

PNHANews

Spring 2024 Issue 101

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

PNHA ACTIVITIES COMING UP:

**October 13 Sunday 11.30-2.00:
Our AGM 2024 and 30th Anniversary picnic lunch,
at Katandra Bushland Sanctuary
Lane Cove Rd Ingleside.**



David Seymour, chairman of Katandra Bushland Sanctuary – a Crown Reserve - will lead us on a bushwalk through this wonderful wild place. We can choose to follow a short walk of about 1 km or the more challenging 2 km track through rainforest remnants with creeks and fern-fringed pools.

Our famous PNHA cards will be available, still a bargain at \$2.00 each.

This is also a chance to renew your PNHA membership if needed. No need to bring cash as we now can accept credit cards.

Thank you very much to all those who have already renewed PNHA memberships and made donations.

October 26 Saturday 7pm to about 9pm: Katandra Bushland Sanctuary By Night.

We will check out nocturnal activity in Katandra's forest.

Will we see fire-flies as we did last year? Be sure to bring a torch and wear boots.

Please RSVP for these activities to pnhainfo@gmail.com including your mobile number for catering purposes and so we can contact you in case of doubtful weather.



Protecting Pittwater's Environment

PNHA is on Facebook Want to get in touch?

pnhainfo@gmail.com Follow us on Instagram

INSIDE: Spring in the Bush: North Chiltern Track peas, Woorarra Reserve bushland, Dragonflies, Light Pollution Effects, Fauna Bridge to - where? Books for Children about our Natural Environment, Asian House Gecko, Ruskin Row Trees, Lizard Rock.

ACTIVITIES - REPORTS:

Weeds Information stall on July 20 in the Avalon “Shared Space” on Old Barrenjoey Rd. Little interest from passers-by. And a really violent wind didn’t help.

Don’t Forget: PNHA can help you identify weeds and provide advice on how to get rid of them. Just send a clear photo or two to pnhainfo@gmail.com

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Spring in the Bush August 25: flower and bird walk. on the northern Chiltern Track in Ku-ring-gai Chase NP. Members of the pea family, Fabaceae, were the star attractions among the flowers, in variety and abundance. What could be living under this sheet of old iron? Jayden spotted a fast-retreating Red-necked Skink and later sent us this image of one he had seen elsewhere in Ku-ring-gai Chase NP. .



L-R: *Phyllota phyllicoides*, *Pultenaea daphnoides*, *Pultenaea stipularis*

Peas and beans are in the plant family Fabaceae. There are about 1100 Australian species in 136 genera. An important feature is their symbiotic relationship with nitrogen-fixing bacteria. The bacteria, *Rhizobium*, form nodules on the roots and convert atmospheric nitrogen into ammonium which can be utilised by the plant. This lets peas thrive in low-nutrient soils such as sandstones of the Sydney region. The process also improves soils for other plants. Reference: Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney – Les Robinson. Kangaroo Press. Peas have long-lived hard-coated seeds which germinate prolifically after fire.

Saturday August 31 Coastal Environment Centre Open Day. We provided weed information to quite a few visitors.

Spring in the Bush September 8 Woorarra Lookout Reserve, Elanora Heights. Not so good for birds that day, but some interesting plants, flowers and magnificent trees.



Left: Plum Pine, *Podocarpus spinulosus*, an uncommon straggling shrub abundant in this reserve. Separate female and male plants. This is a male with clusters of small cones producing pollen. The stiff spiky leaves are about 5cm long.



Clockwise from above: Wedding Bush *Ricinocarpos pinifolius* male flowers, Orchid *Caleana* species, Holly Pea *Podolobium ilicifolium*, Grass Trees *Xanthorrhoea* sp.



Grant Application for Avalon Golf Course Bushland

Avalon Golf Course has about 90 species of native plants, but a lot of weeds. We have applied for a \$5000 grant from Northern Beaches Council Environment grants program to fund bush regeneration in the central area of the course. If the application is successful PNHA will add \$2000 to the project. It includes collecting information about fauna use of the area by using a bat detector, our fauna trap camera, a song meter to detect bird calls, and observations of invertebrates.



