



Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update

February 2021

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DON'T LET SYDNEY WATER TRASH WOLLI BLUFF Please Sign the Petition



Proposed Odour Control Unit at Wolli Bluff - Artist's impression

Many people who care about the Wolli Creek Valley bushland have been signing this petition about Sydney Water's Odour Control Unit, sponsored by the Nature Conservation Council.

www.nature.org.au/get-involved/take-action/save-wolli-creek-regional-park/

Sydney Water wants to destroy part of our valuable bushland to construct an Odour Control Unit (OCU) across the walking track at Wolli Bluff, the eastern gateway to the Valley. This land was earmarked long ago for inclusion in Wolli Creek Regional Park. The petition asks Melinda Pavey, NSW Minister for Water, to overturn Sydney Water's short-sighted decision about the location of the OCU and instead require completion of an integrally connected Wolli Creek Regional Park.

This sort of gradual 'nibbling' is eroding remnant patches of bushland all over Sydney. The Nature Conservation Council's Executive Officer Chris Gambian notes: "More than 300 hectares of precious urban bushland is lost every year in Sydney, often for state infrastructure like the Odour Control Unit."



THESE TWO VIDEOS WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE IN MORE DETAIL

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society accepts the need for this industrial plant to be installed, to remove and treat both bad-smelling and corrosive gases from the sewer line that have been affecting residents in nearby Unwin Street.

But the location chosen is disastrous for a key WCPS bush regeneration site next to the TVT walking track that has been carefully restored over many years. The location has serious negative effects on the natural values of the Wolli Creek Regional Park, on the Two Valley Trail and on the heritage-listed aqueduct of the South-West Ocean Outfall Sewer.

Our suggested alternative location is on the vacant land at no.22 Unwin St, immediately adjacent to the sewer line, already owned by the State Government and less destructive to the natural sandstone cliff-face of Wolli Bluff.

For more about this issue, watch Gavin Gatenby's video at www.youtube.com/user/wollicreekvalley
Also look at NCC's Save Wolli Creek Bushland www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vFiFimlifo

Please pass this on to any of your contacts who might support us and on your social media.
For more information: www.wollicreek.org.au/wolli_valley/other-issues

NO BAT PICNIC THIS YEAR AT TURRELLA RESERVE



Due to Covid restrictions, WCPS will not hold the annual Bat Picnic this year

If you were looking forward to the picnic and want to give the kids a chance to commune with the bats another way, take a walk into their camp area along the walking track below Nannygoat Hill near fly-out time at sunset. Quietly watch the camp stirring and freewheeling around before making a 'bat line' for where they are heading to feed for the night. I can recommend it during this warmer weather.

I was recently there to check fly-out time, and it was a great sight to see them dipping into the creek to drink and flying close by to where we were standing, which was above the elbow bend in the creek. There is a youngish gum tree you can hug to safely get a good view up the creek towards the railway line. It's a steep drop off to the ferns and wetland below. I will probably be paying another visit soon as it's such a great sight - and I can watch them without having to count as well!

Deb Little
Bat Co-ordinator



CONGRATULATIONS PETER STEVENS

Former WCPS President Peter Stevens has been awarded the inaugural Jack Munday Environment and Heritage Award, receiving this well-deserved award at Canterbury Bankstown Council's Australia Day presentation.

Peter joined WCPS in the early 90s and since joining the committee in 2001 has been a tireless and passionate member of the Wollie Creek Preservation Society. He was nominated by Voren O'Brien with the encouragement of Linda Eisler, our local Greens Councillor, who has always been a great WCPS supporter. In her application, Voren said, *"Like Jack Munday, Peter Stevens has used political tactics to achieve environmental goals. He has used his background in the public service to lift the WCPS from a small community group into a powerhouse of political might. While many WCPS members have also contributed to the events and achievements listed here, it is doubtful the Society would have achieved this much without Peter's foresight, dedication, enthusiasm and hard work."*

"Congratulations Peter and all who contribute to the protection of Wollie Creek Valley. A great local acknowledgement. Let's keep up the good fight, finish the last bit of the park and stop the OCU!"
Gina Svolos, WCPS President

"Peter is a fine and firm advocate for the environment, someone who I greatly admire. With colleagues and volunteers, we work closely with Peter in the campaign to see that the Wollie Creek Regional Park is finally complete. Peter is a deserving recipient of this award."
Sophie Cotsis, Member for Canterbury

Peter says *"If I had been asked to nominate someone for this award it would have been my partner Deb Little, who has been at all this longer than I have and just as actively and has done much of the organising that I get credited with. She joined the committee years before I did in 2001 and is still there. She has been the principal organiser of our major art/protest events in 2014, 2015 and 2016 about the proposal to put the new M5 tunnel entry right through the Western Gateway at Bexley North. And she organises our biggest ever events, the annual Bat Watch Picnics, with 500 people attending last year."*

WCPS has been so lucky to have had Judy Finlason, Gavin Gatenby and Deb Little as organisers over the years and while I know I have done a lot too, I've only done so by building on what they achieved and with their assistance - still ongoing after decades of commitment." Well said, Peter.

