



# NEWSLETTER

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## B U S H C A R E

AUTUMN 2021 – ISSUE 49



Caption: Panorama of Barrington Tops National Park by Andrew Scott

## BUSHFIRE RECOVERY PROJECT

SCOTCH BROOM CONTROL AT BARRINGTON TOPS NATIONAL PARK

Early last year, following the devastating Summer bushfires, the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators appealed to members and supporters to contribute to the post-fire weeding effort in high priority areas for fauna habitat recovery. A database of experienced volunteers was created so they could be matched to projects.

With the support of North Sydney Council's General Manager, the Bushland Team settled on a project to help control a 1,000 ha infestation of Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius sp. scoparius*). Ninety-five per cent of the site was impacted by fire in Barrington Tops National Park – a World

Heritage listed area home to threatened species and endangered montane wetlands. We planned a reconnaissance trip in Autumn to assess the suitability of the project for our volunteers, but COVID-19 interfered and then the Park closed for Winter.

Our visit finally came to fruition on 10-12 November when four Bushland and two Tree Team staff members made the five-hour drive from Sydney to Gloucester. Along the way they passed granite peaks ascending from rolling pastures and babbling brooks along Bucketts Way. Self-sufficiency was key – four-wheel drives for access, BYO food and equipment. National

Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) supplied the tools, electric chainsaws, pole saws, brush cutters and very comfy lodging at the Little Murray Hut compound with room to camp.

On arrival, we met the project coordinator, Boyd Carney – Bush Regeneration & Volunteer Officer at the Hunter Central Coast Branch, and Peter Beard – Barrington Tops Park Ranger. Our orientation included a tour of the trial plots by the hut, quadrats of stem-cut Scotch Broom, sans-herbicide treatment. Boyd said the literature indicated that brown stem, mature, single-stemmed plants responded well to this control method,

mostly lacking the capacity to regenerate, while green stem, young multi-stemmed plants did not. Boyd advocated for the 80:20 approach for the greatest impact, whereby one controls the largest area of weed possible and sweeping up the remainder at a later date. Boyd's aim was to stop the Broom going to seed that we saw little of, as the flowers are held on the plant for an extended period of time before the seedpods develop.

Boyd and Peter familiarised our team with Fragrant Pepperbush (*Tasmannia glaucifolia*) and Broad-leaved Pepperbush (*Tasmannia purpurascens*), two threatened mid-story species that were being swamped by a yellow sea of Scotch Broom, a stark contrast against a grey backdrop of Snow Gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) and Black Sallies (*Eucalyptus stellulata*). Stout Tree Ferns appeared at intervals, which are strange 'Cousin It' like beings. The ground was blanketed with tufts of hardy Snow Grass (*Poa sp.*). Boyd said the Scotch Broom infestation had started as a single plant in the late 1800s when the area was grazed. He assumed the weed had spread when the cattle were

removed. Brumbies, likely remnants of this time, roamed freely, slinking into the Broom as we approached.

The work site was a bumpy 45-minute drive from the compound to the edge of Edward Swamp that feeds into the picturesque Junction Pools. Boyd marked a photo and GPS point with a hardwood stake and from there we worked downhill to the Montane Swamp and a peat bog which resembled an open plain with shallow water courses lined with petite Bog Buttercup (*Ranunculus pimpinellifolius*) and other semi aquatics. The chain and pole saws made easy work of the Broom, but it was quite difficult to navigate the felled limbs, and we were exhausted by days end after walking back and forth to the generator for fresh battery packs. We observed a profusion of regenerating Broom seedlings from previous works. Boyd hoped to exhaust the seed bank with this approach. It was disheartening to see the Blackberry smothering the creek leading to the swamp, but we were encouraged as we uncovered remnant Pepper Trees, novel Small-fruit Hakeas (*Hakea microcarpa*) and showy

*Epacris rhombifolia*.

