

Wolli Creek Update

PO Box 270, Earlwood NSW 2206

July 2002

RTA pushes on with destructive creekbank cycleway plan

THE Roads and Traffic Authority is up to its old 'consultation' tricks, which have all the subtlety of a bulldozer demolition. Finally, and only through the good offices of the Nature Conservation Council, the Authority has provided us with one copy of its Revised Review of Environmental Factors (RREF) for the cycleway proposed through the Wolli Valley. This document was submitted to the RTA by their consultants in August 2001!

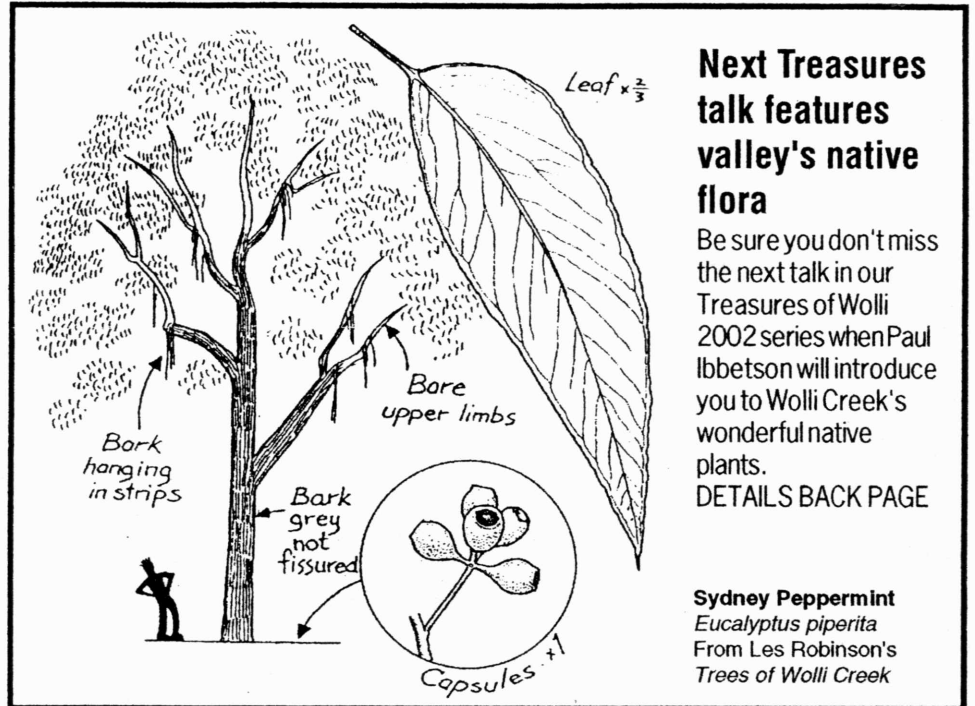
The RREF includes, in the sketchiest of forms, responses to some of the comments made by the Society in its submission in May 2001 on the April 2001 Draft Review of Environmental Factors (DREF). This is the first time (late June 2002) we have seen or heard of these responses, a deplorable fact, which is not relieved by the RREF misconstruing or misunderstanding our comments, in some cases totally missing the point.

Intrusion

The RREF essentially takes the general route proposed in the DREF (alongside the rail line from Bexley North to Turrella) as given and the Society's objections to this route are not adequately addressed. The RREF only deals with a (significant) variation in route on the approaches to Turrella station. Within this narrow context, the variation is most welcome as it avoids the original intrusion into Wolli Creek Regional Park, but the route as a whole remains a major assault on the banks of Wolli Creek which have already been significantly impacted by the rail expansion.

The Society fully supports bikeways, but has consistently argued against the specifics of the RTA's preferred route, primarily for environmental reasons, but also because of its limitations as a cycleway. While gradients would be easy, even boring, the cycleway would be of little use for local trips by residents because the only access points would be at the three stations.

We also have concerns about user safety, given the route's remoteness and inaccessibility from houses and local roads. It is also



Next Treasures talk features valley's native flora

Be sure you don't miss the next talk in our Treasures of Wolli 2002 series when Paul Ibbetson will introduce you to Wolli Creek's wonderful native plants.

DETAILS BACK PAGE

Sydney Peppermint
Eucalyptus piperita
From Les Robinson's
Trees of Wolli Creek

likely that, to stop illegal access and protect passing trains from projectiles, the cycleway will be completely enclosed in 'man-proof' wire mesh. This will make it very difficult to avoid other users, particularly speeding cyclists (the cycleway is to be engineered to allow for speeds of 30 km/h), but also any assault-threatening situations.

The Society fought for 20 years to prevent destruction of the valley by the massive impact of a four-lane above-ground freeway. It does not propose to stand by while a one-lane equivalent is imposed on this rare piece of relatively natural creek

valley in the Sydney's increasingly paved inner south-west. If you would like to be involved in the campaign or kept up-to-date on a more frequent basis contact Peter on 9554 3176.

Barry O'Keefe to speak at Annual Dinner

President of the National Trust of NSW, Justice Barry O'Keefe, will be the speaker at the Society's Annual Dinner on Friday 25 October.

For details and advanced bookings phone Lee on 9567 8502.

Please add your voice against cable bridge proposal

CANTERBURY Council has yet to finalise any Development Consent for a bridge to carry the cable to expand the CBD's power supply across Wolli Creek. RTA advice is still awaited (the proposed crossing is close to Bexley Road), but it seems increasingly unlikely that any route variation will be required of the proponents, Transgrid, to reduce the impact on the valley and creek during construction and, afterwards, on the visual amenity of the Regional Park.