Dark pink form of *Grevillea sericea* at Avalon G.C.

Why are there so many dragonflies around?

The short answer is the weather. A warm start to spring has meant a lot of dragonfly nymphs have decided it's a good time to take the leap into adulthood. Adult dragonflies are the highly visible winged predators we see buzzing around everywhere at the moment.

Have a look at this [article from The Conversation](#) . Dragonflies are predators of aquatic prey as nymphs, and as adults catch their airborne prey on the wing. The average dragonfly nymph eats around 40 mosquito larvae a day, and adult dragonflies also love to chow down on adult mosquitoes. The article contains extraordinary videos of just how they do this, by extending their jaws to grasp the victim in fractions of a second.

We caught these two in their unusual mating activity in the Warriewood Wetland a few years ago. The male is uppermost.

With the claspers at the end of his abdomen, the male grasps the top of the female's head or prothorax, thus forming the tandem position. The male's movements then induce her to bring the tip of her abdomen forward so that it meets his accessory sex organs at the base of his abdomen, where he has deposited the sperm.

From: <https://www.britannica.com/animal/Odonata/The-adult-stage>



Our Night Skies Have Changed

What light pollution means for animals

Artificial light is one of the fastest-growing ways humans are polluting the world, and it has a huge range of effects on animals, plants and ecosystems. [Recent evidence](#) suggests the stress of living with light pollution may impair the growth and development of the brain in some birds and mammals.

How urban lights disrupt Australia's unique wildlife and food webs at night

From ABC News:

The first Australian street to glow with electric lighting was in Waratah, Tasmania, in 1886.

Nearly 140 years later there are more than 2.5 million street lights across the country, and some 10 million houses and apartments. [Does this affect wildlife?](#) Nocturnal fauna such as gliders, moths and birds are all affected by urban lighting. But you can help offset the problems.

What about Spiders? Do they matter?

Does light at night [affect spiders?](#)

And urban lights affect us humans too.

Is Australia at risk of [losing our view of the Milky Way?](#) This article shows the various levels of light at night, and how adapting our lighting can reduce light pollution and improve your night sky view.

Mona Vale Road East Fauna Crossing: A bridge to ...where?

Pittwater Natural Heritage Association has been involved with the on-going struggle for fauna corridors in Ingleside since our campaign to save the Warriewood Escarpment which led to the creation of Ingleside Chase Reserve in 2006.

In 2016 after years of campaigning, we thought we could see success with the release of a map by the NSW Department of Planning showing, as part of a plan for residential development in Ingleside, a fauna corridor which would connect Ingleside Chase Reserve with Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

We were further encouraged, when, after our concurrent campaign with Transport for NSW we were notified that they would cooperate with the Department of Planning by agreeing to build a fauna bridge and a fauna underpass across Mona Vale Road East. This would create an unbroken connection from Ingleside Chase Reserve, through Ingleside, to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

The fauna crossings actually came to pass, as motorists travelling on the upgraded eastern section of Mona Vale Road can see, and we have seen photos of animals crossing the fauna overpass showing that they work.

So, all good? No, because in the intervening years the Ingleside Precinct residential development was scrapped, meaning there is no commitment from the Dept of Planning, who owns the land adjoining the fauna bridge, for their promised fauna corridor from the fauna bridge to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

PNHA is now embarking on a new campaign to have the bushland owned by the Dept of Planning on the western side of Mona Vale Road east, which adjoins the fauna crossings, added to Ingleside Chase Reserve so it will be permanently protected in public ownership. We will keep you up to date with the progress of our campaign.



