

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update

June 2015

www.wollicreek.org.au

SPEAKING OUT

In the lead up to the State election, a small core of our members showed how much they wanted to save our precious bush from Westconnex destruction. Several people put in hours organising events, actions and stalls to get the message out there and to alert people to what they may lose.

Thank you all for your energy and persistence. We need more of both if we are to stop the Westconnex destruction.

“I think the stalls and protests have really helped to raise greater awareness of Westconnex and its consequences.”

Deb Little

FULL HOUSE SAYS “AYE!!”

150 people attended WCPS’s public meeting in Earlwood and overwhelmingly rejected any government investment in the WestConnex toll road project, calling instead for priority to be given to public transport and insisting that local bushland and other green space be preserved.



Photo: Philip Le Masurier

BEXLEY ROAD PROTEST

A colourful and noisy crowd of 100 local residents and concerned citizens gathered at the start of the popular Two Valley Trail on 14 March to protest against the expected destruction of the western part of the Wolli Creek bushland.

This part of the Valley could be bulldozed for the proposed WestConnex toll road.

Passing motorists tooted in support.



Photo: Laura Zusters

STREET ACTION



Catherine Keyser at Coles in Earlwood

About ten members volunteered to set up stalls in all the shopping centres in the Wolli Creek Valley area in the lead up to the election.

Passers by and shoppers were keen to get information and sign the petition.

Thanks to Joanna for inspiring and organizing the stalls.

Wolli Possum and friends put up banners on busy, congested Bexley Road and handed out leaflets to train travellers. About 2/3 of people took leaflets. Station handouts at every affected East Hills line station and regular Saturday stalls were organized over the weeks leading up to the election.



Photo by Deb Little

Banners appeared in the bush by the train tracks too



Anna Le Masurier and Tim Pullen

Three tenders for the New M5 design and construct contract have been delivered to WestConnex Delivery Authority (WDA).

You can read about it here: http://www.westconnex.com.au/news/news_items/news_2015/20150519_newm5_tenders_received.html. We won't be allowed to see or comment on the tenders until the decision is made. So we urge you now to write or phone to ask about the proposed routes and insist that the route does not destroy any part of the Wolli Creek Valley. We've been told all calls and comments will be taken into consideration when making their decisions. So the more people who call to defend our bush, the better!

Joanna Robinski

Call the WDA on 1300 660 248 as soon as you can

COMING UP



WCPS T SHIRTS

We will be putting in another order for WCPS t-shirts towards the end of June. An order form is available on the WCPS web site (About Us > Support Us) with sizes and details required.

The new short-sleeve shirts, with a more stylish cut, have been very popular. Long sleeve shirts are also available. Shirts are \$20 each.

Contact Deryn Griffiths on 95911828 or deryngriffiths@optusnet.com.au if you have any queries and get your order in by 24 June to be part of this print run.

INSECT SURVEY

WCPS is liaising with the Sydney-based Society for Insect Studies <http://www.duttcom.com/InsectStudies> to do an invertebrate survey and possible associated walk. We've long wanted to have information about this aspect of the fauna in the Valley.

If you would like to register your interest in this activity please email us at info@wollicreek.org.au and we'll keep you posted.

Got three hours to spare once a month?

BUSHCARE WOLLI BLUFF

The Saturday morning bushcare group works on Wolli Bluff at the eastern end of the Regional Park, near the Tempe playing fields. If you've never been there, the views from the top of the Bluff are well worth seeing. This area has some of the best bush in the valley, with a high diversity of regenerating native plants, so its well worth removing the weeds and helping these local natives come back.

But our numbers of bushcarers are low and we would love some extra volunteers. If you would like to help, contact Peter on 9554 3176 or bushcare@wollicreek.org.au

We Need Fresh Faces for ALL Our Sites



Dr Mehreen Faruqi

ANNUAL DINNER

"Transport and Transparency"

Friday October 16

Greens NSW MP & spokeswoman for Transport Roads & Ports, Dr Mehreen Faruqi, will be our guest speaker at the Annual Dinner.

The Greens are pushing for an inquiry to put WestConnex under the spotlight and really examine why and how the government intend to build it.

