



Welcome to the new OFF Committee for 2022. Kim Wagstaff was re-elected as President, as were Adrian Polhill Vice-President, Scott Shade Secretary and Rodger Robertson Treasurer. We welcome Sonia Baxant as second Vice-President, with Graham Lalchere stepping down. The 10 other committee positions were all filled giving OFF a complete committee for 2024, and welcome Susan Ghosn onto the committee. We also thank Liz Cameron, who stepped down from the committee this year, for her many years of service including 11 years as Secretary. Committee details will be printed on the program coming out shortly.

SECRETARY'S REPORT, SUMMARY: Scott Shade

Our "green" incoming Secretary began by thanking Liz Cameron for 11 years of service in the role, and for her assistance in bringing him up to speed. He then listed the activities OFF was involved in during our first year of face to face meetings after the "pandemic era".

HIGHLIGHTS

2023 Banks Volunteer of the Year Award was presented by David Coleman MP and Senator Jane Hume to OFF stalwart Geoff Francis, active in many forms of conservation for over 20 years.

Significant Tree Register became a reality after several years of lobbying by OFF, however only 2.5% of nominations were successful.

OFF Research Grants Research grants of \$5900 were allocated to 3 students. A significant and ongoing leg up for the new generation of PhD students we should be proud of.

National Tree Day Many OFF members joined in the planting on July 30.

Greater Sydney Landcare Network (GSLN) Relationship with GSLN strengthened due mainly to the efforts of Adrian Polhill, strong advocate for the Creating Canopies in Greater Sydney project A list of 9 sites in the LGA (est'd 10 -15,000 trees) will soon be confirmed for planting events in 2024.

Clean Up Australia Day 2023, OFF continued its 31 year participation in CUAD at Poulton Park, with 59 enthusiastic volunteers, including Second Mortdale Scouts and Oatley Lions.

StreamWatch was re-instated following the appointment of a full time coordinator by GSLN and the delivery of the chemical testing kits.

CAMPAIGNS

Damage to our Natural Bushland 2023 saw several incidents that caused serious damage to OP's bushland and public spaces. OFF continued to fight for mitigation and remediation (including for Kyle Williams Reserve) and for GRC to value our bushland areas as a natural asset.

Save Glenlee OFF continued the fight for Glenlee including attending a May rally, sending letters to council (who are onboard), state & federal MP's **Georges River Biodiversity and Foreshore Studies (LEP2021 - FSPA revisited)** OFF made submission to this without response to date.

Oatley Park Plan of Management & Master Plan OFF made a submission.

Removal of Vegetation from our Reserves. Brian Dale took the fight up to the GRC General Mng'r on removal of plant material from council reserves.

Synthetic Turf Playing Fields Adrian led our campaign on this issue, armed with the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer's report and other facts from an AUSMAP webinar. A Notice of Motion was tabled by Councillor Peter Mahoney to GRC, but no action to date.

Mangrove Deterioration in LKB Many members raised their voices on this, possibly related to sewage overflows, but Georges RiverKeeper determined that it was most likely caused by the larvae of the Native Mangrove Moth.

Koalas & Greater Sydney Koala Network (GSKN) OFF and individual members made submissions to different campaigns run by GSKN relating to the inappropriate housing development around Appin & Mt Gilead.

ACTIVITIES & COMMUNICATION

Re-greening Country Activities continued at Vince Hefferman's Moorlands (near Gunning, NSW) property with OFF members contributing to more planting. Endangered Superb Parrots are now breeding at Moorlands. Approximately 1300 trees were also planted along the banks of the Wingecarribee River at Burradoo (Bowral).

Locally, Matt Allison worked with Kogarah Bay Progress Assoc to plant and maintain several sites funded by the Fed Govt QE Silver Jubilee celebration.

GRC Historical Markers Program – Myles Dunphy

A submission was lodged in April nominating a marker for Myles but we were unsuccessful.

Menai Wildflower Volunteer Nursery OFF members joined Adrian and Janine in assisting Lloyd Hedges and the Menai Wildflower Group volunteers with the growing of 15,000 trees for the 'Glossies in the Mist' project and >2,000 trees and shrubs for various Rotary Adopt A Tree projects.

Engagement with GRC 2023 was a record year for OFF members attending and speaking passionately at GRC meetings on various environmental issues and many members made written submissions.

