

PNHA NEWS

Summer 2021 Issue 90

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally



MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY
HOLIDAYS to PNHA MEMBERS
and FRIENDS

PNHA Chair's Report, AGM December 5 2021

What we've done this year:

Campaigns/Submissions:

- Ingleside Land Release - submission
- Dark Sky Park at Palm Beach - submission
- NBC Bushland and Biodiversity Policy – submission
- Weeds Management Plan – Submission. Biosecurity focus.
- Wakehurst Parkway widening – Submission
- 8 Forest Rd Warriewood. The site has changed hands this year and the fate of the wonderful bushland on the area zoned R2 is uncertain. - submission
- Trad Smut release – success at last. Smut established along the Irrawong Track and in McCarrs Creek Reserve.
- Letters of support for NBC's Crown Lands Improvement fund grant applications for Turrimetta Head, Careel Bay wetlands
- Littoral Rainforest in Hillside Rd Newport. Now the two blocks are classified as Community land, but no bush regeneration has happened yet mainly due to Covid.
- Support for the Cats and Wildlife project. RSPCA NSW is partnering with 10 councils including Northern Beaches Council on a research project that will help keep cats and wildlife safe.
- NBC's Environment SRG - PNHA is represented at quarterly meetings > p.2



Protecting Pittwater's Environment

PNHA is on Facebook Want to get in touch?

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INSIDE:

PNHA Management Committee for 2021-2022, Bangalley Head presenters at the AGM, Boneseed, Palmgrove Park Spotted Gum Forest project in 2022, Developments for big houses could destroy bushland, Trad Smut establishing on two sites, Mild Weather & Fertiliser from heaven, Cicadas gone?

Large houses and bushland/tree removal. DAs on private land threatening bushland – 521 Barrenjoey Rd in The Bends, and at 189 Riverview Rd Clareville. Submissions/Objections. (See more on page 4.)

Comments on the new LEP, in its early stages still.

Grant projects

Grevillea caleyi. After seven years work, our last grant for this is expended. Covid prevented work at the Bahai temple site so we worked behind the Terrey Hills Golf Club in March to expend the remaining funds in our last grant.

Mona Vale Dunes x 2. The June planting on the Federal Government Communities Environment Program grant area received little maintenance due to Covid shut down of bushcare. But for the recent rainfall a lot of the tubestock would have died. The other grant was from NBC and PNHA, for weeding in bush in fair condition. This will end this month. Weeding grants are hard to come by. Grant bodies like more spectacular results in *before and after* photos.

Avalon Golf Course. Community Environment Program, completed.

New one just awarded: \$5000.00 for Palmgrove Park Avalon. From NBC for restoration of part of the Pittwater Spotted Gum Community EEC. Avalon Primary will be involved in this, work to begin in February 2022.

Crown Lands Improvement Fund – application for bush regeneration funds for Bangalley Head Reserve. We expect a decision this month.

Publications: Pittwater Nature, PNHA Newsletter. Who reads these? We don't get much feedback. Today we have copies of our now remaindered 2004 Warriewood and Irrawong Reserve Bird book to give away, also the booklet about control of vine weeds.

PNHA Cards. No market days or other events this year. Libby at the **Beachside Bookshop** in Avalon kindly sells these for us for cash. We have quite a few new ones, for sale here today.

Meetings with NBC Environment staff. Our submission on the council's Bushland and Biodiversity Policy questioned how it would result in action. The NBC environment staff's response to this was to invite the PNHA committee to meet with them every two months, in between our bi-monthly committee meetings. Topics discussed have included: improving accessible information about weeds on the council website, managing/preventing/rectifying construction of illegal bike tracks in bushland reserves, the possibility of Eastern Osprey nesting poles (following Ospreys deserting their nest on a crane at Whale Beach). The problem of dogs in wildlife protection areas – Bangalley Headland Reserve and Angophora, as well as in Mackay Reserve. Signage for bushcare groups. The weediness of Tuckeroos. In general we find these meetings worthwhile. At least topics are raised, even if few problems are solved and some outcomes are indefinite or uncertain. Some staff are more active and responsive than others.

Social Media

Facebook page – data on response to our posts is improving.

Webpage—Facebook posts appear on this automatically.

Instagram - this might be a way to get younger people interested. We'll do this in 2022.

We'd like to boost our membership. It has hovered around 100 for some time.

Thanks to our hard working committee. We meet six times a year, by zoom or in person, and email often. The members are:

Julie Bennett Vice Chair, David Palmer Secretary, Mark Turner Treasury, Robyn Hughes Membership Secretary, Edna Blanchard project officer - lighting and the Dark Sky project, Gary Harris botany and invertebrate expert, Leigh McGaghey (acting) member following the retirement of Jan Marshall during the year.

What about next year?

We all look forward to a more normal life of course. Covid seems to have got people out and about more. But it put

paid to any chance of guided walks this year. We hope to rectify that in 2022.

How we could be more effective

I think PNHA could embrace a stronger campaigning style that encourages members to support causes we're concerned about. As do the big environmental organisations, such as Australian Conservation Foundation, Birdlife Australia and others, we could have letter writing campaigns on certain issues and strongly encourage members and others to make a loud noise about environmental issues that need attention and better funding.