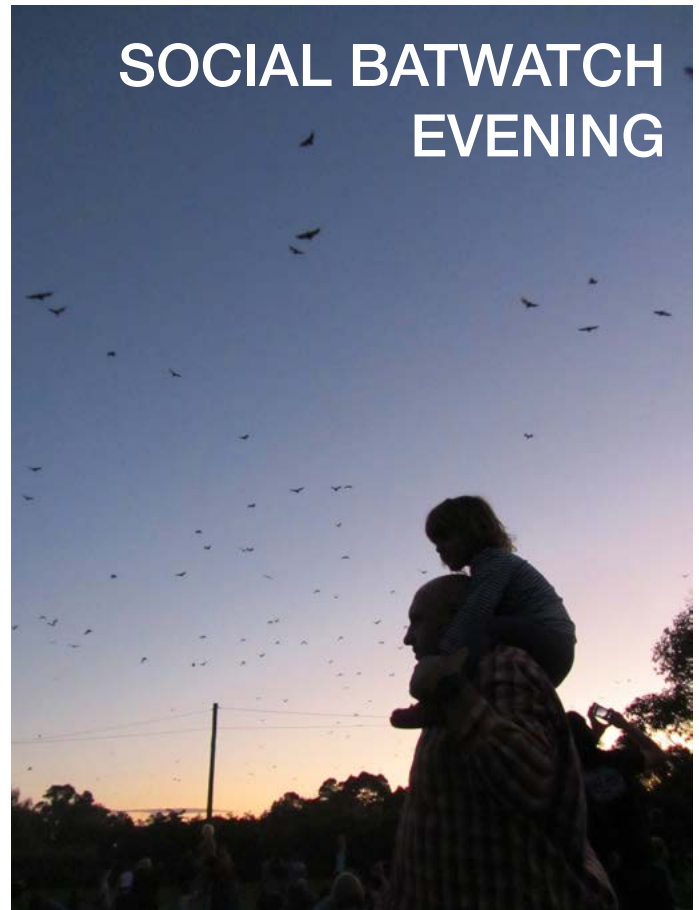
Faruqi says, "In the last parliament the Greens were successful in releasing hundreds of secret papers which showed uncertainty within WestConnex staff and advisers about the viability of the project. It's time to expose WestConnex for what it really is: a polluting toll road that will do nothing to solve congestion in Sydney or make people's lives better."

RECENT ACTIVITY



On a pleasant Friday evening in March, Turrella Reserve teamed with people enjoying their picnics and watching Grey-headed Flying-foxes stream out from the Turrella camp in their thousands. The 'David Attenborough' event was shared by over 200 people. Organised by Deb Little, this was a very successful and popular event.

Organised for Australasian Bat Month, Batwatch was supported by Rockdale City Council, Canterbury City Council, National Parks & Wildlife Service, and Sydney Trains, under a grant from the NSW Environmental Trust.



'Batty craft' was popular with children young and old



Photos by Laura Zusters



Deb Little shows 'em how its done



PLANTING DAYS

The corner of Bray Ave and Hartill-Law got a makeover in April and late May, with the help of 500 tubestock planted by volunteers who braved the wet weather.



Well-deserved morning tea

BATS AND PLANTS WALK

Deb Little also hosted a walk in April for 18 adults and 5 children to learn about habitats and food for flying foxes.

They watched a fly-out from Dragon Rock.



CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA



Anna Le Masurier jumps for joy at the number of bags we collected

On a scorching hot day near Wolli Bluff in March, about twenty of us collected and carried out 55, yes, 55 bags of rubbish, plus a lot of metal, guttering, old TVs and carpet.

The bush on this walking track is so beautiful, so it was very satisfying to clear out some of the unsightly rubbish that's been dumped here over the years. Congratulations everyone! Thanks to Anna for organizing such a successful Clean Up Day and to Sue for morning tea.



Volunteers tackle the mess
Photo by Laura Zusters

In the Valley...

BIRDS OF WOLLI TOUR

Nell Graham from Canterbury Council organized a bird watching tour in March during Seniors Week, from Jackson Place to Girrahween Park. Guided by local birdwatcher and photographer Greg McLachlan, they spotted 38 species along the way, including the Black-faced Monarch.