General Meetings OFF held 10 General meetings in 2023 with people attending both in person at Oatley Uniting Church Hall and via zoom, for an average attendance of 35. A fascinating range of guest speakers, both live and on zoom, engaged the members on various interesting topics.

Field Days 8 Walks were held with an average attendance of 13. The highest at 25 was for the May 28 walk along the Jinga Track in Dharawal NP to remember Sharyn Cullis.

Membership At the end of 2023 we had 279 registered/financial members, a slight drop from just shy of 300 members at the beginning of the year.

Market stalls OFF held 6 stalls during the year selling calendars and plants: Lions market days, National Tree Day and 3 in Oatley & Mortdale in Dec..

Thanks to all who assisted and participated in OFF's events during the year. Scott's full report can be read [here](#).

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, SUMMARY: Kim Wagstaff

The Secretary's report certainly shows the breadth of OFF activities that we have taken on in support of our local and wider environment!

Priorities For 2024

- A. Climate Emergency response** - everything else largely flows from this! Emissions reduction at all levels to reduce Urban Heat Island impacts.
- B. Protection of existing trees** Ensure the revised Tree Management Policy (now including the Significant Tree Register) does the job it is intended to do.
- C. Lots more tree planting** Increase canopy cover towards targeted 40%. Work with Council, Greater Sydney Landcare and other community groups.
- D. Responding to State Government's proposed new housing policies** for increased densities, to ameliorate significant environmental impacts.

KEY PROJECTS/CAMPAIGNS contributing to these goals are:

- 1. Assessment** of climate change impacts in council decisions/policies.
- 2. Expand Council climate actions** from GRC's own operations to whole LGA and its population eg FOGO, EV charging stations, use of solar power.
- 3. Save Glenlee** –Prevent loss of large area of native forest, habitat and biodiversity corridor along Georges River
- 4. Biodiversity calamity** – Australia has an appalling track record on extinctions. Protect, create and supplement biodiversity corridors. Support the Council's recently adopted Wildlife Protection Area Policy.

We will continue to improve relations with GRC developing a cooperative working relationship—and greater influence. We have already made much progress and I acknowledge the Councillors from GRRR Party in this regard. We also hope to re-establish quarterly meetings with Mayor and senior staff.

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

Membership drive – including younger age groups – Facebook has helped in this endeavour to some extent. It's a longer term goal but we have encouraged events with scouts, school groups and general community and family groups to engage with both children and parents.

I'd like to thank OFF committee members for their support and encouragement in OFF's activities for the hard work in keeping OFF running effectively and efficiently, in particular, to Liz Cameron who is retiring from Committee after 11 years service. A remarkable contribution!

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. Together we can work to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment – locally and globally Kim's full report can be read [here](#).