This was a great team building exercise with the new plants, fresh mountain air and the clear night sky (we must have seen half a dozen falling stars). Everyone really enjoyed the experience and I personally loved meeting the resident Copper Head Snake basking in the morning sun on top of the wombat burrow by the entrance to the compound.

Boyd would like to encourage further volunteer support, preferably chainsaw accredited bush regenerators, if possible. The Scotch Broom Management Plan for Barrington Tops National Park has a further four years of funding which is the main reason our team chose this project. To put your name on the list, contact Louise membership@aabr.org.au or Boyd Boyd.Carney@environment.nsw.gov.au

A big thanks to Boyd Carney, Peter Beard and NPWS for being great hosts. We hope to venture up to Barrington Tops again this year as there sure is no shortage of work to do.

Andrew Scott – Bushcare Officer

## COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

Gareth Debney  
Bushland Management Coordinator

Welcome back to Bushcare for 2021! While it would have been nice to say things are back to "normal" for the start of our Bushcare calendar year, unfortunately that's not the case as the Coronavirus pandemic continues to be a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs that none of us can escape from.

The Bushland Team appreciate your understanding and patience as we continue with COVID-safe practices for Bushcare volunteering and the annual program of workshops, training, and activities. As you are all well accustomed to by now, the extent of these measures will change from time to time in response to community transmission trends, however, as a minimum we will continue with physical distancing, hand washing/sanitising, wearing gloves and cleaning tools/other shared items. On a positive note, Council-supplied morning tea will be reinstated with a BYO cup proviso. As the vaccination program rolls out and gains momentum, we will revise these practices in-line with the current NSW Government advice. We'll make sure to keep our volunteers and program supporters informed.

No doubt as many of you returned to your Bushcare sites in February, you may have found it relatively easy to spot a weed or two! The warm, wet weather has triggered numerous flushes of herbaceous weeds which our (currently understaffed) Bush Regeneration Team have been working hard to curb over the Bushcare break. This workload will start to ease as the weather transitions into Autumn and some of our time spent weeding can be dedicated to planting. Speaking of plants, the Bushcare Nursery has also been taking advantage of the growing conditions and we have plenty of stock ready to go into your Bushcare sites.

Around the middle of last year, the Bushland Team made

a submission to the National Trust Heritage Awards that focused on the successful outcomes of sustained bushland rehabilitation in Tunks Park. We have seen the recovery of several flora species, natural recolonisation of native wildlife and the development of North Sydney's most species diverse bushland remnant. The submission received a "Highly Commended" certificate, which Andrew accepted on the team's behalf during an unusual COVID-influenced awards ceremony, where he was the only attendee and the acceptance speech was to a camera lens rather than an audience!

Andrew and the Team have also been hard at work developing new Bushcare Training resources. Short film clips will provide guidance to new and a reminder to existing volunteers on the basics of working safely and effectively in bushland. They will be rolled out through the Bushcare Essentials training program during 2021, with more videos planned in the future to cover advanced technical skills and ecological rehabilitation concepts.

The Bushland Team is looking forward to seeing you all back at Bushcare this year and working safely together to continue the recovery of our unique and unequivocally precious bushland reserves.

Caption: Scotch Broom at Edward Swamp, Barrington Tops NP, 11 November 2020 by Andrew Scott.



# WILDLIFE WATCH UPDATE

(NOVEMBER 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021)

Big thanks to all the Wildlife Watch volunteers that monitor wildlife in North Sydney and submit their observations to Council. The highlights of recent sightings were:

- **Green Turtle** (Balls Head Reserve)
- **Powerful Owl** (Gore Cove Reserve)
- **Forest Kingfisher** (Balls Head Reserve)
- **Brown Goshawk** (Waverton Urban)
- **Australasian Figbird** (Cammeray Urban)
- **Musk Lorikeet** (Primrose Park)
- **White-faced Heron** (Anderson Park, Cremorne Reserve, Gore Cove Reserve)
- **Masked Lapwing** (Coal Loader)
- **Crested Pigeon** (Waverton Park)
- **Green Tree Snake** (Cremorne Reserve, Tunks Park)
- **White-browed Scrubwren** (Sawmillers Reserve, Cremorne Reserve, Balls Head Reserve)
- **Eastern Water Dragon** (Tunks Park, Balls Head Reserve, Sugar Works Reserve, Badangi Reserve, Gore Cove Reserve)
- **Little Pied Cormorant** (Kesterton Park)
- **Pied Cormorant** (Cremorne Reserve)
- **Little Corella** (Coal Loader, Tunks Park)
- **Red-Browed Finch** (Tunks Park)
- **Australian King Parrot** (Cremorne Reserve, Waverton Urban, Cremorne Urban, Balls Head Reserve, Waverton Park, Wollstonecraft Urban)
- **Eastern Whipbird** (Primrose Park, Cremorne Reserve, Tunks Park)
- **Variiegated Fairy-wren** (Primrose Park, Balls Head Reserve, Tunks Park)
- **Grey-Headed Flying-Fox** (Cammeray Urban)
- **Swamp Wallaby** (Tunks Park)
- **White Bellied Sea Eagle** (Balls Head Reserve)
- **Cabbage White Butterfly** (Neutral Bay Urban, Cremorne Reserve)
- **Channel-Billed Cuckoo** (Anderson Park)
- **Red-Bellied Black Snake** (Cammeray Urban, Primrose Park)
- **Tawny Frogmouth** (St Thomas Rest Park, Neutral Bay)



Caption: Australasian Figbird (female) by Diana Womersley 2019 © courtesy of birdlifephotography.org.au

Have you seen any interesting fauna in North Sydney Council, or do you have a photo of your observations? If so, email the Bushland Project Officer - Ramin Khosravi at [council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@northsydney.nsw.gov.au) or visit Council's Bushcare Page - [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcare](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/bushcare) to post your photo on the North Sydney Council Bushcare Facebook page.

## THE GIANT WOOD MOTH

(*ENDOXYLA CINEREUS*) by Ramin Khosravi and Andrew Scott

During his lunch break in mid-January, Andrew discovered an unusually large grey moth, crowned with a fierce looking shield and long thin wings, held roof-wise, lying on the pavement under the Plane Tree in Ted Mack Civic Park. He took several photos of it from different angles before setting it safely aside in an adjoining garden, then sent the images to me for identification and ultimately to record in our Wildlife Watch Database.

I happened to be busy that day, so I asked our Wildlife Watch champion, Anne Pickles, for help identifying the moth. "I started with the book, *A Guide to Australian Moths*, by Paul Zborowski and Ted Edwards, CSIRO Publishing, which helped me identify it as being in the Cossidae family," Anne said.

"Then I looked at Cossidae on the [Lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au](http://Lepidoptera.butterflyhouse.com.au) site, found what seemed a good match and then confirmed this match by comparing

the images with those on the Atlas of Living Australia.

"I really recommend the CSIRO guides to give an overview of the families, which gives you a place to start searching. I often use the **Brisbane Insects website** too."

Anne identified our mystery moth as the Giant Wood Moth (*Endoxyla cinereus*), the heaviest moth in the world. Some females can weigh up to 30 grams and lay about 20,000 eggs and have a wingspan of 23cm; the males are half this size.

Interestingly, the larvae live in holes that they bore into the wood of smooth-barked gum trees and feed on the inner side of the bark. A large hole is cut to the exterior of the tree when the caterpillar is ready to pupate inside. When the adult moth emerges in midsummer, the empty pupal skin is left sticking out of the hole. One of the most obvious signs of the Giant Wood Moths presence is the sawdust-like



Caption: Giant Wood Moth (*Endoxyla cinereus*) Ted Mack Civic Park, North Sydney Council, 18 Jan 2021.

material which you'll find at the base of an affected tree or around the hole itself. Apart from NSW, the species has been reported in WA, QLD, and SA.