“We ended up with 38 species during the walk between Jackson Place and Girrahween Park parts of the Reserve. Not bad for a few hours.” said Nell.



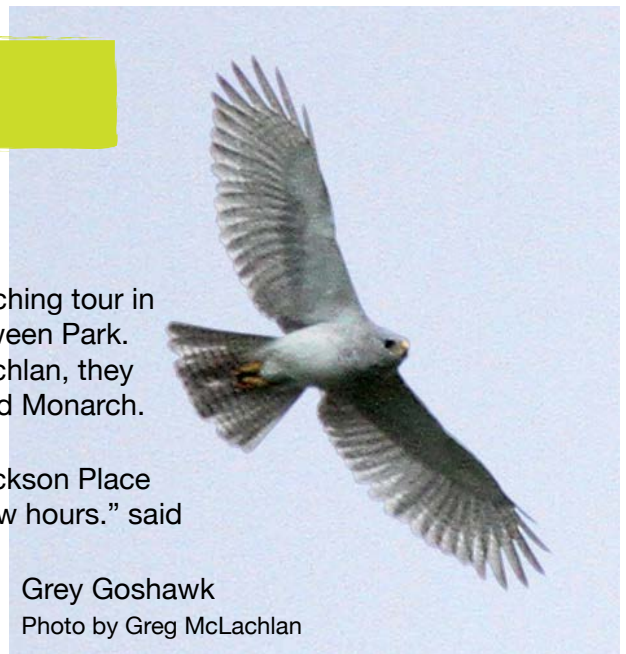
Golden Whistler
Photo by Greg McLachlan



One of about 30 Yellow-faced Honeyeaters spotted by Voren O'Brien at the Bray Ave wetland



White-necked Heron spotted by Alexander Choi near Turrella Reserve



Grey Goshawk
Photo by Greg McLachlan



Foggy morning, Turrella Reserve
Photo by John David

MASSIVE STORMS 20-21 APRIL

The massive storms of April 20-21 were pretty hard to miss in Sydney and they took their toll on the Wolli Creek Valley as well. Wolli Creek flooded Bexley Rd and Bardwell Park Station.

The new Turrella footbridge was covered in rubbish from flood water which spread out into Turrella Reserve. Some of our bushcare sites went completely underwater.

See the video of Paperbark Creek by Philip Le Masurier and the picture of the armouring rocks cast aside, with major bank erosion resulting, for an idea of the force of the water.

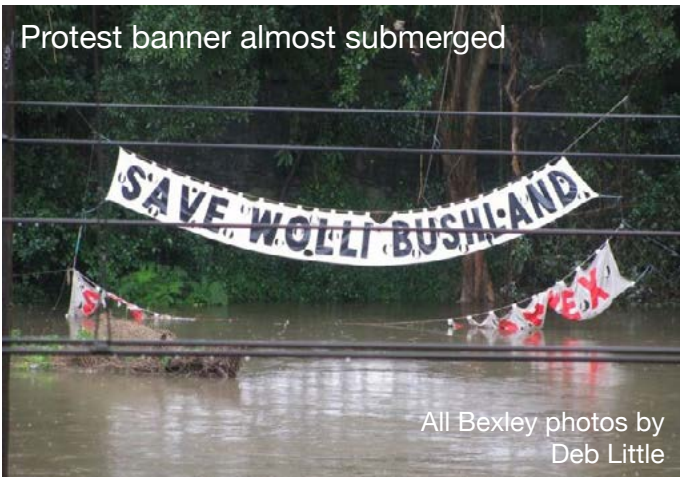
www.facebook.com/protectwollicreekvalley



Railway line between Bexley North and Bardwell Park



Bexley Road closed to traffic



Protest banner almost submerged

All Bexley photos by
Deb Little



Sydney Trains staff
phone the office



Turrella Reserve underwater
photo by Judi Rossi

VALE CHRISTINE MILES

Long term WCPS supporter, bushcarer and committee member Chris Miles recently passed away after a long struggle with Parkinson's Disease.