BUMPER EDITION

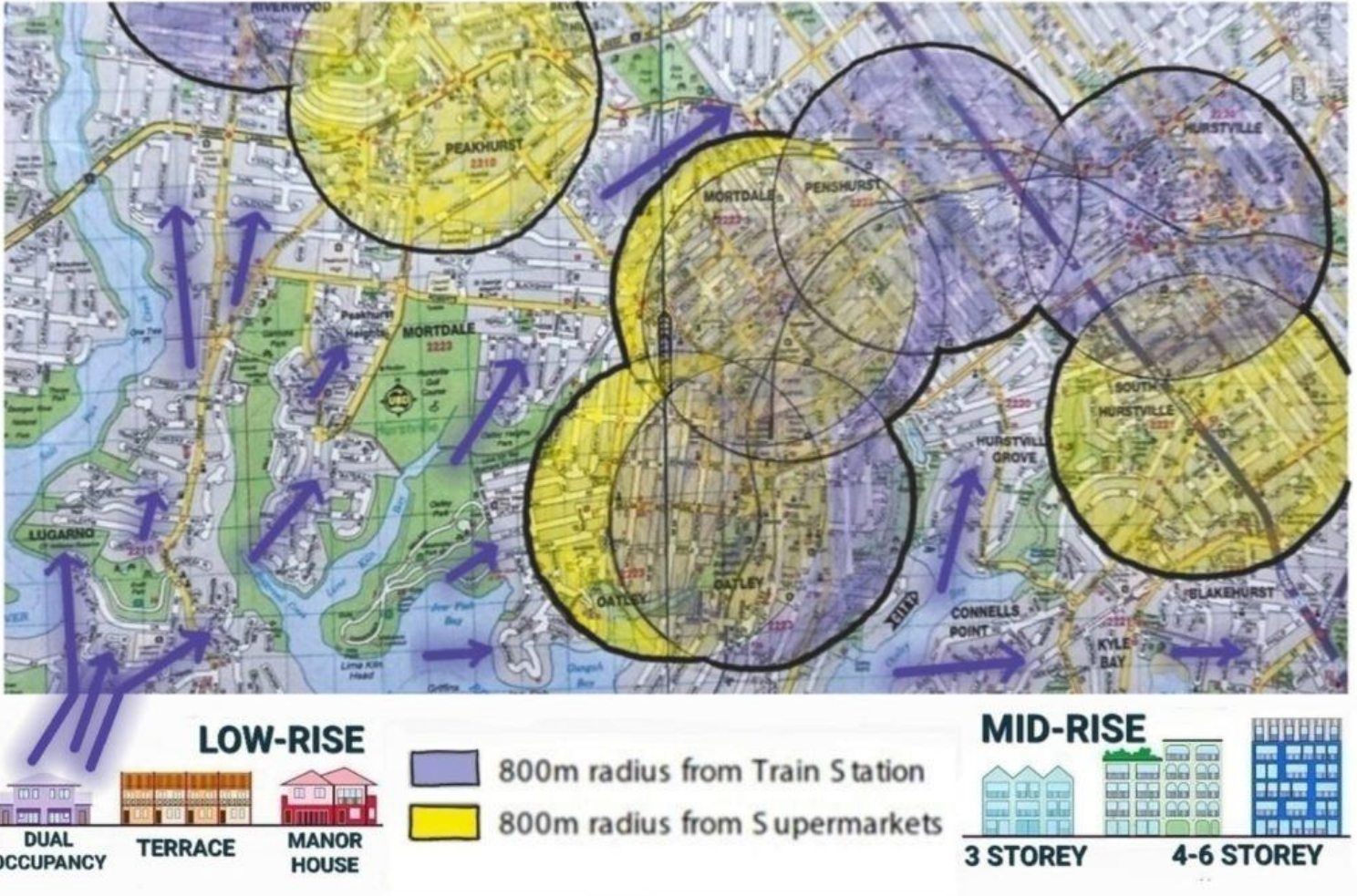
NSW GOVERNMENT PLANNING CHANGES.

The NSW Government is proposing changes to the planning system to respond to the "housing crisis". These changes will detrimentally affect **ALL** residential property in NSW.

These planning reforms will bypass local councils and remove every homeowner's right to object to neighbouring developments. This will have a devastating effect on our environment and our community. There will be a massive loss of tree canopy, increased pressure on infrastructure such as

the sewage system, which is already causing river/creek pollution and health risk and devastation in the Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (imagine duplexes on blocks as small 450 square metres!). Only local planning by Georges River Council in consultation with residents (as is the case now) can align with our values and decide what is right for us.

The map below shows the extent of the areas that will be affected, ie, all areas of our Local Government Area.



More information about these changes can be found on OFF's website [here](#)

You can also access this site by scanning this QR code:

If you are concerned about these proposals, please let the Government know; even a brief submission will suffice.

Submissions on these proposed changes must be made by **23rd February** and can be made [here](#) (just scroll down the resulting page).



This policy will override all existing Council planning controls such as those protecting heritage and environment. There will be non-refusal standards - no appeal for overshadowing etc. Georges River Council has met its required housing targets - but there are no exemptions. 400m from any railway station - up to 8 storey (21m max) units may be built.

Up to 800m from any railway station or shopping area 2 storey (16m max) units and other multi dwellings. There is no local character taken into account. Landscaping and tree canopy targets and floor space ratios are far below council targets.

Dual occupancies will be able to be built everywhere on lots as small as 450m². There is no consideration of aging and already inadequate infrastructure such as sewage - we already have regular overflows into our waterways. Hospitals, traffic, parking, transport, water, schools- none of these are having capacity increased. Current council strategic planning requires council to allocate areas of medium and high density which has worked well.

