

PNHA NEWS

Winter 2021 Issue 88

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

PNHA UPDATE

Grant projects:

Mona Vale Dunes - two projects

On June 17 we planted about 600 tubestock on an area of Mona Vale Dunes previously covered with dense weeds such as Asparagus Fern, Lantana and Green Cestrum. Mona Vale golf



Melinda with baby bluetongue

course provided water. Some good follow-up rain came along, but we'll need to water during spring as the weather usually dries out after June. Northern Beaches Council



Most of the happy planters. Thanks everyone!

PNHA is on Facebook Want to get in touch?
pnhainfo@gmail.com



INSIDE: Draft Ingleside Precinct - PNHA Submission + Wakehurst Parkway flooding
+ EPBC Act Review + Meetings with NBC staff and Weed Information
+ Places You Love Alliance + Grant Applications + Bike Tracks Destroying Bushland
+ Unleashed Dogs on Beaches + Littoral Rainforest in Newport + Cats and Wildlife
+ Canopy Keepers

will organise follow up weeding.

This concludes the project financed by a grant from the Federal Government Communities Environment Program.

Our grant from Northern Beaches Council for weeding near the track to the beach from Golf Avenue will continue until the end of the year. This was for \$3500, to which we added \$1000 from PNHA. It's exciting to start a new bush regeneration project, but follow-up weeding is just as important, and money for that is not so easy to get.

Submissions:

Draft Ingleside Precinct Strategy

Summary of PNHA's Submission

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association considers this strategy needs to be reworked to ensure that biodiversity throughout the strategy area is properly conserved. Here is the DPIE Website's statement on Sustainability : *The draft place strategy for Ingleside seeks to protect the environment and preserve natural and biophysical assets.*

Seeks is not good enough. It is a low bar commitment which demonstrates how poor the commitment to ecological sustainability is, and how little protection for biodiversity this proposed development will provide.

The strategy's first priority should be to ensure that the environmental values of the land area will be acknowledged and then plan development that will fit into, rather than plan an urban development first, then "seek" to protect the environment.

We take exception to this paragraph in the Acknowledgement of Country in the Draft Ingleside Strategy document:

Aboriginal people take a holistic view of land, water and culture and see them as one, not in isolation to each other. The draft Ingleside Place Strategy is based on the premise upheld by Aboriginal people that if we care for Country, it will care for us.

This strategy does not demonstrate the reality of Caring for Country, and we consider it a cynical use of political correctness to claim that this would be an Aboriginal view of what is proposed for Ingleside. Country includes earth, water and all flora and fauna. The Country cannot care for us if we destroy it, as will happen with this strategy.

1. Loss of native plants and animal species within the precinct

The Ingleside Precinct which the DPIE proposes to rezone is rich in native plant and animal species, as identified in reports prepared for DPIE by Eco Logical Australia, and reports from others including Ingleside Residents Landcare Group. Eco Logical Australia identifies 23 threatened fauna species and 14 threatened flora species either occurring in the precinct or likely to occur. A survey by Ingleside Residents Landcare Group in 2011 identified 86 bird species in the area. Recently there has been a report of a new location of Eastern Pygmy Possums, listed as vulnerable under NSW legislation, in a bushland area within the precinct which has been set down for residential development.

Should development occur, the attack of weeds and water pollution will cause many of these native plant and animal species to disappear. Positive action to protect them must be taken.

In addition, this is a time of climate change where retention of trees and native habitat are becoming more and more important to our society



CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS FRIDAY JULY 23

2. Protection of Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs)

There are two EECs in the Ingleside Precinct: Coastal Upland Swamp and Duffys Forest Community

Coastal Upland Swamp in the Sydney Basin Bioregion

- Listed as Endangered under Commonwealth legislation and Endangered Ecological Community under State legislation
- They must be protected by buffer zones, otherwise close residential development will cause a change in the quality and quantity of water entering the swamp which will lead to their eventual destruction

Duffys Forest Endangered Ecological Community

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association has been alerted to a patch of Duffys Forest EEC within the precinct which has been overlooked by Eco Logical Australia, the biodiversity consultants working for DPIE.

