



Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update #99

February 2023

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners, the Cardigal and Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation

1. *Events Coming Up*
2. *Wolli Creek Eco-Paddle*
3. *Biodiversity Walks and Talks*
4. *Regional Park ALP Commitment*
5. *Destruction on Bayview Ave*
6. *Unwin Green Street Momentum*
7. *Johnston St Sewer Re-lining*
8. *Become a Track Monitor*
9. *Annual Dinner Was a Winner*
9. *Turrella Reserve New Bushcare Group*
10. *NCC's One Big Picnic in Oct 22*
11. *Membership Fees & Pictures of the Valley*
12. *Calendar of Upcoming Events*

EVENTS COMING UP



18 MARCH FUNGI FORAY WITH DAVID NOBLE

This popular excursion will soon be on again. Another Foray is also being planned for 17 June. To get more info or to book your place, please contact info@wollicreek.org.au.



25 MARCH WOLLI CREEK ECO-PADDLE

Bookings are now open for this chance to get in a canoe and explore the hidden waters of Wolli Creek. For more info or to book, see the next article, page 2.



1ST & 15TH APRIL GUIDED WALKS

Come along for a relaxed walk with a guide and learn more about the amazing bushland of the Wolli Creek Valley. For more info or to book, see the article on Page 3.



MARCH NO BAT PICNIC

Unfortunately, we won't be holding the Bat Picnic this year, but we hope to hold it next year and celebrate our resident Flying-foxes in style once again. Anyone like to volunteer to help organize the picnic next year?



Photo by Thor Blomfield

WOLLI CREEK ECO-PADDLE

25 MARCH, 12 NOON TO 3PM

Hosted by the Wolli Creek Preservation Society in partnership with the River Canoe Club of NSW, the eco-paddle provides a unique view of the Regional Park and an opportunity to learn about the history, culture and ecology of the creek and its surrounds.

If you are interested in the March Eco-Paddle, sign up now as tickets are likely to go fast.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/wolli-creek-eco-paddle-tickets-518597126967>

Ticket price is \$75 per person. Participants must be aged 10+ years of age.

For more information, contact info@wollicreek.org.au.

Tickets for the November 2022 Wolli Creek Eco-Paddle sold out early, with 10 keen paddlers taking to the water to explore the hidden gem of Wolli Creek. After paddling up to the Turrella Reserve footbridge and back, participants gathered at the River Canoe Club clubhouse for afternoon tea. Here they learnt more about local initiatives and opportunities to get involved.

A participant from the November paddle, WCPS member Miranda, told us:

“It was a wonderful thing to do. Being on the water and seeing the land one normally walks on from this different perspective is a lovely experience. It’s so enjoyable to step into what feels like a different world with the birds, plants and creatures of the river. I have seen the area of remediation that has recently been done from its Jackson Place top edge only, so was very impressed to see from the canoe what a vast area it actually is, extending a long way along the creek bank, and right down to the water.

The guides were excellent and their commentary very interesting & informative about the history and life of the creek and surrounds. There was also an amazingly generous and delicious afternoon tea to come back to!

Further, I was very happy to hear about the Mulletts, who go out once a month in canoes fishing rubbish out of the river. I have now joined them. I really recommend the Paddle tour. It is so good to be on the water, with people who love the river and its surrounding land.”

Kate Flannery



Photo by Gina Svolos



BIODIVERSITY WALKS AND TALKS 1 AND 15 APRIL

We are very excited to be starting up our guided walks again this autumn in partnership with Canterbury Bankstown Council. There are two family-friendly 3.5km walks planned that will showcase the beautiful bushland, creek views and birdlife.

On these short walks you will see striking sandstone cliffs, water views and sightings of threatened native fauna such as Grey-headed flying-foxes. These are medium grade walks with some sections of the trail covering uneven ground.

Bexley North to Turrella Reserve – Saturday 1 April 9am to 12 noon

For further information and booking see <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/biodiversity-walk-talk-in-wolli-creek-valley-tickets-528009198727> Bookings essential

Bardwell Park to Tempe – Saturday 15 April 9am to 12 noon

For further information and booking see <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/biodiversity-walk-and-talk-2-bardwell-park-to-tempe-tickets-528028486417> Bookings essential

It has been three years since we held our last walks. During COVID lockdowns the walking tracks became much more used as local residents looked for activities they could do close to home. However, many people may not know the background of how we got to have this precious bit of bushland.