To see Peter receive his award [facebook.com/ourcbcity/videos/3694870880626968/](https://www.facebook.com/ourcbcity/videos/3694870880626968/)

For background on award, www.cbcity.nsw.gov.au/media/news/award-honors-heritage-and-environment-hero



WHY YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS

Ongoing Bushcare Successes

Last September, the WCPS Committee toured our main bushcare sites to see how the dedicated ongoing work of our bushcare projects continues to improve the quality and diversity of Wollie Creek bushland.

“As a new committee member, I was blown away by the achievements at the bushcare sites. Thanks all for a very informative, enjoyable, inspiring morning. Look forward to volunteering at a bush regen site soon.”

Kate Flannery, Committee Member

WCPS was recently successful in winning a grant from the Communities Environment Program for funding to “Enhance biodiversity and support bushcare by the Wollie Creek Preservation Society Volunteers in the Wollie Creek Regional Park”. This grant will assist the bushcare program in its work and includes a Clean Up Day on March 7 and a community planting day at Illoura Reserve. Thanks go to Bushcare Coordinator Georgina San Roque for her hard work in writing the application.

WCPS really appreciates your support as we continue to protect and restore the beautiful Wollie Creek Valley. The Society has long campaigned for the Valley since the early 1980’s, when the eight lane M5 motorway threatened to destroy most of the Valley. Members continue to guard it against ongoing threats. But don’t forget that your membership and donations also help us in our ongoing work to maintain and improve the bushland and protect habitat and environmental diversity in this important wildlife corridor.

LONG TERM MEMBER SUE CASTRIQUE WINS DINNER AND A SHOW AT GASOLINE PONY

WCPS Members who renewed or extended their membership before the end of 2020 entered the draw for this top prize, generously donated by Fiona Cook, owner and manager of [Gasoline Pony](#)



Sue with friend Malcolm Rogers and Ned Olive at small vibrant Marrickville bar Gasoline Pony

Sue is a notable writer and historian. She won the Nature Conservancy’s 2019 Nature Writing Prize for her story about the Gumbramorra Swamp, part of a local water system now hidden under the streets of Marrickville. [On the Margins of the Good Swamp](#) is a fascinating read, with important parallels and lessons for Wollie Creek.

Sue says, *“I believe my membership is important because it supports the Society advocating to insure this incredible piece of nature in the city is preserved forever.”*

2007
to 2020

Pre
2000

#1

Rainbow Lorikeet
Spotted Dove



#2

Pied Currawong
Common Myna



#3

Superb Fairy-wren
Common Starling



5

WOLLI CREEK BIRDS Top Three Most Observed in Surveys

Dorothy Luther, the previous Birdos Coordinator and present Birdos Statistician, supervised a group of three students from Macquarie Uni to analyse Birdos survey data as part of their final year undergraduate studies. They looked at the change in abundance of bird species & numbers of birds seen in the Wollie Creek Valley in the time periods 1994-1999, 2008-2013 and 2014-2019.

Their overall results show a general decline in occurrence of birds between the 20th Century records & the 21st Century records, which should not come as a surprise. But, the situation still looks quite good and certainly better than some surveyors feared. It is interesting to see that the Top Three birds most observed now are native birds, rather than introduced species. This probably reflects the increase in the quality of the bushland and habitat in the Valley, which has allowed native birds to return in higher numbers.

MOST NOTABLE CHANGES

- The Starling, Sparrow & Rock Dove are no longer seen in surveys
- The Spotted Dove has moved down to #17 & the Common Myna to #18 most observed
- Big birds like the Rainbow Lorikeet, Currawong & Sulphur-crested Cockatoo have moved in
- Silvereyes, Superb Fairy Wrens, Bulbuls, Welcome Swallows & Magpie Larks are holding their own
- New Holland Honeyeaters, Spotted Pardalotes, Red-browed Finches & the White-browed Scrubwren have moved in
- The Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike has now moved to only the western end of the valley
- Waterbirds are in smaller numbers, but surveys no longer include Landing Lights Wetland

COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY AT ILLOURA RESERVE SUNDAY 18TH APRIL, 9.30-11.30 AM

Come along and help bushcarers plant seedlings, to build on the previous planting day.

Bring gloves, sturdy shoes, sun protection, water, long pants and shirt.

Meet at the end of Johnston Street

RSVP to info@wollicreek.org.au
Children are welcome

Illoura planting day in 2014



COOKS RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE Inaugural Meeting

The Cooks River Valley Community Collective held its Inaugural meeting last October. Local community groups with an interest in the Cooks River catchment joined to share ideas, connect with other groups, raise issues of concern, advocate for the environment and support each other's events and campaigns to support the Cooks River environment. The guest speaker was Jennifer Newman, Wiradjuri woman, Aboriginal history lecturer at Australian Catholic University and University of Technology, Sydney and CRVA Executive Member.