Coincidentally, during our research for this article we discovered Walter W Froggatt, Government Entomologist to the NSW Agriculture Department in 1896-1923, had described the Giant Wood Moth in his book *Forest Insects of Australia*, alongside other timber pests. He was the founder and later president of the NSW Naturalists' Society and was memorialised at 'Froggatt Lookout' for his efforts to replant and improve Balls Head Reserve between 1931 to 1937.

# Chasing butterflies

Liz Green - Balls Head  
Bushcare Group



Caption: Top L-R: Small Tortoise Shell (*Aglais urticae*) Lichtenwalde Germany by Jorg Hempel Aug 2013

Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*) Cumnor Hill Oxford by Charles James Sharp Aug 2020



Caption: Bottom L-R: Green Hairstreak by Peter Nijland, Nederlands 18 April 2017 (note: white hair streak markings absent on this specimen)

*Maculinea arion* Austria June 2010 by Ohweh Wikimedia Commons

Seasonal Balls Head Bushcarer Liz Green and I have been corresponding throughout the pandemic. She very kindly wrote a Facebook post for our community last April - *Iso-exercising: a virtual tour of Dolebury England - a welcome distraction from lockdown*. While abroad, Liz said her environmental volunteer activities for the National Trust Britain remained suspended, but she continued to monitor butterflies and I asked her to share this experience with us.

– Andrew Scott NSC Bushcare Officer

Every year for 26 weeks, from April until late September, I join others all around the country to undertake butterfly recording for the **UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey (UKBMS)** part of Butterfly Conservation.

Each week, weather permitting, my colleague Neil and I walk our transect route around Crook Peak in Somerset. Butterflies are very picky and will only come out if the day is warm and sunny with little wind. They don't get up till mid-morning and sometimes take a siesta if it gets too hot during the day. We choose our day carefully and set off with wind gauge, thermometer, compass, pen, and paper to observe and record what we see.

Ours is one of the longer transect routes and it can take up to three hours to walk the 5.5 km as we chase our "prey" to identify it. The route is broken into 10 sections, as the environment changes, so we can find ourselves in dappled woodland where we see speckled woods or fritillaries; on open flower-rich limestone grassland, good for Common Blues, Meadow Browns, Small Heaths and some skippers; and past buddleias teeming with Peacocks, Red Admirals, Large and Small Whites.

Some butterflies hibernate. In April we would expect to see a few Brimstones, Red Admirals, Peacocks, and Small Tortoiseshells. Others, like Orange Tips, emerge early while skippers and gatekeepers aren't seen until July or August.

In Britain we have 57 resident species but only 33 have been

recorded on our site. About 400 species of butterfly occur on the Australian mainland, while in Iceland, apparently, there are no native butterflies at all. A local triumph has been the reintroduction of the Large Blue *Phengaris arion* which became extinct in Britain in 1979 but which can now be seen on a nearby National Trust site at Collard Hill, Somerset. We nurture the caterpillars' food plant, thyme, we cut the grass in the absence of grazing animals and look after anthills as the butterflies' remarkable lifecycle involves spending most of the year within the nests of red ants, where the larvae feed on ant grubs. Other sites exist but are closed to the public. In the flight season, June, butterfly enthusiasts arrive in droves, like twitchers hunting rare birds.

But back to Crook Peak. This year we were in lockdown during April and most volunteering nature conservation work had ceased. UKBMS said we could start in mid-May so Neil and I were able to get back to the hills. This year's counts have not reached last year's when we recorded 399 one sunny July day. However, we have seen four Green Hairstreaks – three on one day – more than in all our years' recording combined! These are small and green and if they sit still on a blade of grass, they are invisible. We were so excited!

Now in November, it is all over till next Spring, although a few hardy Speckled Woods can be seen on a mild, sunny day. Butterflies are so delicate, some so small they are hardly visible, but all are fascinating and beautiful, and we should all do what we can to look after them.