These walks are an opportunity to learn more about the Valley and how it was saved from destruction in the 1980's for all of us to now enjoy. The walk leaders will share their knowledge of this bushland, its cultural and environmental history, as well as information about the current issues facing the Wolli Valley and the bushcare work the Society is undertaking.

Gina Svolos



Walkers on the last guided walk in Nov 2019

WCPS members with ALP's Chris Minns, Penny Sharpe and Sophie Cotsis, with Steve Kamper and Jo Haylen behind, at Girrahween Park

COMPLETE THE REGIONAL PARK NSW ALP ELECTION COMMITMENT

Our campaign to get the Regional Park completed has had a major success with the ALP making completion an election commitment. Several WCPS committee members were present at the press conference where the announcement was made and our President spoke briefly.

However, it is an indication of where our issue rates with the media that few questions were raised about the Park and its completion, most focus being on the shadow cast on the CBCity Mayor at the time.

There is no guarantee that the ALP will be in a position to act on its commitment after the March election, so we must press on with our Open Letter. Sign at https://www.nature.org.au/wolli_creek_open_letter.

We have had support for Park completion from The Greens after we briefed Newtown MLA Jenny Leong and Environment spokesperson and MLC Sue Higgison, but little interest from Government Ministers. Our correspondence to them has been delegated to Departmental officers to respond who, though informative, can of course make no new commitments.

Action to promote the Park has been subdued due to the pressure of other issues. See stories about these issues elsewhere in this Update - Destruction below 28A Bayview Avenue (p5), the Sydney Water clearing of bushland for sewer work below Johnston St (p6), and the effort to bring Unwin Green Street to fruition (p6).

Peter Stevens



WCPS Proposal for how the eastern entrance to Regional Park might look



30 Nov 2022 Tons of loose rubble dumped on south side of block



11 Dec 2022 Flimsy silt fence on top of spoil
Photos by Christopher Jordens

ONGOING DELAY LEADS TO DESTRUCTION BELOW BAYVIEW AVE

The Wollie Creek Regional Park is almost complete, but some of the open space waiting to be added to it has just been buried beneath tons of rubble, threatening years of bush care efforts by local volunteers.

This travesty is unfolding on one of four blocks of privately owned land at the eastern end of the park, right near Wollie Bluff. The blocks extend from Bayview Avenue down to Wollie Creek. The lower third of each block lies below a cliff line. It is inaccessible to the owners and is zoned open space.

In its current campaign to see the Regional Park completed, the Wollie Creek Preservation Society has again urged authorities to actively acquire the lower third of these blocks instead of waiting for the owners to offer them for sale. Development began on one of the blocks in late November 2022 however, and the ongoing delays have come at a heavy cost.

The development was approved with several conditions. Erosion and sediment controls had to be in place before work began, and this had to be confirmed by a private certifier. These conditions were disregarded. Tons of sandstone and loose fill has been excavated and pushed down the slope, burying native vegetation. WCPS, which monitors all sections of the Regional Park, alerted Canterbury Bankstown Council. Council officers inspected the site in December and directed the owner to stop all work at the site, remove the dumped spoil, and install an adequate sediment barrier.

A flimsy silt fence was then erected along the cliff line. It sits on top of an unstable slope created by the loose fill—the very problem a silt fence is supposed to prevent. A few planks have been attached to a mature tree to protect it, although it is likely to die with much of its trunk now buried under the rubble.

Work at the site appears to have ceased and had not re-commenced at the time of writing. However, the damage is plain to see. The spoil has eroded in recent rain, and is washing down the slope towards Wollie Creek, spreading weeds and threatening bush care sites near Wollie Bluff and Undercliffe Track. The flimsy silt fence has done little to stop it.

WCPS President Peter Stevens, *“The developer has failed to protect remnant bush slated for inclusion in the Regional Park. And years of work by volunteers has been destroyed. It is an indictment of current planning rules and enforcement processes that such destruction can occur.”*

The Wollie Creek Preservation Society will continue to monitor the damage and press local and state authorities to end the inaction and delay in protecting precious remnant bushland along the Wollie Creek corridor.

Christopher Jordens
Committee Member



UNWIN GREEN STREET PROPOSAL GAINS MOMENTUM

The Unwin Green Street proposal we shared in the Sept Update has now been presented in detail by local residents and Wolli Creek Preservation Society to CBCity Mayor and one of his directors. They indicated support 'in principle' and undertook to investigate the proposal and examine its cost implications. Council has also passed a resolution supporting the idea.

