



OFF WALK IN MEMORY OF DR SHARYN CULLIS

24 OFF members and friends of Dr Sharyn Cullis enjoyed a beautiful walk in Dharawal National Park on Sunday 28th May, to remember Sharyn and celebrate her life. We gathered at O'Hares Lookout with a backdrop of spectacular views, to listen to heartfelt speeches and a touching poem written by Melina Amerasinghe in memory of Sharyn.

Afterwards we walked down to Minerva Pools for a picnic lunch beside the fast-flowing waterfall and creek. It was a spot often visited by OFF members in the company of Sharyn.

Sharyn was a brilliant, strategic, and tireless advocate for the creation of Dharawal National Park, as well as for numerous other environmental causes. Her amazing work will be continued into the future, by individuals and organisations that campaign on issues close to her heart, such as opposing land clearing, stopping the expansion of coal and gas mines, protecting the Georges River, and saving the koala and other endangered wildlife.



CORAL REEFS IN HOT WATER

This was the title of the 2023 Talbot Oration at the Australian Museum by Dr Anne Hoggett AM, who with her husband, Dr Lyle Vail AM, has managed Lizard Island Research Station (LIRS) on the Great Barrier Reef for over 30 years. The station was established by Professor Frank Talbot in 1973.

Over decades, along with many visiting scientists at LIRS, Anne and Lyle have witnessed the rich diversity of life on the reef, and tracked the many threats to it. Anne graphically illustrated the accelerating frequency of cyclones and above-average sea temperatures (which stress corals and lead to bleaching). The frequency, intensity and area of heat stress causing coral bleaching is increasing over time - a result of climate change.

Dr Hoggett said climate change was undoubtedly the major threat to coral reefs; unless we get carbon emissions under control, efforts to reduce other threats, such as pollution and crown-of-thorns outbreaks, will be largely useless.

We each have a responsibility to take urgent action on climate change by:

- Agitating for swift actions by government to de-carbonise
- Advocating for many more marine parks
- Adjusting our behaviour at home to reduce carbon emissions

"Reefs are too important and too beautiful to lose. We need



to pull out all stops to keep them," said Dr Hoggett.

https://media.australian.museum/media/dd/documents/MR_Talbot_Oration_LIRS_50th_Anniversary-FINAL_31_May_2023.6c80a74.pdf

PROTECTING GLENLEE

A well-attended rally was held at Heinrich Reserve at Lugarno on 21st May. Following the pre-election commitment from the new Minister for the Environment, [Penny Sharpe MLC](#) and GR Clr Ash Ambihapahar to issue a new Interim Heritage Order for Glenlee and ensure that proper site heritage assessments will be conducted, it was important to follow up on these commitments. Has the Minister requested an update on the IHO for Glenlee? It seems not. Note also that unfortunately there has still been no commitment of funds from any level of government, for the purchase of Glenlee.

UNUSUAL BIRD IN OUR AREA

Some months ago, a regular contributor to the OASIS Oatley Facebook group posted a photo of an unusual bird for our area. The bird was a Rock Warbler, a small brownish bird which is relatively common in Royal National Park but had not been recorded on the northern side of the Georges River in recent times. This individual seems to have

settled down in the bushland at Lugarno. It is NSW's only endemic bird species, with a distribution from north of Mudgee down to Wollongong, and across to the coast. It

lives around sandstone cliffs and outcrops and nests in sandstone caves. It is encouraging that a bird which normally lives in national parks and pristine natural areas has found that Lugarno provides a suitable environment. This suggests that saving our bushland parks and managing them sustainably is having a positive impact on the wildlife. Photo courtesy of Peter Stevens.



GRC SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER (STR)

OFF has been campaigning for many years for the Georges River Council to create a Significant Tree Register and it is finally being implemented. You can submit a nomination for a significant tree in the GRC area at Georges River Council's Significant Tree Register 2023 on Your Say Georges River <https://yoursay.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au>

Nominations are open until 24 July. This will be a trial of the nomination system and process. By late 2023 it is expected that a further report on the results of the STR trial will be put to Council to adjust if necessary, and finalise for implementation.

The Register is a good start and now looking further ahead, OFF believes a broadbased tree asset management system covering aspects of all the LGA's trees is needed to effect further improvements in tree management and achieve the environmental outcomes that GRC aspires to, and the community expects. We urge Council, once the STR is established, to build on OFF's and Council's experience to date and continue to develop a holistic tree asset management system.