# – YOU GET MORE OUT OF IT THAN YOU PUT IN – ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING WITH IAN CLARKE

Ian Clarke and I caught up at our first Tunks Park West Bushcare meeting on the first Sunday of February. We got to speaking about his recent environmental volunteer activities further afield. Ian mentioned how he had been hunting Orange Hawkweed in the Jangungal Wilderness Area (off the Snowy Hwy between Tumut and Thredbo) in Kosciuszko National Park at the end of November 2020.

This was Ian's second tour; he said National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) organise the week-long survey to coincide with the peak of the Orange Hawkweed flowering period each year, when it is easier to detect. They provide four-wheel drive access to site from the accommodation at Khancoban, plus meals (prior to COVID-19), otherwise they had to be self-sufficient. Just five volunteers are invited per week. The project has been running since 2009 with the support of over 300 volunteers.

Ian said Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) is an anonymous, small, prostrate daisy with red green foliage bearing unusually long hairs and attractive bright orange flowers. It was thought to have been introduced as an

BY IAN CLARKE AND ANDREW SCOTT



Caption: Orange Hawkweed by Natalie S, Derbyshire UK, 20 Aug 2013 Wikimedia

ornamental at one of the Snowy Hydro Scheme settlements. It is a serious threat to the Australian Alps and surrounding environments, including productive farmland, known to out-compete native and pastoral plants and is capable of creating a monoculture. It's spread over six million hectares in New Zealand.

Ian said NPWS has taken three approaches to control the Orange Hawkweed – sniffer dogs, drones, and police lines which he helped with. The

target area is divided into grids of 50m x 100m. Bec Mooy from Greater Sydney Local Land Services, known to most of us as the Coordinator of Floating Landcare, locates the edge of the perimeter using a GPS. The line of volunteers is staggered diagonally back, right from this position, each person within peripheral vision of the next to maintain their bearings, head looking down for Hawkweed. A second officer is positioned to the left and places a flag on the edge of line that is collected on the march back as they swing around to examine the next grid.

"If we find one [an Orange Hawkweed] we just mark it and they [NPWS] treat it later and we return to the site for a further five years, but often there's nothing to be found," Ian said.

"On one trip we were flown in for two days of work at a remote location, I was so excited as I had never been in a helicopter before."

Ian said *Gardening Australia* did a great segment on the project – **Hawkweed Hounds, Series 30, Episode 42**. Ian's next project is hunting Mouse Eared Hawkweed at Perisher, above the snow line where there are no trees.



Caption: L-R Volunteers Ian Clarke, Ingrid Liermann, Rosemary Taylor, Marilyn Johnson, enjoy a lunch break with a view over Lake Eucumbene following a morning of surveying for Orange Hawkweed in the Jangungal Wilderness Area, Kosciuszko National Park, 17/02/2021. Photo by Rebecca Mooy



Caption: Top: NPWS sniffer dogs used to control Orange Hawkweed. Bottom: Line of volunteers looking for Orange Hawkweed

Ian's second adventure occurred on 20 December when he answered a call from Sydney Wildlife's Sonja Elwood to help build a wombat enclosure for Wisdom Wombat Sanctuary in Kangaroo Valley (run by Lyn and Paul Obern). Wisdom is the collective noun for a group of wombats.

Sonja said their facilities were lost during the devastating 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires that affected half of Kangaroo Valley. The job was half finished and Lyn was distressed a week before Christmas. They needed another compound to house four orphaned joeys that arrived en masse into care, pushing their facilities to be overcrowded. Lyn hired an excavator and Sonia recruited volunteers - James Robertson an accomplished carpenter/builder, his pregnant wife Alex, his mate Rhys Bevan a plumber and his fiancé Dot, and Ian as labourer (in his own words - the dog's body).