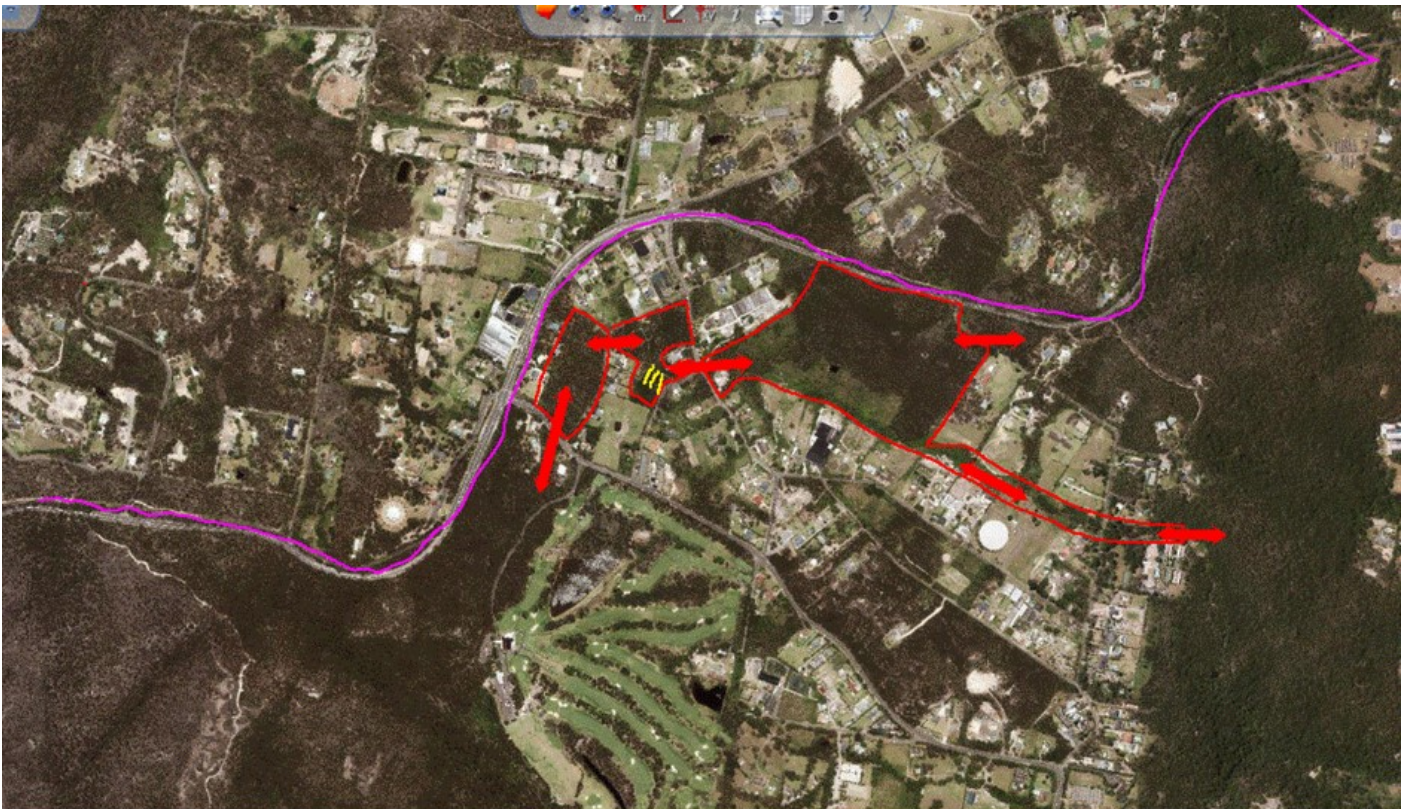
- Listed as an Endangered Ecological Community under State Legislation
- Is habitat for *Grevillea caleyi* which is listed as critically endangered under both State and Federal legislation
- Duffys Forest EEC occurs in a few locations in Ingleside, Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest and Belrose and nowhere else in the world. As many sites as possible must be protected to add resilience in case of bushfire and other damaging events.