A similar presentation was later made to Canterbury MLA, Sophie Cotsis, who received it with some enthusiasm and let us know that she wanted to brief her ALP caucus colleagues, especially the Shadow Minister for Planning, Paul Scully. Other local MLAs (Jo Haylen, Steve Kamper, Jenny Leong and Chris Minns) and MLC Sue Higginson, were alerted to the basic concept late last year and were sympathetic, but made no commitments.

You can view some of the images from the detailed presentation on [our website here](#) and briefing material WCPS provided [here](#). To support the proposal yourself you can sign a public petition set up by local residents at <https://www.change.org/UnwinGreenStreet>.

Peter Stevens

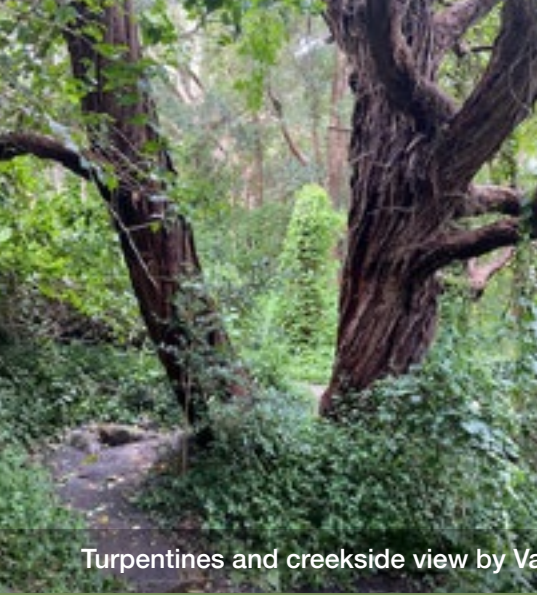
JOHNSTON STREET DAMAGE SYDNEY WATER REPAIRS SEWER PIPES

In our July 2022 Update, we reported on damage to bushland below Johnston St by contractors to Sydney Water in preparation for work on relining sewer pipes. The affected area of bushland is slowly showing signs of recovery. But La Nina rain and Covid have caused many delays in getting the work of relining the pipes underway.

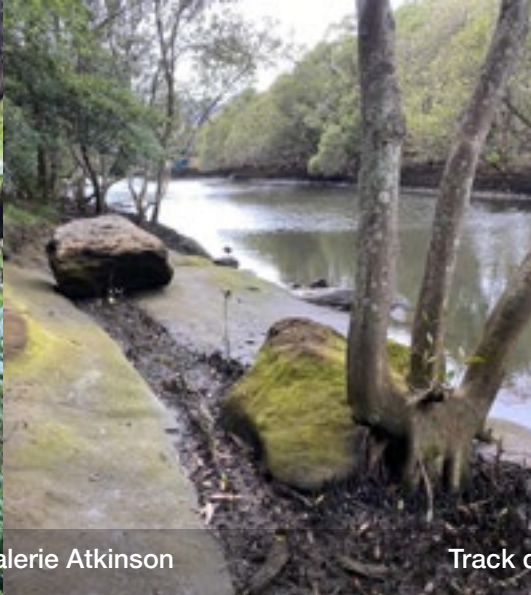
The pipes are very old, maybe 100 years, and ground shifts in that time have opened many joints in the old pipes. The resulting root intrusions have had to be cleared away before Sydney Water can reline the inside of the pipes with a thick plastic sleeve. Sydney Water agreed to our request to have all the pipes in this section of the sewerage system relined at the same time, to avoid any need to revisit the areas of recovering bushland. So expect to see work going on between Kings Track leading down to Illoura Reserve and the footpath down from Johnston St to Bexley Road at the TVT trackhead during February.

Funding for WCPS work to restore the damaged bushland and to provide compensatory planting on Illoura Reserve has been negotiated and we are eagerly awaiting completion of the relining work and the provision of funds so that we can get that underway. The new planting is anticipated in early spring.

Peter Stevens



Turpentines and creekside view by Valerie Atkinson



Track damage from bikes by Chris Jordens

KEEP WALKING AND BECOME A TRACK MONITOR

When I volunteered to be a Track Monitor for the Wollie Creek Preservation Society, I had little idea of what the role entailed. Our job is to act as the eyes and ears, and sometimes the nose, of the WCPS. One thing I learned during my first year on the job is how poorly enforced environmental protections are.