She served on the WCPS committee for some years and was always an eager volunteer and an extremely capable organizer. Chris was also a regular bushcarer at Johnston St, Paperbark Creek and Bray Avenue and had a big hand in the provision of morning tea. And that is just with WCPS. She was also a volunteer at two community nurseries and an organiser with Wrap with Love and a great helper of friends.

Chris was so lively, forthright, passionate and generous. She will be sorely missed by those who knew her.



Chris Miles and her sister Sylvie on the Girrahween Track

HISTORY IN THE VALLEY

Graham Wilson (Senior Heritage Advisor – Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions Pty Ltd) has now completed his survey of seventeen sites in the Wolli Creek Valley. It is an update of the report he completed in 1992 for WCPS and makes interesting reading.

Graham walked through the valley, visited sites and examined maps, newspaper archives, photographs, the work of Brian Madden and the late Lesley Muir and materials available from the WCPS. He has located sites of interest on maps and provided photos and descriptions of evidence he has found of middens, small farms and larger estates, cottages, modifications of the creek and early crossing points.

We are now at the point of deciding how to make these materials more accessible. Significantly, Graham also identified an additional 46 sites worthy of further detailed investigation!

The survey was managed and paid for by the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, with the assistance of a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Judi Rossi



Children play in Jackson Place 1943

HISTORY IN THE VALLEY

TEMPE HOUSE

When it was built in the 1830s, Historic Tempe House on the Princes Highway had grounds that edged the Cooks River and Wolli Creek. As it was gradually surrounded by dwarfing high-rises at Discovery Point, WCPS tried to save portions of the grounds and significant pre-European trees.

The restoration work has been excellent and Tempe House is only open to the public for two days each year. WCPS volunteers manned a table inside the adjacent St Magdalene's Chapel, hosting the Amazing Wolli Display, which as usual, attracted a lot of attention from visitors.



Volunteers staff the WCPS stall in the lovely Chapel

PETER STEVENS IS STEPPING DOWN FROM BEING OUR TREASURER AND BUSHCARE COORDINATOR IN OCTOBER

WE NEED YOU!!

Get in quick to seize the opportunity to contribute your pro bono expertise!

BUSHCARE COORDINATOR

We need to find one or two people to take on organizing our regular bushcare groups. Peter will no longer take the organising role as co-ordinator, but will still come to many on-ground bushcare sessions.

TREASURER

Does anyone know of a retired accountant or bookkeeper who might be interested in using their skills to keep our books?

No-one will be thrown in the deep end

If you think you might be able to help, please discuss with Peter on 0412 596 874 or PeterStevens@iinet.net.au.

KIRBY REPORT

In 1981, when a proposed motorway through the Wolli Creek Valley was proposed, Justice David Kirby wrote a vital 4 volume report on the findings of his original Commission of Inquiry into the proposed Kyeemagh-Chullora Road. It is still a very relevant user-friendly handbook on highway planning. Many of the findings are still relevant to the latest fight to save the Valley, as this extract shows.

2.5 The Options Before This Inquiry

“The options presented to this Inquiry are, however, somewhat lop-sided. There is a heavy emphasis on road solutions to perceived traffic problems. Land use (or public transport) alternatives have not been first eliminated. The land use implications of building certain options do not appear to have been fully explored.”

The same is true of the WestConnex project, except that this time it has proved very hard to get any kind of enquiry into it. WCPS crowd-funded the conversion of the typescript report to a searchable digital format and digitization of Volumes 2 & 3 has been completed, along with summaries of the other two volumes. Volume 1 is well advanced.

Much thanks to Voren O’Brien for contributing her considerable editorial skills at ‘mates rates’ to move the project along quickly.

Check out the work in progress at <http://roadinquiry.blogspot.com.au>.

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOLLI

The Wolli Creek Valley is inner south-west Sydney’s environmental gem. But it might have been an 8-lane freeway. It was saved by Sydney’s longest conservation fight. For 40 years the struggle has continued. Gavin Gatenby has documented this fight to save the Wolli bush.



PARTS 3 & 4 RELEASED

Saving Wolli Creek Part 3: The Greiner Government’s Cruel & Cynical Hoax

<https://youtu.be/eK839cdTn7c>

In Part 3, Gavin takes the story from the formation and early years of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, through the 1988 state elections, in which the Liberals led by Nick Greiner promised to remove the freeway reservation through the valley, through to the 1989 environmental impact process.