3. Protection of Fauna Corridors and riparian Zones

Native animals need to be able to move between local reserves within and around the precinct and the national parks to the west. Fauna corridors through the precinct are required for this to happen.

However:

- None of the fauna corridors shown on the plan give an unimpeded passage for fauna.
- Riparian zones make a valuable contribution to fauna movement if constructed properly. Those shown in the Structure Plan are too narrow, in private ownership, not zoned Environmental Conservation and not linked by bushland to reserves and national parks bordering the precinct.



Corridors critical to fauna movement through the precinct.

Image: Jacqui Marlow

In short, commitment to construction and protection of fauna corridors in the structure plan is entirely inadequate.

A final point

We consider advice from ecological consultants is being ignored. For example:

Eco Logical Australia has given advice to DPIE about the number, size and location of fauna corridors through the Ingleside Precinct. This advice is not reflected in the Structure Plan. For example, on page 60 of the ELA biodiversity Assessment, they state, in reference to connectivity links, that:

The most significant link exist between Garigal National Park in the south west and Ingleside Chase Reserve in the East (See the PNHA map). The rezoning should aim to maintain these areas of connectivity throughout the precinct.

One of these areas of connectivity, the bushland in Waratah Rd, is mapped for R2 Low density residential. Part of this area contains Duffy Forest EEC. And the whole is needed as a fauna corridor between Garigal NP and bushland to the north.

Also, Eco Logical Australia has recommended that riparian corridors should, where possible, be in public ownership. Their map on page 34 marks the riparian zones as E2 (Environmental Conservation). This zone is not given to the creekline corridors in the Structure Plan which shows the zoning of the riparian corridors as RU2 Rural landscape which enables private ownership and construction of dwellings. We believe that they **must** be in public ownership and a total width between built form of 100m, as in the Warriewood Valley. Otherwise they are not sustainable.

The view of PNHA is that this planning proposal has been rushed, not fully thought through and not suitable for its environment. PNHA requests that a new plan be produced, one that responds to the environmental demands of its peri-urban location.

Waratah Rd Bushland

Waratah Rd runs between Powderworks Rd and Manor Rd. This bushland area is about 2.5ha on Lots 66-74, plus three adjoining lots facing Powderworks Rd. The land is owned by the Department of Planning Infrastructure and Environment. The strategy proposes to clear and zone it **Low Density Residential R2**. To raise awareness of the value of this bushland, with the expert assistance of John Illingsworth we have made a video now on Youtube. Here's the link to **Bushland Trashed: The Ingleside Place Strategy 2021:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gq3YmbCucvo&t=3s>

The project is managed by the Department of Planning. The link to view the whole Strategy and have your say: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Ingleside>



In the Waratah Rd Bushland:

Each Waratah seed pod contains many seeds.

Right: *Cymbidium suave*, an epiphytic orchid on a Banksia. Flowers October-November. (NOT a Lomandra!)



Nest burrow of **Spotted Pardalote** near road edge.

Wakehurst Parkway flooding

We are opposed to all of the options proposed to reduce flooding on the Wakehurst Parkway for the following reasons:

- Wakehurst Parkway is a state road and as such the State Government should be doing the work, not Northern Beaches Council.
- None of the proposals presented for comment will prevent all flood events, they will just reduce the number of flood events. This is roadwork on the cheap and shouldn't be contemplated given the environmental damage that the options will cause.
- The environmental damage caused by all of the options includes destruction of large areas of bushland and exposure of contaminated sediments which would have to be treated.

We need a permanent solution to flooding on Wakehurst Parkway that takes in the effects of climate change. For example: raising the road and constructing bridges that would allow animals to move safely under them. It is not good enough to ask the public to choose between a number of bad solutions without giving us the option of a better solution.

Meetings with Northern Beaches Council Environment Staff

PNHA committee members meet with some of the staff every few months to discuss environmental concerns. Our first meeting by invitation was triggered by our response to the NBC's Bushland and Biodiversity Policy, seeking to know what actions would be taken.