Coming OFF Events in February/March 2024

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

Meetings are held in the Uniting Church Hall, Frederick St Oatley, starting at 7.30pm. Meetings are also 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](#)

19 February – Birds on Farms: From 1995 till now

Margot Oorebeek, Project Coordinator for BirdLife Australia, will tell us about the Birds on Farms project, a citizen-science monitoring program assessing woodland bird communities in agricultural landscapes. Originally operating from 1995 - 1997, Birds on Farms was re-established in 2017, and more than 5,000 bird surveys have been conducted across south-eastern Australia.

Margot moved to Australia for her PhD, studying *Ixodes hirsti*, an avian tick in South Australia. After completion, Margot worked at the Broome Bird Observatory for two years before moving to Perth as a senior zoologist/ornithologist for an environmental consultancy. After eight years she moved to Tasmania to become Regional Cat Management Coordinator for northwest Tasmania. She has returned to her love of birds

25 February 2024 (Sunday) – The Spit to Manly. Leader: Lesley Wylie

Big day out. Meet at Oatley station 8:15am train and arriving at Wynyard at 9am. From Carrington Street Wynyard, Bus Stand A catch 9:15am bus to the Spit. Then a 10km walk around Middle Harbour to Manly wharf. There are lots of small bays and beaches along the way so bring along your swimming costumes for a cool swim. Also bring along food, snacks and water. We will get back to the wharf around 3pm where people can catch the ferry back to Circular Quay and train home. If you are coming please let Lesley know 0400 562 085, as we can wait at Carrington St, Wynyard if you want to join us there.

3 March 2024 (Sunday) – Clean Up Australia Day. (CUA) <https://www.cleanup.org.au/cleanupaustrialaday>

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. Meet at the OFF Gazebo Jinna Reserve, at the bottom of Pamela Avenue, Peakhurst Heights.

Gumboots recommended; low tide at Oatley will be around 9.00am and high tide about 2.30pm.

Kyle Williams Reserve, Blakehurst 12.00-14.00 pm. Meet at the OFF Gazebo 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: 18 March – General Meeting: Brendan Alting (UNSW postgraduate & OFF grant recipient) – Interactions of mammal and reptile predators in a mixed-use coastal ecosystem.

Advance notice: 16 March (Saturday) -- Field Day: Walk/Kayak then picnic on Wingecarribee River. Adrian Polhill.

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 9 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 22 Feb at Gannons Park supervised by a GRC Bushcare Officer and welcome new bushcarers. <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Council/Volunteering>

STREAMWATCH This activity takes place on the Tuesday morning (9.00 am) 1 week after OFF General Meetings. This month we will be at Dairy Creek (near Scout Hall in Glen Road) on 27 February. Please check by ringing 0430 968 260 before coming,

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>

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Rochelle Summerfield will have a pop-up exhibition at Carss Park Lifesaving Hall, 103 Carwar Ave on Sat 17th February. Rochelle is an artist who explores interconnectedness of rivers and trees.

MEMBERSHIP. Members who have not yet paid their membership fees are requested to do so, now that we have commenced the year's program.

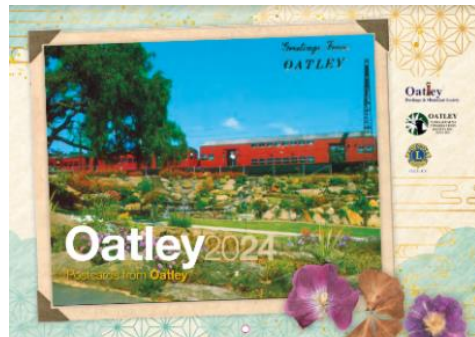
TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Georges River Council at its meeting on 27 November 2023 resolved to publicly exhibit the draft revised Tree Management Policy. The council states that: "Overall, the content of the existing Policy remains substantially unchanged in the revised Policy. The revised Policy has been drafted with a renewed focus on the enhancement and management of trees to facilitate the delivery of the adopted canopy target. Equal significance is placed upon both private and public trees as Council cannot meet its canopy target by increasing canopy cover on public land alone." Amongst a number of changes is the insertion of a new chapter "to give effect to Council's Significant Tree Register.", something for which OFF campaigned for some time. You can read more about this revised draft [here](#).

Submissions close on 1st March and can be made on the above web page.

