

PNHA NEWS

Summer 2022 Issue 94

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

To all our PNHA Members and Friends



**Best Wishes for the Festive Season
and a Happy and Healthy 2023**

AGM November 27, Newport Community Centre

We welcomed many PNHA members and friends, also our Pittwater MP Rob Stokes and Crs Rory Amon and Michael Gencher. Jayden Walsh gave us a presentation about the ecology of Ku-ring-gai Chase NP, relating the geology to the wildlife. How important rocks are!

President's Report

PNHA Newsletters and emails during the past year have given members regular accounts of our activities, but I'll go into details with a few.

We try to be proactive in caring for the natural environment of our area, but of course life happens and we must also be reactive, as I will relate.

Our planned project for this year was to take action to improve Council bush regeneration in our area.

Early in the year we sent an **open letter** to NBC Councillors, many of whom would not have known PNHA existed. We wanted to introduce PNHA and raise our concerns about the state of bushland reserves and weeds in the area. Cr Miranda Korzy responded and was most helpful and successful in advocating for an increase in funds.

We learned more about this in a Teams meeting with NBC staff a few months ago, that an extra \$250 000 would be provided, not all in the Pittwater Ward. Whether this would be ongoing was not known at the time. **We supported** NBC's application for a Crown Land Improvement fund grant project for bush regeneration on North Narrabeen Head Reserve, and some PNHA members joined the bush regen field days undertaken when that application

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Protecting Pittwater's Environment

PNHA is on Facebook Want to get in touch?

pnhainfo@gmail.com Follow us on Instagram

INSIDE: 2-4 AGM report continued, 4. Mona Vale bushland saved from rezoning to residential 5. PNHA on Socials, Conservation Zone - not too late to submit, Extra funding for bush regeneration 6. Mona Vale Rd East Fauna Overpass, Leopard Slugs, The Night Sky 7. Blue Eyes Lacewing, Ospreys

was successful. It is a wonderful place but not all has had bush regeneration yet. Earlier this year PNHA applied for a grant from NBC to extend that work but we were unsuccessful.

Sunday Nature Walks were resumed as Covid eased off. These were well attended. The last was cancelled when a probably more popular event was held in Avalon on the same morning.

We respond with submissions to draft NBC policies or studies to do with the new LEP. For example, the Draft Northern Beaches Council Northern Beaches Environment Study and the Northern Beaches Council Community Strategic Plan. Mostly we support where we can. However one was the Open Space and Recreation Strategy, where we objected to the proposal to authorising an informal mountain bike track in Ingleside Chase Reserve.

We received a grant of \$5000 from NBC to revegetate a small area of Palmgrove Park Avalon. Pittwater and Wagstaffe Spotted Gum Forest is an endangered EEC. The project has been delayed by the rainy weather but last week (November 25) the contractors planted most of the 500 tubestock and the rest was planted last Friday by children from Avalon Public School. Photos of this will be on our Facebook page soon.



Learning how to plant tubestock

We can report that Trad Smut, a biological control leaf fungus, has been successful in establishing in many reserves. We first planted infected stems in October 2020. The locations have been reported to the CSIRO, in charge of the project. It is yellowish, not black, as you might expect from that name. Some samples are here for you to look at later.

PNHA's Instagram page is gaining popularity. The posts are shared onto our Facebook page, and then onto our web page. The most popular so far has been a video of a leech, with 1189 accounts reached and so far 60 for the most recent about a katydid, like a grasshopper with long antennae. Our Facebook page now has **913** followers. Please help us to get more followers by inviting your friends to like it. 1000 coming up!

We do this is to raise awareness of PNHA as an organisation, but just as importantly to raise awareness of the biodiversity in our Pittwater area. Of this biodiversity Invertebrates are so important in our ecosystem, and so undervalued.

PNHA is a member of the Pittwater Community Alliance, consisting of several Pittwater community groups. We join forces on behalf of the Pittwater Ward in advocating for causes with NBC.

Our new representative on the NBC's Environment Strategic Reference group we expect will be committee member Leigh McGaghey, but the new group has yet to be appointed.

Following the example of Willoughby Council, to keep volunteers in touch with each other during COVID prohibition of volunteer activities, we produced 10 issues of **Pittwater Nature**, the last in February this year. Bushcare, Community Garden and Wildlife carers contributed articles. Along with our quarterly Newsletter, these are on our website

PNHA Cards are for sale here today, still only \$2.00 despite inflation. Libby at the Beachside Bookshop in Avalon kindly stocks some for us and sells quite a few there.

Reactive:

The so-called proposed Lizard Rock development is on Aboriginal land, on Morgan Road, above Oxford Falls. While this is strictly outside our area of interest, it is such an environmentally destructive proposal that we felt obliged to support those in opposition. While NBC opposes it, the NSW State Government is the determining authority.