Our second meeting last month focused on the Weeds Management Plan, recently released. We recommended that the council's webpage be more graphic and informative for people seeking information about weeds and it appeared agreement was reached. But so far the webpage doesn't appear to have changed. The **Northern Beaches Priority Weeds Management Plan** is a statutory document of little use to someone wanting to identify weeds and understand how to control them. Compared to Willoughby Council website's weed information, NBC's has a way to go. Have a look:

<https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environmental-Health/Pest-Weed-Management/Weeds>

Let NBC know what as a user you want to see about weeds on this page:

<https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/council/search/weeds>

Email your comments to: council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

We appreciate the communication and discussions these meetings afford with staff but are looking for outcomes.

EPBC Act 1999 Review

You might think Pittwater is a long way from the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Protection (EPBC) Act and the Federal Government, but we were alerted to the failings of the EPBC Act when Federally listed **Coastal Upland Swamp Endangered Ecological Community (EEC)** areas in Ingleside were apparently not considered in planning for the previous iteration of the Ingleside land release. The littoral rainforest on the Hillside Rd land at Newport is also federally listed as an EEC, but this didn't save it from some inappropriate clearing in the past.

The **Australian Conservation Foundation** has a Northern Beaches branch. PNHA agreed to sign an open letter to Jason Falinski, Member for Mackellar, urging the government to adopt changes to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 recommended by the recent review.

In part the letter said:

"A once-in-a- decade independent review found our national environment law, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, is failing to protect our country's plants, animals and ecosystems and is insufficient

to meet current or future challenges like climate change or extinction. The independent review recommends a complete overhaul of our national environment laws, underpinned by strong national environmental standards. By protecting our forests, bushlands, wetlands and rivers through strong laws we can combat climate change and address Australia's growing extinction crisis."

On July 2 we contacted the **Environmental Defenders Office (EDO)** for the latest on the EPBC Act Review.

The response:

"The independent review of the EPBC Act has now formally concluded. Prof Graeme Samuel released a Final Report with 38 recommendations and 3 tranches of reforms – the Final Report is available at: [Final report | Independent review of the EPBC Act \(environment.gov.au\)](#)

*The federal government has not made a formal response to the Final Report, however, there are two bills before the Senate to establish national environmental standards, and an Environment Assurance Commissioner to facilitate devolving environmental approval powers to states and territories. Parliament has risen for the winter break, but these Bills are expected to be debated in the Senate in August. EDO is working with the **Places You Love** alliance of environmental NGOs on these reforms.*

There is a summary of the recommendations and analysis of proposed legislation on our website at: [‘Trajectory Unsustainable’: 10 Key Findings of the EPBC Act Review Final Report - Environmental Defenders Office \(edo.org.au\)](#)



The Places You Love Alliance is a network of environment groups from across the country formed to fight for a new generation of national environment laws.

Find out more: <http://www.placesyoulove.org/>

Grants continued:

Saving Our Species—Saving *Grevillea caleyi*

Our grant for that project is now expended. Work may continue on the Baha'i site but there is no definite news yet.

Grant Applications:

We have applied for a Crown Land Improvement Fund (CRIF) grant for **Bangalley Head Reserve** but will have to wait until December for a decision. We also supported applications by NBC for grants for other areas of Crown Land in need of bush regeneration— the lower area of Careel Creek and for North Narrabeen Headland.

We will also apply for a grant from North Beaches Council for bush regeneration and Spotted Gum reforestation in **Palmgrove Park Avalon. Pittwater and Wagstaffe Spotted Gum Forest** is an Endangered Ecological Community, Gum reforestation in **Palmgrove Park Avalon. Pittwater and Wagstaffe Spotted Gum Forest** is an Endangered Ecological Community, now largely cleared from residential land and where there is little likelihood of recruitment with seedling trees or other plants in the community. So all the more reason to care for the EEC in bushland reserves.

Bike Tracks Destroying Bushland

Bushland reserves are increasingly seen as a place to build bike tracks, by adult riders and by kids and their parents. Serious destruction is happening, as quite old trees are chainsawed, and what were walking tracks are increasingly widened, destroying bushland edges. The tracks become dangerous for walkers. The cost to the Council is in trying to protect the bush, close off tracks, rehabilitate damaged bushland and monitor future use. Covid and the school holidays worsens the illegal activity, very difficult to stop before damage is done.

