



Welcome to the newly elected OFF Committee for 2023. President, Kim Wagstaff, was re-elected as were Adrian Polhill and Graham Lalchere as Vice-Presidents, and Rodger Robertson as Treasurer. We welcome to the committee Scott Shade who will take over the Secretary's position from Erica Buzo. The 10 other committee members positions were all filled giving OFF a complete committee for 2023. All committee details will be printed on the program which comes out shortly

SECRETARY'S REPORT, SUMMARY: Kim Wagstaff

Despite COVID restrictions and massive wet weather disruptions to our 2022 program, OFF made significant advances in protecting and enhancing our natural environment.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Nature photographic exhibition "TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE" held in Hurstville Museum and Gallery in June and supported by NCC. We spread OFF's message and raised our profile in the wider Georges River area. This exhibition garnered many positive comments from over 450 visitors to the gallery over the 26 days of its showing. They enjoyed beautiful photos of our precious local flora and fauna. OFF thanks the talented local photographers who contributed photos, the NCC and all who worked so hard to make the exhibition a success.

Book launch - OFF was a co-host of an event at Hazelhurst Gallery, for the launch of *Georges River Blues*, award winning author and historian, Heather Goodall's new book on Swamps, Mangroves and Resident Action 1945 – 1980. Over 60 people attended. The accounts of the early activists for the Georges River environment provide inspiration for all our current-day 'greenies'.

Revegetation of local parks and reserves with native plants in collaboration with Greater Sydney Landcare Network and Georges River Council (GRC); more than 150 hours of volunteer labour invested and 1,660 trees and ground cover species planted at Carss Park; Claydon Reserve (2 days); and Renown Park.

Rotary Adopt-A-Tree Program - Adrian Polhill worked with Rotary Adopt-A-Tree project team to identify planting sites for 8750 native trees and shrubs. Outcomes: Over 2 weekends OFF members and others planted 2,000 plants at Moorlands, Vince Heffernan's biodynamic sheep property near Dalton; OFF members also joined Rotary, Lions, and friends to plant 1,800 plants at Severn Park near Berridale, the property of Charley Massy, another regenerative farmer.

OFF Research grants worth \$6,000 were disbursed to three postgraduate students, who presented very interesting and well-prepared talks on their research findings to OFF meetings. This continues to be a strategic and successful Program in not only providing great speakers and topics for our meetings but also advancing nature conservation science.

CAMPAIGNS:

Misuse, overuse of Oatley Park and other bushland areas in LGA - OFF made repeated requests to Council to rectify damage from unauthorised bike tracks and unregulated car parking, recommending actions to mitigate damage.

GRC is developing a **new Oatley Park Plan of Management and Masterplan (PoM&MP)**. The current PoM is dated 2004. Council sought public input. OFF attended a webinar for key stakeholders in the Park and lodged a follow-up submission describing our major concerns for Park management. The revised PoM has not yet emerged from GRC.

Loss of mature native trees on private and public land – OFF lobbied Council to create a Significant Tree Register and upload all tree removal applications on the website, for transparency; The STR is to be delivered by June 2023. A particularly egregious example of illegal tree destruction

occurred at Peakhurst where 16 trees on the same property were poisoned. This outright vandalism was highlighted by members with a candlelight vigil.

FSPA revisited

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

Late in 2022 GRC published reports on 2 studies - *Biodiversity and Foreshore Scenic Character* - which proposed significant and complex changes to the LEP2021. Council sought public feedback within a very short timeframe. Following representations from OFF and others, Council extended the deadline for feedback to 31 March 2023.

Save Glenlee (Lugarno)

Interim Heritage Order granted to temporarily protect the site from imminent destruction. OFF lobbied GR Councillors and various members of Parliament to support the purchase of Glenlee by providing funding. The NSW Heritage Council advised its intention to consider listing Glenlee on the State Heritage Register. OFF members and residents lodged submissions in support. However, HC NSW resolved to reconsider the decision when assessments of the natural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values of the site are completed. The campaign continues.

Renaming The Former Oatley Bowling Club Site - GRC proposed to the Geographical Names Board to rename the former OBC site to Arthur Hardiman reserve, disregarding the fact the site already has an official name: Myles Dunphy Bushland Reserve. Myles Dunphy was well known for his environmental commitment, often referred to as the Father of Conservation in NSW. To rename a significant portion of the reserve that carries his name would be doing an injustice to the revered conservationist. OFF made submissions, and encouraged members to do likewise, in support of the current name. We still await the outcome from GNB.