The play pen/enclosure was completed in a single day, much to the delight of the four joey's Tootsie, Puddles, Leo, and Lillie. Lyn said the volunteers installed a 500mm concrete pipe at 30 degrees (the angle of decent most preferred by wild wombats) in a slope adjoining their barn pen and the sick bays housed within. The pipe prevents the burrow collapsing and gives a good floor grip in wet weather so it is a good starter for the wombats. Lyn said at the time of writing this article, that the joeys had dug way beyond the end of it. The adult mum digs the burrow in the wild.

"It turns right after the end of the pipe and has disappeared beyond our sight to know how far it now reaches," Lyn said.

"As time goes by, some of the others may well dig their own new entrances and new tunnels, or they will reach the end of the pipe and divert another tunnel to the left etc.



Caption: Left. Ian Clarke at Wombat Play Pen Build, 20 Dec 2020 by Lyn Obern. Right. Joeys investigating artificial burrow in newly constructed play pen, 20 Dec 2020 by Lyn Obern.

"This activity creates extensive tunnels to individual sleeping chambers but with one entrance, similar to what has occurred in our much more established pens. The fence was then installed below ground level to contain the wombats while they are in care."

Ian said "I've driven past Wisdom Wombats Sanctuary many times in the past not knowing about the good work being done there.

"This fire recovery project gave me the opportunity to go somewhere I'd never usually go, I nursed a wombat and met nice people including our hosts, the guys and their wives. I encourage anyone to volunteer because you get more out of it than you put in."

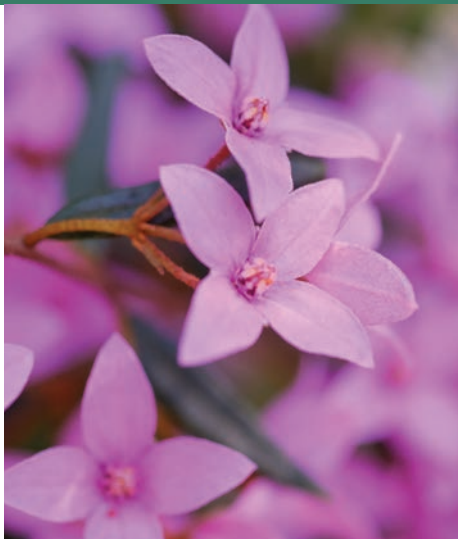
If you would like to assist with Fire Recovery for Wildlife contact Sonja Elwood on 0481 013 579 or visit [www.facebook.com/wisdomwombatrefuge](https://www.facebook.com/wisdomwombatrefuge)

## Native Plant Profile: *Crowea saligna*

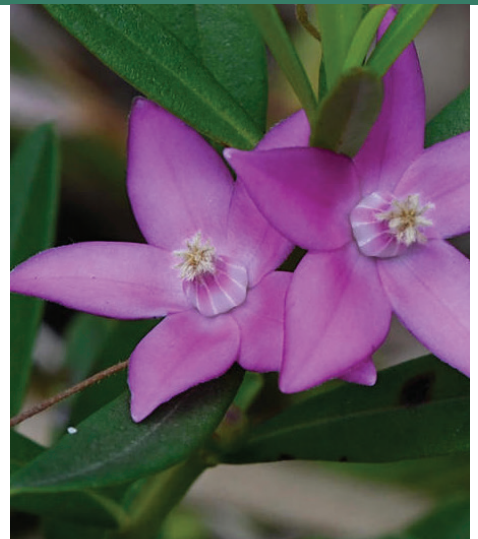
\* Note: this photo was incorrectly named *Crowea saligna* in the 2020 Bushcare Events Calendar



Caption: Pink Wax Flower (*Eriostemon australasius*) by Andrew Scott Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden 14 August 2019 \*



Caption: Sydney Boronia (*Boronia ledifolia*), Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden by Andrew Scott, 14 August 2019



Caption: Willow-leaved Crowea (*Crowea saligna*) by Mark Calabretta, Balgowlah Heights, 6 March 2020 iNaturalist

**Name:** *Crowea* = in honour of James Crow, a British botanist;  
*saligna* = (latin) pertaining to willows, referring to the shape of the leaves.