We've done this a few times in the past, but we could be more active. For example, on the management of bushland reserves, where financial decisions need to be made at a high level in Council when budgets are being allocated. Our committee meetings with NBC environment staff are OK but don't result in as much action as we'd like.

A YouTube channel? Short videos about issues and areas we're interested in. Who can help us make smart phone videos?

To do this we need to increase our membership which has hovered around 100 for many years. We need to attract more people with social media skills and ideas.

All comments and suggestions about what PNHA can do and how we can operate are very welcome.

Marita Macrae, PNHA Chair

PNHA Management Committee for 2022

The members of the existing committee were re-elected, there being no other nominations. Jan Marshall had retired during the year and Leigh McGaghey was elected in her place.

Marita Macrae Chair, Julie Bennett Vice Chair, David Palmer Secretary, Mark Turner Treasurer, Robyn Hughes Membership, Edna Blanchard project officer - lighting and the Dark Sky, Gary Harris botany and invertebrate expert, Leigh McGaghey social media.

Bangalley Head Reserve - presentations at the AGM

Jayden Walsh gave us a fascinating account of his study of vertebrate fauna on the bushland in 2019—2020, as well as describing the important vegetation and different soils there. You can read his report on our website [here](#).



Sally Alldis, supervisor of the bush regeneration team BARRC, described her work in the reserve. Shortage of funds from NBC limits the amount of work her team can do and made it clear our hoped-for grant is really needed. One surprising find recently was an infestation of the weed Boneseed, left, closely related to Bitou Bush, but far more serious as it can invade inland across the state.

Both speakers are clearly attached to this remarkable reserve. We are very fortunate to have two such interested and capable young people working to conserve it.

Grant Projects:

Palmgrove Park Spotted Gum Forest restoration

We've been successful in receiving \$5000 from Northern Beaches Council to revegetate a small area of the lower part of Palmgrove Park between Bellevue and Dress Circle roads. Avalon Public School is just down the road and will be involved in tree planting and environment studies here. Work will begin in February 2022. We are hoping a bushcare group will be established to maintain the site.

Developments destroying bushland

521 Barrenjoey Road – in the Bilgola Bends

Read the Council's Develop Application Assessment report [here](#):

Note: no approval from Transport NSW.

This development application will be referred to the next meeting of the Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel (NBLPP), to be held on Wednesday, 15 December 2021 commencing at 12.00pm, **by a webcast**. Click [here](#) to join the webcast.

The meeting agenda is [here](#).

Minutes will be posted on this page following the meeting, usually within 3- 5 business days.

Let's hope this horrendous proposal gets the rejection it deserves.

189 Riverview Rd Avalon

This DA has been resubmitted. **Submissions close 18 December.**

Please comment on this one. It is still awful! You can see the documents [here](#):

Note: Council's Natural Environment and Engineering staff referral responses do not support the application.

Trad Smut

We're very happy to report this is spreading really well in two of the sites where we have planted infected stems since October 2020. You can see the yellowing foliage along the track to the waterfall from Irrawong Rd Narrabeen, and in McCarrs Creek Reserve. We can now use stems from these sites to spread it to other infestations.

Trad must be the most frustrating and expensive weed to control. The tiniest broken stem can sprout again even after the most careful weeding. The smut means Trad will be weakened so that it can't form dense infestations that smother all plants below it. Probably smut will not actually kill it. But that's good, because we want the disease to survive, and for that it needs its Trad host.



Mild weather + fertiliser from heaven?

Plants, native and introduced, are growing like crazy in these long mild days of summer. It's not only because we're having so many showers and overcast days. The rain after thunderstorms contains nitrogen, a vital plant nutrient.

Air is 78 per cent nitrogen, and plants need it to grow. Nitrogen gas is chemically very stable because it is made from two atoms that form strong bonds with one another. Breaking these bonds requires lots of energy before they can react. Lightning can provide this energy, breaking the bonds and leaving the free nitrogen atoms to combine with oxygen in the atmosphere. The resulting compounds are called nitrates, which dissolve in rainwater more readily than nitrogen gas. Most plants cannot use nitrogen gas but they can use nitrates. Because of this, thunderstorm rain is particularly good for fertilising plants.

Source: <https://www.sciencefocus.com/planet-earth/why-does-thunderstorm-rain-contain-more-nitrogen-than-ordinary-rain/>

Cicadas gone?

Or just underground waiting for warmer weather?

Though sometimes their noise is really over the top, we shouldn't complain because they are part of the fauna food chain. Channel-billed Cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of Pied Currawongs. Cicadas are an important food source for the nestling cuckoos, as well as their foster parents and biological parents.

In contrast to the cicadas the Cuckoos seem to be extra noisy this year. It will be interesting to see if there is any change in the population next summer related to this summer's cicada population.

But maybe next week we'll all be shouting above the cicada din!

This cicada was in Plateau Park above Bilgola a few years ago.



PNHA in 2022 We'd like a much bigger membership. More people demanding better environmental management are needed. PNHA is just one voice, and whether we have 100 or 1000 members doesn't make much difference if the members do not speak up on issues. For instance, NBC needs a much bigger budget for contract bush regeneration and weed management. We are in competition for funds with organisations and people who are very vocal and demanding about sports club facilities and playing fields, roads and footpaths, dogs and so on.

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.