Reserves where this is happening include:

- Deep Creek reserve
- Plateau Park on Bilgola Plateau where the bush is Duffys Forest Endangered ecological community (EEC)
- Stapleton Park and Palmgrove Park Avalon in Wagstaffe and Pittwater Spotted Gum EEC
- Ingleside Chase Reserve near Laurel Rd East Ingleside.
- Whitney Reserve Mona Vale, where areas planted with tubestock on National Tree Day a few years ago have been trashed.

Parents often argue that making these tracks and riding through the bush keeps kids off their screens. Maybe so, but it must not be at the expense of damage to bushland. For bike riders the making of the track is apparently as important as simply riding and parents sometimes provide tools.

Solutions could be:

- opening school grounds during holidays and weekends, with some security presence, so that sports facilities could be used.
- Providing bike tracks around public football fields or other unused land.

If you see this sort of destruction happening, please report it to the Council. You can phone for a ranger on 1300 434 434 24/7 but it will be some time before one turns up, if ever, or email council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au and if you have a photo, even better. Bushland management staff are working in their own time to keep up a presence in the reserves as best they can, and some bush regeneration contractors staff are also employed to help stop the destruction.

PNHA will investigate further what can be done.

Unleashed Dogs on Beaches

We objected to the recent proposal by Northern Beaches Council for unleashed dog areas on North Palm and South Mona Vale Beaches because the necessary environmental studies had not been done. Again, in line with our aims, we insist that the possible impact on the natural environment be assessed and determined before the trial goes ahead. Dogs must not be able to access nearby dunes and there must be no risk to birds or seals on the shore.

Littoral Rainforest at 62 & 85 Hillside Rd Newport

After a community campaign to save this land over many years, then a three-year wait after it was purchased by the Department of Planning, this land has just come into Council ownership. This means that at last care for the bushland can begin. We will be asking for bush regeneration to begin on this land as soon as possible, looking after habitat for small birds, including Superb Wrens.

Image: Neil Fifer



Cats and wildlife

The ACT is introducing citywide containment for all new cats from the middle of next year.

Currently, all cats in new Canberra suburbs have to be kept indoors or in cat runs at all times.

But under the ACT government's plan, announced recently, all new cats obtained by owners after July 1, 2022 will have to be contained, regardless of which suburb they live in.

The ACT Cat Plan 2021-2031, developed in consultation with cat owners, environmental groups and the broader community, states the policy will "help cats live longer and healthier lives while better protecting native wildlife". One of the plan's first actions is to introduce the citywide containment requirements for new cats.

Read more here: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-28/all-canberra-suburbs-to-contain-new-cats-from-2022/100172644>

Even the nicest happy domestic cats can be deadly killers of wildlife, some roaming for kilometres at night. Cats get into fights, suffering bites and infected puncture wounds which can cost at least \$1000 at the vet to fix.

Cats can be perfectly happy, safe and healthy indoors. This article suggests how to keep your cat indoors, even offering YouTube videos of birds to keep the cat entertained!

<https://theconversation.com/dont-let-them-out-15-ways-to-keep-your-indoor-cat-happy-138716>



The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 refers to cats only on pages 24-27. <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/act-1998-87> How adequate is this?

We know a lot more now about the damage cats do to wildlife, so we think it's time for NSW to consider an ACT approach.



CANOPY KEEPERS

Our native tree canopy is a wonderful feature of our area, and while we have great tree cover, sadly Northern Beaches lead in rate of tree loss. Canopy Keepers are determined to change that, to help people value trees and encourage more tree planting. To find out more and get in touch, have a look at our website:

<https://www.canopykeepers.org.au/>
and: <https://www.facebook.com/canopykeepersAU/>



Membership of **Pittwater Natural Heritage Association Landcare Group** is open to all who share our aims of caring for the natural environment of the Pittwater area and working to enhance and protect it. You can find a Membership Application form on our website <http://pnha.org.au/join/> or contact us on pnhainfo@gmail.com for one to be sent to you.

Cost \$20 per year, \$10 unwaged.