REGULAR MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING

OFF continued Bushcare in Oatley Park monthly (140 hours); maintained planting sites in Boorea Reserve & Lower Gannons Park; held Clean Up Australia Day events in Kyle Williams Reserve and Lime Kiln Bay joined by Lions and Scout groups; and continued to monitor and report environmental degradation in our LGA - damage to bushland reserves from unauthorised bike riding, loss of trees, and sewage overflows as well as pollution caused by microplastics and run-off from synthetic turf playing fields.

COMMUNICATION AND ACTIVITIES

Eleven issues of **OFF News** published and posted on OFF website. Zoom-recorded monthly presentations are also published on OFF website. **OFF's Facebook** page publicised OFF activities to a possibly wider and younger audience.

Ten general meetings; seven in Oatley Uniting Church Hall and broadcast simultaneously via Zoom; three on Zoom only. The maximum audience was 42. Most presentations have been uploaded to OFF's YouTube channel where we again widen our audience reach.

Field activities were greatly curtailed by Covid and constant wet weather - of the 10 planned outings three had to be cancelled due to poor condition of some tracks. The remaining seven had an average attendance of 10 participants.

OFF collaborated on various projects with allied organisations including: Nature Conservation Council NSW; Wolli Creek Preservation Society; Oatley Lions; Oatley Heritage and Historical Society; Sutherland Shire Environment Centre; NPA Southern Sydney Branch; Citizens Climate Lobby; Kogarah Bay Progress Association; Menai Wildflower Group; St George Men's Shed and The Fix-it Sisters.

National Tree Day Events - OFF supported Lugarno PS planting day, engaged with students and parents and raised OFF's profile in the community. At the GRC event at Beverly Hills Park, OFF had a stall,

engaged with participants and assisted Council with supervising planting of 1000 native species and the plant giveaways.

OFF produced the 2023 Oatley calendar - a key tool in our communication and marketing activities; and held Pre-Christmas street stalls alongside OHHS and Oatley Lions to promote OFF, and sell native plants, jams and the 2023 Oatley calendar.

Membership

During the year OFF membership rose to a high of 310 however we finished the year with 294 registered/financial members.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, SUMMARY: Kim Wagstaff

So, to the coming year! What can we look forward to and what are our priorities for 2023?

Given, as we understand it, our LGA is making no progress on achieving the set tree canopy targets (we are removing more trees than are being planted), I believe our key priorities should be:

- A. Protection of existing trees and vegetation– to maintain existing canopy and biodiversity/habitat benefits; and
- B. Planting lots more trees - Locally (and regionally) to increase canopy cover and habitat for biodiversity;

We will need to work cooperatively with Georges River Council (GRC) and the Greater Sydney Landcare Network (GSLN) to progress supporting strategies such as:

- Revising the current Tree Management Policy to bolster compliance and enforcement actions;
 - Lobbying to maintain the current area and level of protection of the tree canopy and biodiversity of the FSPA;
 - Save Glenlee to prevent loss of a large area of native forest, habitat and biodiversity corridor along the Georges River; and
 - Campaigning to increase Federal Government funding for Landcare, Greening Australia and like-minded organisations.
- C. Continuing to improve the water quality of the Georges River, focusing on monitoring, stormwater run-off, gross pollutant traps, microplastics and sewer overflows.
 - D. Continuing to increase OFF membership numbers, particularly in a younger age range and more culturally diverse profile. Facebook has helped in this endeavour to some extent and we have encouraged events with scouts, school groups and general community and family groups to engage with both children and parents. This is to some extent a longer term goal.

Thank you

I'd like to thank all the committee members for their support and encouragement and for their contributions across the myriad of issues and projects and campaigns that you have heard described earlier. For raising and following up issues and conducting discussions to arrive at largely consensus-based decisions and for all the hard work in keeping OFF running effectively and efficiently.

Thanks in particular go to Erica Buzo who stepped into the vacant Secretary role earlier in the year bringing her enthusiasm and commitment to the committee. We very much appreciate the contribution during the time that Erica has been able to put into the job. Erica will be retiring from the committee this year to allow more time for the demands of treatment of husband Adrian's serious ill-health. We wish Erica and Adrian all the best and we will be thinking of you in the coming months.