2024 CALENDAR

2024 OFF calendars are still available at Oatley West Newsagency and at general meetings.



Event Dates in 2024

Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society Inc. Calendar of meetings, field days etc. in 2024 Public Holidays, OFF News deadlines etc.

General Meetings (7.30 pm on 3rd Monday of month)	No.	Field Days (usually Sunday following General Meeting)	No.	Committee Meetings (7.00 pm, 1st Monday of the month)	No.	Other Events	No.
5 February 2024 (AGM) then supper and photos				15 January		Sat 13 Jan – Oatley Park (OP) Bushcare Thu 25 Jan – OFF Bushcare - Gannons	
19 February – Margot Oorebeek – Birds on Farms		Sun 25 February – Spit to Manly with Lesley Wylie				Tue 6 Feb – Streamwatch – Dairy Creek Sat 10 Feb – Oatley Park Bushcare Thu 22 Feb – OFF Bushcare – Boorea	
18 March – Brendan Alting – Mammal & reptile predators in coastal ecosystems		Sat 16 March – Kayaking on Wingecarribee with Adrian Polhill		4 March		Sun 3 Mar – Clean Up Australia Day Sat 9 Mar – OP Bushcare Tue 26 Mar – Streamwatch Thu 28 Mar – OFF Bushcare – Gannons	
15 April – Vanessa McPherson & Michael Gillings – Fungal biodiversity		Sun 28 April – Grays Point to Audley Loop with Lesley Wylie		1 April (NB Easter Monday)		Sat 13 April – OP Bushcare Tue 23 April – Streamwatch Thu 25 April – OFF Bushcare Boorea NB Anzac Day Sat April – Lions Market Day	
20 May – Dan Bickel - Flies		Sun 26 May – Red Hands Cave with Matt Allison		6 May		Sat 11 May – OP Bushcare Thu 23 May – OFF Bushcare – Gannons Tue 28 May – Streamwatch	
17 June – Andrew Scott – Booroowa plantings		Sun 30 June – Malabar Headland loop with Lesley Wylie		3 June		Sat 8 June – OP Bushcare (NB PH w/e) Tue 25 June – Streamwatch Thu 27 June – OFF Bushcare – Boorea	
15 July – Rob Dixon – Georges Riverkeeper		Sun 21 July – Convict Trail in Dharug NP with Liz Cameron		1 July		Sat 13 July – OP Bushcare Tue 23 July – Streamwatch Thu 25 July – OFF Bushcare – Gannons Sun 28 July – National Tree Day	
19 August – Katherine Moseby – bilbies, quolls etc		Sun 25 August – Barren Grounds NR with Deb Andrew		5 August		Sat 10 Aug – OP Bushcare Thu 22 Aug – OFF Bushcare – Boorea Tue 27 Aug – Streamwatch	
16 September – Jonathan Saunders - Canowindra		Sun 29 September – Bottle Forest with Lesley Wylie		2 September		Sat 14 Sept – OP Bushcare Tue 24 Sept – Streamwatch Thu 26 Sept – OFF Bushcare – Gannons	
21 October – OFF members – Travellers' tales		Sun 27 October – Lake Eckersley, Heathcote with Ian Pitt		7 October (NB long w/e)		Sat 12 Oct – OP Bushcare Thu 24 Oct – OFF Bushcare – Boorea Tue 29 Oct – Streamwatch	
18 November – Gilad Bino – Platypus in Royal NP – then supper		Sun 24 November – Auburn Botanic Gardens with Kim Wagstaff		4 November		Sat 9 Nov – OP Bushcare Tue 26 Nov – Streamwatch Thu 28 Nov – OFF Bushcare – Gannons	
2 December – OFF picnic						Sat 14 Dec – OP Bushcare??	
3 February 2025 (AGM)				?13 January 2025		Sun 26 Jan – Australia Day	

Public Holidays: Australia Day: Sun 26 January; Good Friday: 29 March; Anzac Day: Thu 25 April; King's Birthday: Monday 10 June; Labour Day: Monday 7 October
Deadlines OFF News (Wednesday ~12 days prior to General Meeting): 17 January; 7 February; 6 March; 3 April; 8 May; 5 June; 3 July; 7 August; 4 September, 9 October; 6 November

Note. Check the dates of events before each event in case of a change.