OFF RE-GREENING EVENTS

Just a reminder that OFF will be taking part in another tree planting event on Vince Hefferman's property Moorlands on 23 and 24 September.

The goal is to provide essential habitat for native fauna including endangered species like the Superb Parrot which breeds in the South West Slopes during spring and early summer in grassy box woodland. These are very rewarding events and a great opportunity to meet other like minded people from outside Sydney. Members and friends are encouraged to participate in this planting; further details will be provided closer to the event.

Coming OFF Events in June/July 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_daK5memiUVeVb7bERgr5WgKybj2w Note: Some OFF presentations & movies can now be found on [YouTube](#)

19 June 2023: Platypus in the Sydney Basin.

Dr Michelle Ryan is a senior lecturer in Ecology and Environmental Science in the School of Science at Western Sydney University. Working with Cattai Hills Environment Network the Hawkesbury-Nepean Platypus Project began in 2018 by using environmental DNA to determine the distribution of platypus in the mid-Hawkesbury catchment. This project has developed to investigate the distribution and health of platypus populations throughout Hawkesbury-Nepean River catchment. The project works closely in connection with local community groups and citizen scientists to ensure sustainability of the platypus population in the greater Sydney Basin.

Michelle will present on what is currently known about the populations in the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment, the impacts of urbanisation on platypus populations and what we can do to help support the platypus population in the Sydney Basin.

25 June Sunday – Poulton Park and Moore Reserve, GRC LGA

Meet at 9:30am opposite No. 40 Whitfield Parade, Hurstville Grove – plenty of parking spots; we will finish back at the start. 5-6 km along bush tracks, concrete paths and roadsides. Bring snacks and water. There are several toilet blocks along the way, and a coffee shop if you run out of steam. Learn about the history of these public spaces and admire examples of GRC Bushcare undertaken by volunteers including OFF members.

Leaders Graham Fry and Liz Cameron 0490 056 233

ADVANCE NOTICE: SOCIAL SUPPER FOLLOWING OUR 17 JULY MEETING

Supper will be served after the OFF meeting in the Oatley Uniting Church Hall on Monday 17th July. This will be an opportunity for members to linger and chat over light refreshments at the conclusion of the meeting - about 9 pm. Tea, coffee and fruit juice will be provided; you are invited to bring something sweet or savoury to share. NB The Uniting Church Hall is now heated.

The speaker for this meeting is Brendan Altig- OFF research grant recipient – Interactions of mammal and reptile predators in a mixed-use coastal ecosystem.

23 July - Advance notice: Sunday Field Day – Wildflowers in Royal NP – Leader Matt Allison

22 June 2023 - Local Bushcare

Members can assist by volunteering to maintain OFF planting sites on a Thursday either 1 or 2 weeks after general meetings (exc Dec) from 8.00 am to 11 am. This month we will be at lower Gannons Park supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer and we welcome new bushcarers.

<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering>

8 July 2023 - Oatley Park Bushcare

OFF members volunteer to carry out bush regeneration at Oatley Park on the second Saturday each month starting 12.00 pm, (except January). Please check with GRC Bushcare Officer on 0435 963 643 before coming.

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

STREAMWATCH This activity takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) 1 week after OFF General Meetings.

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/7868786878>

OFF 2023 RESEARCH GRANTS

OFF has committed another \$6,000 for research grants this year. Application forms have been sent out to Universities to request students to apply. Previous recipients have appreciated this help with their studies and have then volunteered to speak to OFF meetings on their research, including in this year's program of talks. Applications close 30 June.

SYNTHETIC Vs NATURAL TURF INVESTIGATION

The NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer's Report has finally been released. Briefly, some key points include:

- The key driver for replacing natural turf with artificial turf is demand for playing space; however in summary the report suggests best practice natural turf CAN provide the carrying capacity.
- Zinc, PAHs & other chemical leachate pose risks to aquatic ecosystems.
- Both turf fibre blades and rubber infill pose a risk of being transported to waterways as plastic pollution and threatening aquatic life. Loss may be substantial, especially at end of life or if a field is poorly maintained.

The report recommends a set of requirements for approval and funding of synthetic turf fields is needed to assist management of identified environmental issues and the data gaps limiting current decision-making and innovation.

There's more to come from this report. Watch this space!

MEMBERSHIP. Members are reminded that if fees are not received by 30 June, your membership will lapse. Thank you to those members who have paid, particularly to those who have made generous donations.

Don't forget to check the OFF **Facebook** page and **website** to find information on OFF's activities and events, or to comment on issues.