If you are a Canterbury ratepayer you

may wish to add your independent voice to the Society's submission by ringing Ms Mine Kocak on 9789 9357. The relevant development application is No. 1124/01 re 278 Bexley Road, Earlwood.

A copy of the Society's submission can be obtained by ringing Peter on 9554 3176. It is disappointing that the National Parks and Wildlife Service, due to come into control of the affected land when it is gazetted as part of the regional park, has apparently offered no opposition to the proposal.

Get to know your local bush valley with the Wolli Creek Preservation Society's talk series

Treasures of Wolli in 2002

On the last Wednesday of each odd month!

Wed July 31 Paul Ibbetson

Native plants in Wolli - Much of the valley has been degraded by human activity around it but detailed surveys have shown that there are some great pockets left. Learn about them and what they contain and what can be done to expand them. Find out how your own garden activities can be modified to support local bushland.

Wed Sept 25 Justin Cahill

Survival of Wolli - The valley's treasures have had some close escapes from destruction, past as well as present - from quarrying, railways, roads, and development. Get to know some history and key events.

1960s TV coverage of efforts to protect Nannygoat Hill from quarrying will be shown.

Wed Nov 27 Judy Finlason

Jackson Place, Wolli Valley - After he reached Wolli from England, William Jackson became, among other things, a quarryman. In one of his quarries he built the six sandstone cottages of what is now known as Jackson Place. It's a fascinating tale of the early days of the valley's occupation by Europeans.

The speakers are all knowledgeable and enthusiastic about Wolli. Presentations will run from 7:30 - 9:00 pm and will allow

good time for questions and participation.

Sessions will be at the Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL in Harthill-Law Avenue, adjacent to Bardwell Park station; buses 471 and 446 pass by. There is parking behind the club. The RSL has a wide range of dining venues and bars and you may like to eat there before, or share a drink afterwards, as part of your evening.

Sessions are free to WCPS members, \$5 for interested others. Family membership of Wolli Creek Preservation Society is \$10 for 2002 - membership enquiries 9554 3176.

Regular Wolli Creek Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Community Development Organisation offices, 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park at 7.30 pm. All WCPS members are welcome to attend.

Treasures talks a success

DESPITE the failure of Australia Post to deliver more than a small fraction of our March mailing, about a quarter of the membership attended each of the first two sessions of the Treasures series. Brief reports are below and a reminder of the remaining presentations is included with this update.

■ **MARCH** Justin Cahill's talk on the Birds of Wolli featured anecdotes from a real enthusiast and fascinating slides of the common and rarer species found in the valley. A particular highlight was his account of the way species present in the valley have changed over the years based on long-term records (from 1940 on) collated and collected by the late Neil Rankin, a stalwart WCPS member, and Justin's own observations. The talk was supplemented by handouts on the species, locations for birdwatching, and suggestions for making our own gardens native bird-friendly. A few copies of Neil Rankin's Birds of Wolli Creek are still available, but be quick - book order form enclosed!

■ **MAY** Danie Ondinea, a fauna and native gardens consultant, and Dion Hobcroft from Taronga Zoo, spoke about wildlife—what's in the valley, and likely to still be there (given the elusive nature of some critters), the habitats they are likely to be found in, their needs, and the threats they face. Dion focussed on reptiles, showing some great slides, putting names to the skinks that many of us have seen scurrying

around the place—including in our backyards. The valley's many rocky outcrops provides great habitat for skinks in particular. Danie engaged the audience in a discussion of fauna-friendly garden and backyard design, and other fauna-friendly activities around the home. Many in the audience commented on how lucky they were to still have blue tongues lizards frequent their backyards. We'd love to have a follow-up talk on invertebrates (insects etc), so any budding entomologists out there should give us a call!

A community garden for Wolli Creek?

LOCAL residents and members of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society have identified a site at the end of Henderson Street Turrella, owned by the Department of Planning, as an ideal site for a community garden.

The site has historic resonance, having been Chinese market gardens from the mid 1800s until the 1940s. It has the added advantage of being opposite the Turrella Reserve which is being incorporated into the Wolli Creek Regional Park.

Rockdale Council has provided \$500 to the newly formed Rockdale Community Garden Steering Committee to investigate the most appropriate location for a community garden in Rockdale Municipality. Local resident Elaine Cohen, a member of the committee which developed the suc-

New members and committee members needed

We'd like to double the number of members in the Society. That requires only that each of us recruit just one other person among friends or neighbours to sign up. Our rates are remarkably low! We are particularly keen that our new members should reflect the change in local residents, so please, *recruit!* We are also keen to add some new members to our committee at the October AGM. We'd love to talk to you if you have an interest in joining and learning more about how your society works. Contact Lee Hoffmann on 9567 8502.

successful Riverwood Community Garden, said "Community gardens are a very strategic way of preserving the environment and involving local residents".

The meetings of the Community Garden Steering Committee are coordinated by the Inner South-West Community Development Organisation (CDO) and are held at the CDO's offices at 11-13 Hartill Law Avenue, Bardwell Park.

Anyone interested in helping to make this exciting new proposal a reality is invited to attend meetings of the Steering Committee.

For further details contact CDO Coordinator, Cheryl Kelly: Phone: 9559 2522 or email: iswcd@comcen.com.au