If you take an Autumn walk along the Gadyan Track at Berry Island or the Angophora Walk at Balls Head, a low shrub with flowers like bright pink stars might catch your eye. This beauty is *Crowea saligna*, a member of the Rutaceae family. This plant family includes the familiar citrus group (such as oranges and lemons) and about 320 Australian species in 41 genera, including *Boronia*, *Correa*, *Eriostemon*, *Phebalium*, *Philotheca* and *Zieria*.

Most members of the Rutaceae family contain glands, seen as translucent dots on the leaves that release strongly aromatic oils when crushed – a feature also found in the Myrtaceae family.

*Crowea saligna* is a small, erect shrub, usually under 1m high, found

in dry, sheltered forest on sandy soils, usually in the shade of taller shrubs. Its distribution is restricted to the coastal zone around Sydney.

Leaves are shiny green, up to 5cm long and arranged alternately on distinctly angular, winged stems – a feature that distinguishes *Crowea saligna* from the more widely distributed *C. exalata*.

*Crowea* can be distinguished from *boronia* and *eriosomon* by its Summer and Autumn flowering, with *Eriostemon* and *Boronia* flowering in late Winter/ Spring. *Crowea* flowers are a rich rose pink with five overlapping petals and anthers with long bearded appendages where as *Eriostemon* flowers are usually white or pale pink with five petals that do not overlap and anthers that do not have

bearded appendages. *Boronia* flowers have only four petals.

Like most local Rutaceae species, *Crowea saligna* is difficult to propagate from seed but relatively easy from stem cuttings. The hard seeds are dispersed explosively, and plants are often found in small groups. Unexpectedly, the Bushland Team have observed a King Parrot snacking on *Crowea* seeds at Berry Island.

Next time you are enjoying an Autumn bushwalk, keep an eye out for *Crowea saligna* - it often has the flower show all to itself at this time of year!

Clare McElroy  
- Bushcare Nursery Supervisor

## THE LAVENDER BAY MOB – UPDATE



Caption: The Lavender Bay Mob (L to R) Ann Lyons, David Yip and Victoria Whitney, taken by passers-by Gary & Vicki from the Blue Mountains 12 Feb 2021 (the 4th member of the group, Sue Allen was working at Northbridge on this day).

In 2013, a group of North Sydney volunteer bushcarers came together for a one-off weeding blitz on Goat Island. That evolved into a regular gig at the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) Sydney Harbour Islands Precinct sites on Goat, Shark and Clark, and occasionally Fort Denison. A nod to the classic crime/comedy film *The Lavender Hill Mob*, and because NPWS collected us from Lavender Bay wharf, we called ourselves The Lavender Bay Mob or LBM for short.

Six years, many friendships and tonnes of agave later, NPWS found itself unable to provide water transfers for volunteers, so the LBM looked around and found the Bradleys Head Amphitheatre/naval memorial site beside Sydney Harbour. This site was also under NPWS management and the area was sadly neglected, with native plantings invaded by weeds and smothered by uncontrolled buffalo grass. We were eager to apply our skills and experience to another harbourside site. That was two years ago.

Since then, four of us have attended weekly, hacking back the buffalo, and removing perpetual/seasonal weeds, the usual suspects such as *Ehrharta*, *Fleabane* and *Asparagus Fern* as well as site-specific invaders like *Cape Ivy*, *Lantana*, and *Fishbone Fern*. Replanting has been minimal and in accordance with NPWS approved species for the area.

Earlier plantings were alive but stunted – most have recovered well since we gave them space, light, and mulch. To our joy, we found *Microlaena* growing in patches and we've added native grasses such as *Themeda australis* as well as small shrubs such as *Acacia myrtifolia*, one of which was already present and healthy, and rewarded us by flowering in our second year.