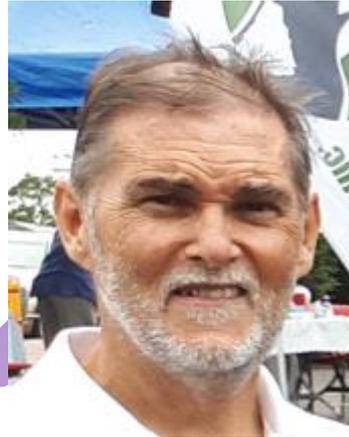
Finally, thank you to all members for your support of, and participation in, OFF activities. Please continue to provide your feedback on our activities,

events, and campaigns both how they could be improved and suggestions for new ones. I look forward to the year ahead. It promises to be another busy but exciting year for all of us. Together we can work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment – locally and globally and in doing so we will make a difference

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

ADRIAN AND JANINE POLHILL RECEIVE ROTARY AWARD

Members will be aware that Adrian Polhill has been working with Rotary in their Adopt-a-Tree Program over the last year or so. In fact, we believe that he has been one of the main driving forces behind the program, arranging sites where the trees were planted, as well as organising volunteers to attend the planting sessions, most in distant regional areas. Rotary has obviously greatly appreciated his hard work as they have recently presented him with one of their highest awards given by Rotary. At a recent presentation that Adrian made to a Rotary meeting, they surprised both him and Janine, by presenting them both with the Paul Harris Fellow Award. I'm sure you will also join Rotary in thanking Adrian for his hard work and dedication. Well done, Adrian and Janine.



MOORLANDS BIRD SURVEY

Vince Heffernan informed OFF of a Birdlife Australia survey commencing at Moorlands (near Gunning) in April 2023. This is a great opportunity to 'close the loop' on the plantings (Sept 2020 & Sept 2022) as well prior plantings which Vince has completed since 2000. Many OFF members have contributed to the plantings which are included in the 5 sites to be surveyed on Vince's farm. The first survey is due on 19 April. There will be a second survey in October if members would like to take part. There will then be two surveys per year in 2024 and 2025. You can contact Adrian Polhill (0424 478 498) for more details..



Check the OFF **Facebook** page and **website** to find information on OFF's activities and events

Coming OFF Events in February/March 2023

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](#)

20 February 2023: Nestboxes.

Susan Rhind, a wildlife conservation biologist, will present an interesting talk covering the following topics: why we need nest boxes; whether nest boxes are useful and used by animals; which of our local mammals (and other groups) need tree hollows; whether nest boxes are as good as natural hollows; if there have been successful nest box programs; making nest boxes attractive to animals; common problems with boxes; nestbox design and installation; some current research on nestboxes and alternatives; and finally, findings from nestboxes installed on the presenter's property at Bergalia. Susan, along with zoologist partner and researcher Murray Ellis, has a background working on hollow nesting animals and nestboxes

26 February Sunday – Forest Path, Royal National Park, Vicki Bolling.

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 Vicki know (0427 870 240), in case we cancel the walk due to weather.

5 March Sunday 9:00 - 12:00 - Clean Up Australia Day. OFF site: Lime Kiln Bay mangroves beneath Hurstville Golf Course; also along the creek in Jinna Reserve. Register in Jinna Reserve, at the bottom of Pamela Avenue, Peakhurst Heights. Event No. 35553 on the CUAD website:

<https://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/fundraisers/elizabethcameron/lime-kiln-bay-wetlands--peakhurst> Gloves, bags, first aid kit and insect repellent available; if you can bring tongs, gloves and additional rubbish bags that would be much appreciated. Hats and solid footwear/gumboots recommended.

Advance notice: 20 March - Meeting. Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, Alice Springs. Ian Coleman, Curator.

Meetings of the Society are at the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm, usually on the third 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 11 Mar. Please check with Bushcare officer on 0435 963 643 before coming.

LOCAL BUSHCARE Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites on a Thursday either 1 or 2 weeks after general meetings (except Dec) from 8.00 am to 11 am. Next month we will be back on 23 Feb at Gannons Park supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer and welcome new bushcarers. <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering>

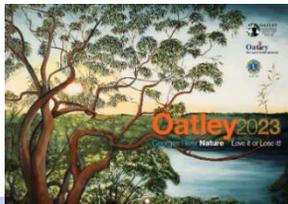
STREAMWATCH Due to the change of general meeting dates, this activity will now take place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) 1 week after OFF General Meetings. Next month we will be at Myles Dunphy on 28 February. Please check by ringing 0430 968 260 before coming, particularly as our equipment supplies have not yet been replenished.