Saving Wolli Creek – Part 4: A Tale of Two Tunnels

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZSNTlxtKLO>

In Part 4 we see how the fight against a surface freeway through the valley led to the construction of the Airport Rail Line and eventually pushed this section of the M5 East into a tunnel that avoided the valley’s open space east of Bexley Road.

See the **SAVING WOLLI CREEK** trailer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpSy91RviEI>



Unfiltered M5 tunnel emission stack near Turrella Reserve

M5 EAST TOXIC EMISSION STACK LINKED TO ABNORMAL FUNGI

Fungi displaying a rare abnormality linked to vehicle pollution have been found near the unfiltered M5 emission stack in Turrella. The fungi, belonging to the genus *Collybia*, have abnormal growths known as Rosecomb, characterised by the gills growing scrambled on the top of the mushroom cap, as well as normally underneath.

Found by Roewen Wishart during a scientific study of the Wolli Creek Regional Park earlier this month, the Rosecomb-afflicted fungi were identified by Dr Ray Kearney from the Sydney Fungal Studies Group (SFSGI) and a former Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at Sydney University.

The study was organised by the Wolli Creek Preservation Society and, although the whole Wolli Creek Regional Park was searched, Rosecomb was found only near the unfiltered stack which discharges emissions from thousands of vehicles using the M5 East tunnel every day.

Joanna Robinski of WCPS likens Rosecomb to a dead canary in a coalmine. "Finding Rosecomb is another wake-up call for local residents," she said.

"Since 2012, when the World Health Organisation upgraded the status of diesel fumes to the highest level of human carcinogenicity, we've had confirmation of the ill-effects of pollution. This provides further evidence that living alongside emission stacks negatively impacts the biota of our environment as well."

WCPS and the Sydney Fungal Studies Group will hold another foray to collect and identify fungi in the Wolli Creek Valley on Sat 9th July, depending on the weather. To be confirmed. Contact info@wollicreek.org.au for details



Photo Laura Zusters

1-3 HENDERSON ST

We have good news to report on a Development Application (DA) that we'd been fighting for over a year for a Building Materials Holding Yard at 1-3 Henderson St, Turrella.

The DA was refused by Rockdale Council because, among other things, there were no provisions in the DA to prevent the loosely stored materials from being picked up by flood waters, potentially causing immense damage to Wolli Creek.

We need members who are in the vicinity of this and other Turrella developments to be vigilant and keep an eye on what is happening - or shouldn't be.



Bottlebrush near Bray Ave and Mangroves on lower Wolli Creek

Photos by Laura Zusters



CALENDAR

Bush regeneration:

June 6, 10, 14, 19, 20, 27

July 4, 8, 12, 17, 18, 25

August 1, 9, 12, 14, 15, 22

Get details of locations via email bushcare@wollicreek.org.au or the website calendar. Always check in case of changes at short notice.

Bat counting: Generally, third Friday of each month, just after sunset. For up-to-date details join the bat group email list by contacting bats@wollicreek.org.au and come along to see the fly-out or join in the count.

Bird Surveys: Ten teams are doing regular monthly surveys of bird species and numbers present. They work to their own timetable, but we can get you involved on a team if you contact birds@wollicreek.org.au

Committee Meetings: June 22, July 27, August 24. Inner South-West CDO, suite 1, Ground Floor, 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park. All members welcome to attend meetings, notification to WCPS essential due to security at the building.

Fungi Foray Sat July 9. To be confirmed. Depending on the weather.

Editing + Layout Laura Zusters

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

PO Box 270 Earlwood NSW 2206.

T 0431 914 553 E info@wollicreek.org.au

www.wollicreek.org.au



KEEP IN TOUCH

If you want to know what's going on in the valley or share news and opinions, follow us on Facebook, Twitter or have a look at some great videos on our YouTube site.

facebook

www.facebook.com/protectwollicreekvalley

twitter

twitter.com/wollipossum

You Tube

www.youtube.com/wollicreekvalley