Destruction of bushland for residential development on McCarrs Creek road land, near the bus turning circle. This land, zoned residential, was sold by Transport for NSW. We appealed to Rob Stokes for information on how this could have happened. But the land has been sold and he could not intervene. He undertook to notify us if other State-owned land is proposed to be sold, land that is of environmental value.

Now land owned by Sydney Water is requested to be rezoned for residential development. It contains Estuarine Swamp Oak Forest, a form of endangered ecological community listed under the NSW State Biodiversity Conservation Act and Federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act and is flood prone. It is on the corner of Mona St and Bassett St Mona Vale. **POSTSCRIPT: SEE NEXT PAGE**

Rory Amon contacted PNHA, noting that Council adopted his motion regarding government owned land. Council staff are preparing the environmental reports in the assessment of the planning proposal and the matter will come to council in about December.

Louise Kerr, Director of Planning and Place at NBC, wrote to PNHA:

“That at the Council Meeting of 27 September 2022, it was resolved:

That Council:

1. Write to the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP, the Hon. Jonathan O’Dea MP, the Hon. James Griffin MP requesting advice /information from State Government in relation to the Northern Beaches local government area:

- A. Regarding State Government owned land sold or transferred to third parties since 1 January 2021, including details of the street address, lot number
 - B. Regarding State Government owned land which is being considered for sale in the next three years and on an ongoing basis, including details of the street address, suburb, Lot details, excluding road reserves which could be sold/transferred in circumstances of council’s involvement.
 - C. Requesting that State Government continue to provide details of State Government owned land being considered for sale on an ongoing basis.
 - D. Requesting that before considering land for release for sale, that State Government undertake all relevant environmental, traffic and other relevant studies as to that land’s suitability for the intended changed land use before it is sold and such reports to be made these public.
2. Request that State Government and its agencies introduce a policy of consulting all local residents within a 250 metre radius before the sale of any State Government owned land.

She added that on 31 October 2022, the Mayor wrote to the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP, the Hon. Jonathan O’Dea MP, the Hon. James Griffin MP requesting advice and information on this matter and suggested the introduction of a new policy regarding the sale of State Government owned land. “We are awaiting a response to this request.”



Once was bushland. Work is under way on this and other steep bushland blocks near the bus turning circle on McCarrs Creek Rd.

We opposed along with many others a DA for 521 Barrenjoey Rd in the Bilgola Bends. It was rejected by NBC.

We objected to the study for a trial to allow unleashed dogs on north Palm Beach and South Mona Vale, on environmental grounds and because the study didn't have a proper foundation of data to measure if the trial would be a success or not.

Conservation Zones Review. Along with other community groups, PNHA analysed the proposal to change many blocks of land currently zoned Conservation to Residential. Most of these are in the Pittwater Ward of the Northern Beaches area. You will have read our submission, largely researched and presented by our wonderful secretary David Palmer. If you are yet to make a submission, the closing date is December 2. **SEE POSTSCRIPT P.5**

Next Year

We've missed being at Market Days, casualties of COVID, where we used to share information about local weeds. We successfully prompted NBC to make their website more informative about weeds, but there's nothing like handling actual examples and chatting about them. We'll be continuing our campaign for more funding for weed control and bush regeneration. Our urban bushland and native ecosystems are as much assets in need of management as others - sports fields, roads etc, with the difference that neglect raises the cost of management or makes it completely prohibitive. We need members to be active individually in this, be intolerably squeaky wheels. Contact your local councillors about your concerns who can talk to staff about the issues.

The new NBC's LEP is still being prepared and no doubt we will be kept busy for quite a while with more documents to consider and submissions to make.

We'll plan another series of guided Sunday Nature Walks for next year. Suggestions of where to go or topics to focus on are very welcome.

Finally, thanks very much to our current retiring committee – Mark Turner our treasurer, Secretary David Palmer and our rep on the PCA, Robyn Hughes our Membership Secretary, Leigh McGaghey - NBC ESRG representative-elect, as well as Edna Blanchard, Julie Bennett, and Gary Harris.

Marita Macrae

2022-23 Committee members

As there were no other nominations the current management committee was re-elected: Marita Macrae: president, Julie Bennett: vice president, David Palmer: secretary, Mark Turner: treasurer, Robyn Hughes: membership secretary, Committee Members: Gary Harris, Edna Blanchard , Leigh McGaghey .

POSTSCRIPT: Mona Vale Land Saved from Rezoning to Residential

Since our AGM the Proposal by Sydney Water to rezone its land at 15 Mona Street opposite Pittwater High was withdrawn after being rejected by Northern Beaches Council.

The plan was to rezone it to residential, with several blocks for housing and one as a reserve. The whole area is flood prone and contains the Coastal Swamp Oak (*Casuarina glauca*) Ecological Community, listed under the Federal Government's Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act.

PNHA had objected to the proposal, along with various Agencies and NBC departments.

PNHA on Social Media

Some **Instagram** posts you might have missed. These automatically go on to our Facebook and our webpage. The purpose is to raise



awareness of PNHA and what we do, and help people learn about our marvelous biodiversity.