I took on the Undercliffe Track and fellow committee member Valerie Atkinson took on the track from Hartill-Law Ave to Bexley Road. The Society works closely with National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Water and local councils to protect the bushland and advocate for consolidation into a Regional Park. We document emerging and ongoing threats to the environment and alert the Committee so it can respond in a timely way, either by contacting the appropriate authority or by taking direct action.

For example, a demolition company had for years been illegally using a site adjacent to Wollie Creek for its noisy, dusty operations. In 2020, WCPS began pressuring Bayside Council to enforce its own zoning rules and put an end to this. After months of delaying tactics, the demolition company undertook to vacate the site in April 2022 but monitoring by WCPS showed there was ongoing activity on the site in late July. The Society’s persistence paid off when the site was finally vacated in August, two years after the first report to Council.

The fragility of the bushland has also been exposed by heavy rains over the last year. Bikes are not permitted on bush tracks for good reasons. One is that they leave deep ruts in the mud, and as walkers sidestep the mess, they widen the tracks and trample plants alongside it. But the rules are not enforced, so the damage goes on, unchecked. During one particularly heavy deluge, one of the raingardens on Highcliff Road collapsed. This resulted in a landslip that washed a mountain of buried rubbish down a slope onto Undercliffe track. The council was informed, and the mess is now under a sheet of black plastic, awaiting a clean-up.

The WCPS needs more monitors for other tracks along Wollie Creek, between Undercliffe and Earlwood. If you like walking through the bushland, it’s a great way to keep doing what you like and helping to protect the bushland at the same time. As the veteran activists tell us, “The price of parks is eternal vigilance.”

**Chris Jordens
Committee Member**



Thanks to the Society’s vigilance, this site next to the Creek has now been vacated



MC Chris Jordens and Gina Svolos get some help running the raffle

75 people came to the dinner

RETURN OF THE ANNUAL DINNER WAS A WINNER

After two years of isolation and lockdowns and no chance to hold our beloved Annual Dinner, our best fund-raising event returned in a new venue. The sun was shining on a pleasant October evening, and a soft breeze moved across the balcony at Bardwell Valley Golf Club as we made final preparations for the return of the Society's Annual Dinner.

It was a lovely view across Bardwell Valley with a glass in hand, and engaging conversation all round. Soon it was time to move inside. Raffle tickets were bought, silent auction bids made and seats found. Peter Stevens gave a short update on the many and varied activities of the Society over the last year - advocacy, meetings, bushcare, bird sightings, the bat count, gosh it's been a busy year!

A Mediterranean meal was served, and the teams put their heads together to answer the Trivia quiz. After dinner, perhaps the highlight of the night arrived in the form of our two Speakers, Sue Castrique & Jennifer Newman. The topic of "Recovering Gumbramorra Swamp; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Perspectives" was so relevant to us all. This is the story of what was a local wetland area in Marrickville; weaving together the knowledge of the original Bidjigal people and their use of the land, with the more recent history of usage and regular flooding.

The hum of conversations continued so enthusiastically all night, that our excellent MC Chris Jordens had to sometimes try hard to make himself heard. After missing two Annual Dinners, we all really appreciated the opportunity to catch up with old friends and speak together across a table.

Finally, the mammoth task of distributing 20 raffle prizes, and seven silent auction items, and marking the Trivia Quiz. Phew, what a night. And thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make this evening such a success.

Julie Deady
Member of the Organising Committee



Speakers Jennifer Newman and Sue Castrique



Treasurer Abi with Organising Committee
Thanks Gina Svolos, Julie Muir and Julie Deady



2008 Original clearing work on the site



2011 Bushcarers clear weeds at the pond amid thriving natives

NEW BUSHCARE SITE IN TURRELLA RESERVE

A new bush care site started up in November 2022 around the dipping pond in Turrella Reserve. This used to be a source of water for the market gardens back in the day, but it went wild over the years and has been in need of a weeding.

In 2008 a huge coral tree, willows and weeds were removed and a mass planting of native plants was carried out by the WCPS. Since then, the plants have thrived, and the area is shaded by huge Melaleuca and Robusta trees. Some remedial work has been carried out in the past to remove invading nasties such as Madeira Vine, but the site has been neglected for a number of years, as our resources have run to only the occasional weeding session.

If you would like to be part of the restoration of this site and help remove unwanted vines and weeds we would love you to join us. Our main aim is to control the weeds around the pond. In time, with plenty of helping hands, we also would like to tackle the edge of the Wollli Creek, where Balloon Vine, Moth Vine, Madeira Vines are taking over the native trees and plants.