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY meetings held at 2.30 pm on the second Sunday of every month. These meetings are now being held on-line using Zoom. The address is <http://zoom.us/j/7368736878>

GLENLEE Save Glenlee has invited members to join them for an afternoon with special guest speaker Heather Goodall, historian and author of Georges River Blues and Rivers and Resilience. "Georges River Blues" describes the Georges River conflicts that have been fought historically over many years to save our River and Bushland. Lugarno Uniting Church.: Saturday 18 February 2023 3pm-5pm, incl afternoon tea. RSVP: FOGlenlee@gmail.com

2023 CALENDAR

2023 OFF calendar are still available at Oatley West Newsagency and at general meetings.



FORESHORE SCENIC PROTECTION AREA (FSPA) REVISITED

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

Since 2020, GRC engaged consultants to carry out a Biodiversity Study and a Foreshore Scenic Character Study (FSCS). Late last year Council was asking residents for feedback before 30th Nov 2022, on these 2 studies. Following representations from OFF and others the Council extended the **deadline to 31 March 2023.**

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).

We are again urging residents to make a submission to GRC before the new **closing date of 31 March 2023.** The Nov /Dec 2022 OFF newsletter presented some key points for submissions, however OFF will be further reviewing the proposals in the documents and gathering expert advice over the coming 2 months. We welcome members' comments (forwarded to oatleyff@gmail.com) so they can potentially be shared through OFF to other members and assist us to formulate a comprehensive submission.

Please watch the OFF website, Facebook page and emails for updates and advice on this campaign and make sure you submit your comments prior to the **deadline of 31 March 2023.**

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

MEMBERSHIP. Members who have not yet paid their membership fees are requested to do so, now that we are back to our full program.

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc.

Calendar of meetings, field days etc. in 2023 (general meeting dates scheduled to avoid clash with GRC meetings)

| General Meetings (7.30 pm on 3 rd Monday of month) | Field Days (usually Sunday following General Meeting) | Committee Meetings (7.00 pm, 1st Monday of the month) | Other Events |
|---|---|---|--|
| 6 February 2023 (AGM) | | 16 January | Sat 14 Jan – Oatley Park Bushcare |
| 20 February | Sun 26 February | 30 January | Sat 11 Feb - Oatley Park (OP) Bushcare |
| 20 March | Sat 18 March | 6 March | Thu 23 Feb - OFF Bushcare – Gannons Park |
| 17 April | Wed 26 April | 3 April | Sun 5 Mar - Clean Up Australia Day Sat 11 Mar – OP Bushcare |
| 15 May | Sun 28 May | 1 May | Thu 23 Mar - OFF Bushcare – <u>Boorea Reserve</u> Sat 8 April - OP Bushcare |
| 19 June | Sun 25 June | 5 June | Thu 27 April - OFF Bushcare – Gannons Park Sat 13 May - OP Bushcare |
| 17 July | Sun 23 July | 3 July | Thu 25 May - OFF Bushcare – <u>Boorea Reserve</u> Sat 10 June - OP Bushcare |
| 21 August | Sun 27 August | 7 August | Thu 22 June - OFF Bushcare – Gannons Park Sat 8 July - OP Bushcare |
| 18 September | Sun 24 September | 4 September | Thu 27 July - OFF Bushcare – <u>Boorea Reserve</u> Sun 30 July - National Tree Day |
| 16 October | Sat 4 November | 2 October (NB long w/e) | Sat 12 Aug - OP Bushcare Thu 24 Aug - OFF Bushcare – Gannons Park |
| 20 November | | 6 November | Sat 9 Sept - OP Bushcare Thu 28 Sept - OFF Bushcare – <u>Boorea Reserve</u> |
| 5 February 2024 (AGM) | | January | Sat 14 Oct - OP Bushcare Thu 26 Oct – OFF Bushcare – Gannons Park |
| | | | Sat 11 Nov – OP Bushcare (Remembrance Day) Thu 23 Nov – OFF Bushcare – <u>Boorea Reserve</u> Mon 4 Dec – OFF Picnic in Oatley Park Sat 9 Dec – OP Bushcare – Gannons Park |
| | | | 26 Jan – Australia Day |

Public Holidays: Good Friday: 7 April; Anzac Day: Tuesday 25 April; King's Birthday: Monday 12 June; Labour Day: Monday 2 October

Deadlines for OFF News (12 days prior to General Meeting): 18 January; 8 February; 8 March; 5 April; 3 May; 7 June; 5 July; 9 August; 6 September; 4 October; 8 November