Clockwise from left: Juvenile **Litchee Stink Bugs** *Lyromorpha rosea* suck the sap of Tuckeroos. When upset they squirt noxious liquid that can damage eyes. **Swamp Lily** *Crinum pedunculatum*, NOT Agapanthus. Despite its name it can grow in quite dry places. **Olive Green Coastal Katydid** *Austrosalomona falcata*, nocturnal plant eater with magnificent antennae.

POSTSCRIPT: Submission: Conservation Zone Review

The exhibition period for Northern Beaches Council's Conservation Zones Review has closed with over 940 submissions received by Council. Members will have seen in PNHA's submission that we were concerned about many aspects of the review, including the need for scenic protection areas, protection of tree canopy and the lack of a proper strategic bushfire study.

Despite submissions officially closing on December 2, Council is still accepting submissions. If you haven't sent yours yet, it's not too late. Email yours to council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au with Conservation Zones Review in the subject line.

We understand that Council will now get its consultants to produce a report on the community consultation, then Councillors will be briefed and a report will go to a council meeting early next year.

Extra funding for bushland in Pittwater

We welcome news that there will be extra funding from NBC for bush regeneration contract work in various Pittwater reserves: \$25000 for Bangalley Head Reserve, \$10000 for Toongari Reserve, \$15000 for Palmgrove Park and \$7500 for The Terraces (along Whale Beach Rd).

There will also be an extra \$27000 for extra work on Avalon Dunes focusing on Turkey Rhubarb and Morning Glory in this financial year. This is on top of the inadequate annual \$15000 for the current bush regeneration contract work there. **Right:** A million seeds of Turkey Rhubarb *Acetoasa sagittata* on Avalon Dunes.

Yes, bush regeneration is expensive, but our bushland and biodiversity is an asset that MUST be maintained, despite rain and COVID.



Mona Vale Rd East Fauna Overpass Goes Ahead

PNHA members eventually convinced the road designers to include this overpass so we're thrilled to see it now under construction.

The road will be fenced to direct fauna towards the overpass. They will be able to move between bushland reserves, important for providing safe access to large areas of habitat and maintaining genetic diversity. Right: Artist's Impression: Looking east towards Mona Vale. More information [here](#).



Leopard Slugs *Limax maximus*

Despite the Australian Museum website saying they feed on dead animal tissue, cat food and pet faeces, in fact they will eat your vegetables and flowers as well. They are invaders from Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor, and can grow to 20cm long. Nocturnal, they love beer, brand not important, and drink themselves to death. This is a safer way to deal with them than using snail bait. David Attenborough shows you Leopard Slugs mating [here](#). Be prepared for some very weird stuff!

The Night Sky

PNHA has supported proposals for an Urban Night Sky Park location at Palm Beach. This includes advocating for low intensity lighting. We are delighted that Northern Beaches Council in partnership with Ausgrid has installed world class street lighting of low intensity but which is safe and will be economical for years to come in Governor Philip Park.

In addition, NBC is installing best practice lighting on the amenities block, and the Palm Beach surf club will follow suit.

Local restaurants have also committed to installing lighting which is appropriate. We hope this lighting will be rolled out to other parks and reserves thereby ensuring our environment and ecosystems are best protected whilst safety is preserved. This is a huge step forward and we are delighted that Council have taken such initiatives following their involvement in the UNSPP.

Safeguarding the night sky

The University of Melbourne is launching the only university subject of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and one of only two offered globally. It will be offered as a 2-week summer intensive from 4-15 December 2023, taught in-person with a range of guest lecturers and workshops covering topics such as light pollution and artificial satellites, astronomical heritage, Indigenous sky rights, space colonisation, wildlife ecology, human health, crime, economics, landscape design, lighting technology, and public policy. to find out more: [PHYC30025: Safeguarding Dark Skies](#)

Ass Prof Duane Hamacher

Prof Duane Hamacher is Associate Professor of Cultural Astronomy in the ARC Centre of Excellence in All-Sky Astrophysics in 3-Dimensions (ASTRO 3D) within School of Physics at the University of Melbourne.



A Blue Eyes Lacewing *Nymphes myrmeleonides* , about life size here, landed on a bush regenerator's weed bag in Toongari Reserve Avalon. Its body is about 3.5cm long. It belongs to the Neuroptera order of insects, along with the Antlions. Eggs are laid on tiny stalks in this pattern, above. As a larva, here just hatched, it is a

well concealed predator with large jaws, hunting other insects in leaf litter. Larva photo: Keith Power at [Brisbane Insects](#)



Eastern Ospreys on the Northern Beaches are having a good breeding season.

PNHA member Margaret Woods saw this magnificent nestling testing its wings.

Ospreys fish by plunging into the sea with legs outstretched.

Wingspan is 145–170 cm. Females are larger than males.

See a video of an Osprey catching a fish [here](#)

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.