm for the creation of a new lot, 1,000sqm lot size for a dual occupancy and 30% minimum landscape area within the entire existing FSPA, which helps protect the biodiversity within private properties, keeps traffic and off-street car parking to acceptable levels, allows older infrastructure such as water and sewerage systems to keep pace with development and does not place an undue burden on local schools, medical facilities, hospital services and our public transport system.
6. The Biodiversity Study included a desk top assessment across the whole LGA. However supporting field surveys were limited to the areas with higher biodiversity values (Level 2 and level 3) identified in the desk top study. “Private properties were also not considered for field assessment due to small lot sizes, and as such lower likelihood of biodiversity, as well as access issues.” So, biodiversity in more urban and developed areas may be under-represented as the Level 1 areas were subject to desktop assessment only. Given this, your submission could also include photographs of the biodiversity in and around your property giving examples of the flora and fauna that contribute to your neighbourhood and making it so special.
7. Council introduce new local character clauses and character statements in its LEP (rather than the DCP) for each Unique Character Area identified in the FSCS to complement the existing zoning controls for the FSPA in GRC LEP 2021.
8. GRC prepare Development Control Plans (DCP) for:
 - a) New green corridors for existing/future habitat connectivity corridors;
 - b) Areas to improve tree canopy coverage.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR OPPOSITION TO THE REDUCTION IN THE FSPA AS OUTLINED IN THE FSCS. SUBMISSIONS CLOSE 30TH NOV.

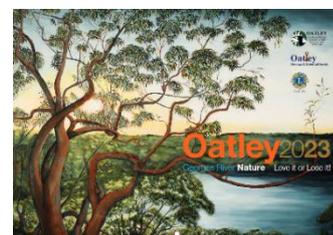
.LOT SIZE SURVEY

For the GRC's [survey](#) of lot size preference for those areas proposed to be excluded from the proposed FSPA or UCAs, we urge you to vote in favour of retaining the larger lot sizes and hence protect our precious biodiversity.

If you have already sent a submission, you can send another submission with any new or additional points you wish to make!

2023 CALENDAR

Remember to buy your 2023 OFF calendar, available at the locations listed in the Sep/Oct News, the Oatley Lions Christmas Market Day at the Uniting Church (Sat 26 Dec) where OFF will have a stall and at Saturday morning street stalls at Oatley (3 & 17 Dec) and Mortdale (10 Dec).



Coming OFF Events in November/December 2022

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

We have returned again to face-to-face meetings, starting at 7.30pm, in the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley. Meetings will also be available on-line, using the video conference application Zoom. If you are on the OFF News email list, you will receive an invitation prior to meetings or use this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3742141020?pwd=i_dak5memiUVeVb7bERqr5WgKybj2w Note: Some OFF presentations & movies can now be found on [YouTube](#)

28 November – Billion Bees Project. Saverio Russo. Note. The speaker advertised in the annual program is unavailable.

Saverio will talk about the black summer bushfires of 2020, and pollination. He will also discuss the future of the bee industry as a whole.

Saverio spent 37 years in the hospitality industry and the last 8 years as a wine maker. Working closely with biodynamic/organic growers he began to see the depletion of insects through current farming practices. Searching for a birthday present for his 4 year-old son, he attended an indigenous workshop and learnt that Australia has stingless bees, which that alone he found astonishing; the perfect gift. Saverio then became captivated with them and the number of colonies expanded dramatically and led to the forming of a foundation dedicated to the restoration and long-term conservation of Australian bees in our communities.

27 November Sunday –. Forest Path, Royal National Park, Lesley Wylie. Note that this is a different walk from that advertised in the annual program.

A rainforest walk through the Forest Path track in the Royal National Park, at the Waterfall end of Lady Carrington Drive. It's a short 5 km easy walk along the Port Hacking River and Bola creek. Bring morning tea, snacks, water etc. Then afterwards we are planning a picnic lunch at Audley if you want to join us - you can purchase lunch from the café or bring your own. Meet at 9:30am at the carpark on Lady Carrington Drive north of the Waterfall turn-off at McKell Avenue. If you intend to come please let Lesley Wylie know (0400 562 085), in case we cancel the walk due to weather.

5 December - Christmas Picnic in Oatley Park 5.30pm in the Castle (arrive earlier if you would like to park nearby). BYO meal and Christmas cheer and perhaps a chair and small table to supplement the seating in the Castle. You can renew your membership at the picnic. After a year with only a few OFF gatherings, this will be a nice opportunity to catch up with other members in a relaxed social gathering. New members are particularly welcome.

3, 10 and 17 December - Street Stalls to sell 2023 Oatley calendar. Please contact Liz Cameron on 9580 6621 (you can leave a voicemail message) if you are able to assist at these stalls. Oatley 3 Dec, Mortdale 10 Dec and Oatley 17 Dec.

Advance notice: 6 February - Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Next year's first Monday meeting will be the Annual general Meeting. A reminder that this is the time when we call for members to form a new Committee for 2023. You are invited to nominate at the AGM. Please consider joining the committee and having your say in what the Society does.

Meetings of the Society are at the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick 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. As noted above, the meeting is accessible on-line using ZOOM.

BRIEFLY SPEAKING

OATLEY PARK BUSHCARE group is normally on the second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm, except January. The next session will be on 10 Dec. Please check with Bushcare officer on 0435 963 643 before coming.

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 1 December at lower Gannons Park, supervised by a GRC Bushcare officer. <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering>

STREAMWATCH This activity usually takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Myles Dunphy Reserve on 29 November. Please check by ringing 0430 968 260 before coming, particularly as our equipment supplies are low and have not been replenished recently.

BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY (BBS) is having a planting day at Deepwater Park, Milperra on December 10. This event is sponsored by a Queen's Jubilee grant. Start time is 0900 and the place is the mound on Henry Lawson Drive at the locked gate just north of Webster St. OFF members are welcome to join in.

KOALA PROTECTION CAMPAIGN ePetition to NSW Legislative Assembly 'Save the Koalas of Sydney' has been signed by more than 20,000 people, so it will now be debated in parliament. Closing date was 15 November.

Don't forget to follow the **OFF Facebook** page and the **OFF website** to find more information on OFF's activities and events, including videos and photos of past OFF walks and talks and other interesting information.

CITIZEN'S CLIMATE LOBBY

Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL), Oatley branch will host Oatley MLA Mark Coure at their regular meeting on Sunday 13 December in the Oatley RSL & Community Club. Mr Coure will address the meeting in the Board Room starting at 2:30 pm. Prior to this, CCL members, friends and others who may be interested are invited to a pre-meeting lunch at the RSL commencing from 1 pm; look for a Citizens' Climate Lobby T-shirts.

This invitation of course includes OFF members, many of whom have an interest in the hot topic of climate change and how the NSW Government is responding to this burning issue. You can also attend on-line at zoom.us/j/2023151151. For details text George on 0467004892

SYDNEY BASIN KOALA NETWORK

OFF has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to become a collaborator with the [Sydney Basin Koala Network](#) (SBKN) established by Total Environment Centre (TEC) and WIRES with the aim to protect and expand connected, thriving Koala core habitats and corridors across the Sydney Basin.

SBKN, which aims to support and collaborate with local groups fighting for koala protection, is **running its first citizen science training day in Rosemeadows, Campbelltown, on November 26th 10am-4pm**. If you would like to become an accredited koala citizen scientist, please [register](#)

[for training](#) and learn more about koala ecology and habitat and how to accurately spot and report koala sightings that will help protect their habitat.