"It was great to meet with other locally based groups. There is such a great respect and fondness for the Cooks River catchment including Wollie Creek. To meet together gives us the opportunity to share any concerns about the catchment area and also support each other in our activities." Gina Svolos

TOP ISSUES DISCUSSED

Reducing litter, improving water quality, increasing biodiversity, access management, celebrating the river, raising public awareness and community engagement with the catchment.

IN ATTENDANCE

Gina Svolos, Wollie Creek Preservation Society (WCPS)
Jakki Trenbath, Earlwood Environmental League & WCPS
Andrew Tighe, Marrickville Golf Club
Ann Leahy, Cooks River Valley Association (CRVA)
Matt Burke, Canterbury Racecourse Action Group

Scott McArthur, Marrickville Heritage Society (MHS)
Melissa Mason, Tempe Birdos
Bridget Cleaver, The Mullets
Simon Wilkes, River Canoe Club (RCC)
Martin Puchert, Crabwalkers + Cooks River Wildlife FB

FREE RANGE CHILDHOOD

Four boys in makeshift boat on Wollie Creek, 1984
Courtesy Colin Taylor, Friends of Wollie Creek & City of
Canterbury Local History Photograph Collection

"I am signing the petition against the OCU with alacrity. Wollie Creek was our 'wild playground'. After dad built a house in Bexley North, c. 1953, many of us, boys & girls, frequented the creek and we even stashed a tiny boat in the bushes to sometimes paddle around. We ventured a long way down the creek with ne'er a care in the world. Our meeting point was behind the garage, opposite Bexley North Station well before any shops or the pub or homes were established there. Over the years there must have been a huge loss of flora & fauna there and Wollie Bluff is some of the remaining remnant bush and fauna."

Carole Allen, member



Rod Byatt at Wollli Bluff



White-browed Scrubwren

WATERWORTH PARK NEW BIRD SURVEY TEAM

The Waterworth Park to Wollli Bluff surveys have re-started after a long break, with a new survey team.

One of the new surveyors is Rod Byatt. "I regularly see White-browed Scrubwrens and Red-browed Finches up at Wollli Bluff. It's such lovely bushland up there. Mark has spotted Channel-billed Cuckoos in Gough Whitlam Park. We've seen more species and numbers than I was expecting. I'm really enjoying it!"

Presently WCPS has 8 active bird survey sites, 4 of which are closed to new Birdos as they have reached their limit - Western Track, Girrahween Park, Coolibah Reserve & Undercliffe Track.

But Illoura Reserve, Bray Ave Wetlands & Stotts Reserve survey teams are open to new Birdos and Fauna Street Circuit, Nanny Goat Hill and Bardwell Quarry are in need of experienced surveyors. Nanny Goat Hill and Bardwell Quarry would require at least 2 volunteers to commence surveying the difficult terrain.

Since Covid, more people have explored the valley and shown an interest in joining one of our survey teams, which is great to hear. If you are interested in joining the Illoura Reserve, Bray Ave Wetlands or Stotts Reserve survey teams, please get in touch with Ann Fardell at birds@wolllicreek.org.au.



Olive-backed Oriole



Photos by Rod Byatt

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo



Little Wattlebird

The Wollli Creek Valley walking track continues to grow in popularity. National Parks counted 20,866 walkers from Highcliff to Turrella in 2019 and over double that at 44,011 in 2020. Covid restrictions have certainly encouraged people to get outdoors and appreciate nature!

MEMBERSHIP

Family One Year \$15
 Individual One Year \$10
 Concession \$7
 Group Membership \$30

Direct Deposit Westpac BSB 032 067
 WCPS Inc 288295, with your
 SURNAME and RENEW in
 the description line

Email membership@wollicreek.org.au to
 confirm years and any donation included

WCPS T-SHIRTS

If you would like a t-shirt
 please let us know



T Shirts are \$25 each
 Short and long sleeved

The order form is available at
[WCPS-T-shirt-Order-Form.pdf](#)
 or via our website/ About Us/ Support Us

We will be printing as soon as we have sufficient
 orders to make it financially viable.

CALENDAR

Bush Regeneration	February 6, 10, 14, 19, 20 March 6, 10, 14, 19, 20. April 3, 11, 14, 16, 17 May 1, 9, 12, 14, 15. Details via bushcare@wollicreek.org.au , website calendar or phone Georgina on 9957 2284. 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 counting
Bird Surveys	Regular monthly surveys of bird species and numbers present Teams work to their own timetable, but we can get you involved on a team if you contact birds@wollicreek.org.au
Committee Meetings	March 22, April 26, May 24 Currently held by Zoom Planning Meeting February 22 at the River Canoe Club If interested please contact info@wollicreek.org.au
Clean Up Day Planting Day	March 7 Text Jakki Trenbath on 0407 469 523 9.30 April 18 Illoura Reserve Contact info@wollicreek.org.au
Guided Walks and Surveys	None are currently planned, due to COVID-19 restrictions

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See previous issues at
wollicreek.org.au/publications/update-newsletter

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