The Amphitheatre and Naval Memorial is well attended by young and old, picnickers, walkers, wedding parties and tourists who take selfies with the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House as their backdrop. It's a beautiful place. We love working there and passers-by often stop to say thanks. We expect to continue forever, supervised by families of magpies, kookaburras, and a colony of water dragons.

# GREEN EVENTS CALENDAR

BOOKINGS must be made for all events at: [www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/greenevents](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/greenevents) or 9936 8100 unless otherwise stated

The Bushland Team is committed to providing activities and events where social distancing measures can be applied. Please refer to the events listing on the North Sydney Council homepage and Green Events page for the most up-to-date information.

## MARCH

- 4 **Bushcare Visit - Maroubra dunes** | Thursday 8am to 3pm
- 11 **Bushcare Convenor Meeting** | Thursday 6pm to 8pm
- 16 **Powerful Owl Project Volunteer Online Training** | Tuesday 6.30pm to 7.30pm. Enquiries: [powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au](mailto:powerfulowl@birdlife.org.au)
- 18 **Rakali Webinar** | Thursday 6.30pm to 8pm
- 20 **Cuttings Workshop** | Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm
- 20 **Bat Count** | Saturday 5pm to 8pm

## APRIL

- 13 **Family Bush Walk** | Tuesday 10.30am to 12pm
- 17 **Bushcare Stall - Produce Markets** | Saturday 8am to 12pm
- 20 **Annual Adopt a Plot meeting** | Tuesday 6pm to 7pm

- 20 **Native Bee Webinar** | Tuesday 7pm to 8.30pm
- 20 **Wildlife of Lane Cove Webinar** | Tuesday 7pm to 8pm. Bookings essential: [www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/bushcareevents](http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/bushcareevents)

## MAY

- 9 **Trees for Mum Day** | Sunday 9.30am to 11am
- 11 **Secret Life of Echidnas Webinar** | Tuesday 7pm to 8.15pm. Bookings essential: [www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/bushcareevents](http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/bushcareevents)
- 20 **Community Nursery Visit SSC** | Thursday 9am to 1pm
- 22 **Eucalyptus ID Walk** | Saturday 10am to 1pm

## JUNE

- 8 **Family Bush Walk** | Tuesday 10.30am to 12pm
- 27 **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Walk** | Sunday 8am to 2pm

## SHORE BOYS: OUR SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM



Caption: Year 11 Shore School Students spreading mulch at Balls Head picnic area.  
Photo by Tristram Thomas

On Tuesday 2 December, Year 11 Shore School students assisted the Bushland Team in adding the finishing touches to the Balls Head Reserve picnic area upgrade. Shore School's service-learning program, aims to get the boys to give back to the local community by giving their time and "expertise". Shore has had a strong relationship with North Sydney Council by having a permanent albeit small group of students who volunteer their time weekly.

However, 2020 was the first time we have had over 80 boys spend four full

days with the Bushcare Team. We are hoping to continue this in the future. The tasks varied each day, some boys moved four tonnes of mulch and spread it throughout the picnic area to the sandstone edging. The material was recently salvaged gutter from kerb and gutter upgrades around North Sydney, to reduce the impact to pedestrian traffic on the surrounding bushland. Others did litter collection, weeding or removing non-native plants.

The boys liked giving something tangible to the community... that is,

a nicer looking Balls Head than it was beforehand, but they dislike the physicality! It was interesting to see members of the first rugby team struggling with the heat and mulch!

Upon reflection, an interesting story is two of the boys were in Balls Head on another occasion with their families. They noticed some people were walking over the areas where they had spent five hours planting and hence told the public to stick to the designated paths, which I'm sure would not have happened previously.

All the boys were extremely impressed with the Bushcare Team. A big thank you goes to Trusty (Tristram Thomas) and his team. They fully got involved in whatever the boys were doing and lead by example.

Mick Massey  
- Shore School Mathematics Teacher



Caption: Mick Massey, Ramin Khosravi and Year 11 Shore Student spreading mulch to sandstone edging. 2 Dec 2020.  
Photo by Tristram Thomas.



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