Mona Vale Road east showing Ingleside Chase Reserve on the left side and on the right side, the Dept of Planning land, which PNHA wants added to the reserve



Primary students and our natural environment

Retired teacher and PNHA member Sylvia Saszczak has written and illustrated several delightful books about local wildlife and bushland. PNHA is supporting Sylvia's project to have her books introduced into local primary schools, for teachers to read to children, and so the books can be in each classroom's Reading Corner.

Says Sylvia: "I agree with the saying: *You only protect what you love, and you can only love what you know.* That's why I think children need to learn about and connect with the native flora and fauna around them.

In Pittwater we are fortunate to still have some areas of native bush, so children are able to engage with the natural environment. I believe that we should encourage this connection.

Unfortunately, when children start to read and enjoy books, they are immersed in the natural environment of England (hedgehogs, rabbits,

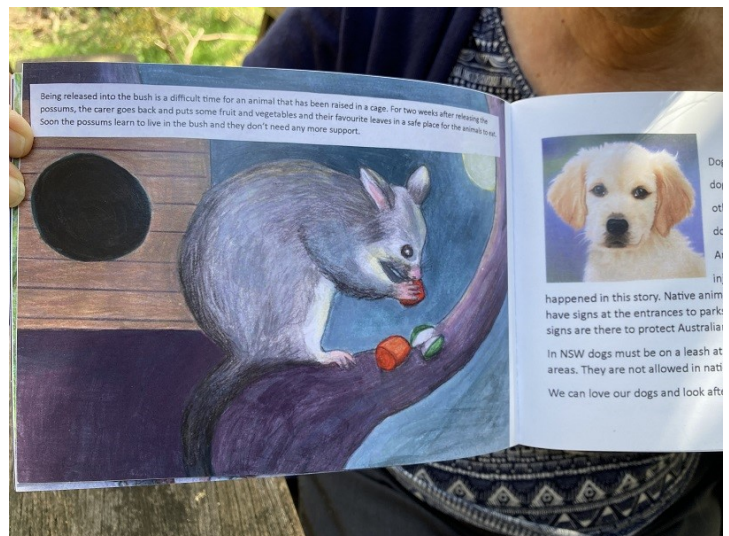
squirrels and blackberries) or the US (racoons, bears and chipmunks), because so many of the books we use are published in the UK and the US. The reading schemes, which are used to teach reading in our schools, also usually come from these countries.

So, when I retired from primary teaching, I started writing and illustrating my own stories about the local environment. I use Snapfish to publish my books online then give them to my local school. My efforts have been richly rewarded by the enthusiasm of my young audience.

I am very grateful to members of PNHA who have given me a great deal of encouragement and support."



Can you help promote these books to schools? Would you like some for your family?
Contact pnhainfo@gmail.com for more information and a list of titles and prices



Above: From **Possum Rescue** - how a rescued possum is released back into the bush



Asian House Gecko on a window frame in Avalon in August 2024. It was about 16cm long.

Asian House Gecko

Have you seen this little lizard around your house?

Native to Asia and the Indo-Pacific region, the Asian House Gecko is a small lizard with a distinctive 'chuck-chuck-chuck' call.

Its colour ranges from beige through to grey, light brown, and iridescent greenish.

Originally a tree-dweller, the Asian house gecko has adapted to buildings and urban environments.

Asian house geckos can cause declines in native insects and spiders, and compete with native geckos for resources.

More information about this feral reptile [here](#) and [here](#)

Should you do anything about it?

Best advice seems to be not to encourage it. Extermination is impossible.

Ruskin Row Trees - update

The two remaining Flooded Gums are still marked with an X indicating they are to be felled, possibly in October.

We understand NB Council will review the two extra arborist reports which assessed the trees as safe. These reports were produced by expert arborists funded by community donations.

Lizard Rock

The Lizard Rock proposal continues to be processed by the Department of Planning. We understand the Department of Planning is in the process of granting an extension until 31 March 2025 to allow for representatives of the Department to "work with MLALC to address planning issues to allow the Sydney North Planning Panel to consider the proposal later in 2025". Submissions made by the public and government agencies will be published in November.

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.