We meet at 9 am on the 4th Thursday of the month, for the usual 3 hours with a little break for a BYO morning tea and a chat. Please let me know each month if you are interested in coming along, to make sure I have enough tools for everyone. Please bring along your own gloves and wear sturdy shoes. The ground is uneven and may be wet near the pond or after rain so we all need to take care.

Maggie Aitken



2022 The new bushcare group tackle weeds and growth around the dipping pond in Turrella Reserve.



The NCC Picnickers at Girrawheen picnic area



WCPS 'Amazing Wollie' posters on display

NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL'S ONE BIG PICNIC

Nature Conservation Council NSW (NCC)'s first Picnic for Nature was held in Oct 2022, attended by over one thousand people in forty different locations across NSW. The Australian Plant Society's Harbour Georges River Group invited WCPS to join them at their picnic in Girrawheen Park and to promote it to our members.

The picnics had a range of live music, entertainment for kids, fiery speeches, information stalls and picnic snacks. One even had croquet! One thing they all had in common was that new connections were forged around our shared value of protecting nature.

For our part of the big NCC picnic at Girrawheen Park, we had beautiful weather and 23 people attended from a variety of local groups like HGR, WCPS, Landcare, CB City council, as well as friends & visitors.

In their newsletter, the Australian Plant Society (APS) gave special thanks to Gina Svolos for her invaluable partnership in promoting the event and bringing the Wollie Creek poster display which decorated the picnic shelters on the day.

APS wrote: *"We had three different walks - the short walk, the longer walk and the intrepid walk. The short walk just went East along the sealed track and a short distance over fairly flat sandstone slabs to a point where you can look down into the fern gully."*

Gina took a longer walk east along the Girrawheen track. There was a very muddy patch, but a few intrepid souls didn't mind about the mud and so they went on as far as the flying fox camp before returning. Although a couple of people had forgotten to bring their lunches, there was no shortage of food. Quite a few people brought something to share even though it was billed as a BYO picnic."

A family of Tawny frogmouths, a parent and two small grey fluffy babies, sat in a tree quite near the park. Their activities kept people quite entertained during breaks in eating and talking."



Tawny Frogmouths

(C) Robyn Young



Gina and some intrepid walkers



Two more beautiful photos of Wollie Creek by committee member Valerie Atkinson

HELP US PROTECT THE BEAUTIFUL WOLLIE CREEK VALLEY

MEMBERSHIP

Family \$25
Individual \$15
Concession \$10
Group Membership \$50 p.a.

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

Email membership@wolliecreek.org.au to
show number of years and any donation

Click on JOIN on the website homepage to
download the membership form.



GET READY FOR WALKING

Summer is here and autumn not far away. It might be time to update your wardrobe with one of our shirts, long or short sleeve. They are the perfect way to show your support for the Valley. Wear them on the walking track or at the park, they're a great conversation starter.

Once we have enough orders, we can place an order with our suppliers. We'll let you know when the shirts have arrived.

WCPS T-SHIRTS

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



T Shirts are \$30 each
Children's \$25

The order form is available at
[Supporters T shirt](#)
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

Feb 4, 8, 12, 17, 18, 23. Mar 4, 8, 12, 17, 18, 23. Apr 1, 9, 12, 21, 22, 27. May 6, 10, 14, 19, 20, 25.

Details via bushcare@wollicreek.org.au, website calendar or phone Peter Semple on 0411 021 440. Always check in case of changes at short notice.

Bat Counting

Generally third Friday of each month, just after sunset

Meeting at the footbridge, Turrella Reserve

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

Teams are doing regular monthly surveys of bird species

Teams work to their own timetable, but we can get you involved in a team if you contact birds@wollicreek.org.au

Fungi Foray

18 March and 17 June Fungi in the Valley with Dave Noble

Register via info@wollicreek.org.au

Canoe Trip

25 March Wollie Creek Eco-Paddle, 12 noon to 3 pm

For more information, see page 2 or contact info@wollicreek.org.au

Guided Walks

1 April and 15 April Biodiversity Guided Walks

To register, see Eventbrite links on page 3

For more information, contact info@wollicreek.org.au

Committee Meetings

22 March, 24 May, 26 July, 27 September, 22 November.

Currently held bi-monthly by Zoom. All members welcome.

If interested to attend please contact info@wollicreek.org.au

EDITOR & LAYOUT: LAURA ZUSTERS

All photos by Laura unless otherwise credited

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

Wollie Creek Preservation Society
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