

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Update ^{#109}

June 2026



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

1. Nannygoat Hill Burn
2. \$130 Million for NSW Nat Parks
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NANNYGOAT HILL APRIL HAZARD REDUCTION BURN

On April 26, National Parks finally had the right conditions to conduct a much-needed Hazard Reduction Burn on the eastern side and back of Nannygoat Hill, above Turrella Reserve. Several damp or wet seasons had prevented the bush drying out sufficiently to attempt a burn until recently. This slow, controlled burn protects bushland and nearby houses from potential bushfire, plus helps the bush regenerate.

Dormant native seeds in the soil benefit from the smoke and heat, then germinate after rain. The burn two years ago at Girrahween has resulted in beautiful regrowth of native plants that were previously choked out by weeds. This burn on Nannygoat Hill also went very well and new sprouts can be seen already.

Although some houses in the valley are close to bushland, there is little risk of a wildfire really taking hold. Generally, vegetation in the valley doesn't dry out enough to be tinder dry, plus it is not really exposed to the hot dry norwestly winds that can really accelerate fire in other areas such as the Blue Mountains. If a fire did ever start in the bush, several fire crews could very quickly reach a variety of access points to get the fire under control.



Hazard Reduction Burn on Nannygoat Hill



NPWS Area Manager Ben Khan, local member Sophie Cotsis, State Minister for Environment Penny Sharpe and WCPS Vice President Laura Zusters
Photo by Julia Frecheville

\$130 MILLION BOOST FOR NSW NATIONAL PARKS

NSW Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe, came to Turrella Reserve on 20th June to announce that The Minns Labor Government is investing \$130 million to help renew ageing infrastructure, upgrade facilities and improve accessibility across the national parks network, so more people can get out, explore and enjoy these special places.

The funding will support works on walking tracks, campgrounds, picnic areas, amenities, lookouts, roads, visitor centres and more. It will also help rebuild and strengthen infrastructure damaged by floods, storms and landslips, improving resilience to natural disasters and helping much-loved visitor destinations reopen more quickly after extreme weather. NSW's network of around 900 parks and reserves hosted a record 65.6 million visits last year, showing just how much families, communities and visitors value time outdoors.

The Government media release says, "At a time when household budgets are under pressure, more people are turning to national parks for low-cost holidays, weekend adventures and time in nature. This Budget builds on our record investment in new parks and visitor experiences, including at Sydney's Wolli Creek Regional Park. Work is almost complete on new and upgraded walking tracks, playground equipment, amenity blocks and picnic tables.

The Minns Labor Government has added another three hectares of bushland to this city park, giving the community more space to explore. Penny Sharpe was joined by local state member Sophie Cotsis and NPWS Area Manager Ben Khan, who showed the ministers the new playground additions and improved walking tracks in and around Turrella Reserve. WCPS was represented by committee members Julie Deady and Julia Frecheville, with Laura Zusters, WCPS Vice President.





Maggie Aitken Ute Foster Deb Little Cian Sarkis (NPWS) Pat Thomas and Paul Ibbetson
with a mountain of Asparagus Fern that was dragged out of the bush

NANNYGOAT HILL MAJOR WEED REMOVAL

In early June, WCPS bushcare supervisors met on the back of the Hill near The Walk, to take advantage of the clearer access to bushland that the recent hazard reduction burn is providing. They were able to tackle large mats of Asparagus Fern, Fishbone Fern, Mother of Millions and Lantana that had long taken hold in the bush.

This area behind the houses has long been disturbed by dumping and garden escapee weeds. Ongoing work will be required to keep fast-growing weeds at bay, as the slower native plants start to regenerate. Earliest sprouts were Lomandras regrowing from their base, closely followed by the new growth of Hardenbergia and Wattle from their hard-coated and resilient seeds.

Lending a welcome hand was NSW National Parks Senior Field Officer for Bush Regeneration, Cian Sarkis. Cian is the first person to hold this position and provides consistent support to volunteers like us to help maintain bushland in several Regional Parks.

The burnt areas will need time for natural regeneration to take place. NSW National Parks (NPWS) say that it is important to let it thrive now without outside interference, to ensure that weeds are not introduced into the area. Native seeds need the opportunity to germinate undisturbed and keep the impacts of erosion minimized. Reducing disturbance will also help protect precious species like the Grey-headed Flying Fox, whose camp is nearby. National Parks ask people to assist by only walking on the Girrahween Track (Two Valley Trail) and not entering the bush or going up the track to Nannygoat Hill.



Lomandra

Dumped rubbish

Hardenbergia & Wattle

Mother of Millions - Before & After



Photo by Julia Frecheville



2023 planting

SYDNEY WATER SWOOS WORK AT WOLLI BLUFF ENTRANCE TO PARK

The eastern entrance to the Regional Park has had a bit of a facelift recently. Sydney Water have built a new chain link fence enclosure to close off access to the SWOOS more securely.

Committee member Julia Frecheville has been keeping an eye on the work and says, “The fence is so high now, it’s truly unscalable.” Hopefully, members of the public will now find access to the South and West Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer (SWOOS) pipes across the creek a bit harder.

The old fence across the walking track, marking Sydney Water land, is still there and still not exactly welcoming, but with a slightly wider opening that is a bit less off-putting to walkers wanting to enter the Regional Park.

Since the plans for building of an Odour Control Unit at this site were laid to rest, hopefully for good, in mid 2023, Sydney Water has also engaged in extensive bush restoration work on its land adjacent to the sewer aqueduct on the western side, below the walking track. Much weed material has been removed and they’ve undertaken considerable planting.

We can live in hope that one day, this location will finally look like the entrance to a Regional Park that we can be proud of.



Current eastern entrance to the Regional Park



Artist's impression of possible entrance



July 2025: Loose spoil dumped in Regional Park
Photos by Chris Jordens



June 2026: Dumped spoil removed, crushed stone laid

DESPICABLE DUMPING BUT HAPPY ENDING FOR THE PARK AND WARNING TO DEVELOPERS

In December 2023, concerned residents contacted WCPS about a development site at the east end of Highcliff Rd in Earlwood. A few months later we discovered to our dismay that, during excavations for a retaining wall, contractors had dumped hundreds of tons of loose spoil into the Regional Park. Our track monitor immediately alerted the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and began documenting and investigating the damage.

Two and a half years down the track, we can report that most of the spoil has now been removed from the park, along with a considerable amount of rubbish from historical dumping. NPWS has also taken advantage of access afforded by the site to remove three huge coral trees. Crushed sandstone was recently laid along the park boundary to suppress the return of woody weeds and NPWS will re-plant the area with local native vegetation. Our bushcare teams will then give this corner of the bushland the attention it deserves.

In this instance, the community has turned a bad situation around. If you see damage being done to the Regional Park, please don't hesitate to alert us at info@wollicreek.org.au. And to all the other developers working along the boundaries of the park:

WE ARE WATCHING YOU!

Chris Jordens
WCPS President





NEW AMENITIES BLOCK SHARED FACILITY IN WATERWORTH PARK?

Members might have noticed that the new amenities block in Waterworth Park is nearing completion. Since 2023, WCPS has been liaising with sporting groups, other community groups and council officials to ensure that this facility is shared by community and environmental groups. This would provide access to the meeting room and other amenities.

Also, being located right next to Wolli Creek and only a short walk from Tempe train station, it is an ideal meeting place for walkers setting out or completing the Two-Valley Trail. We suggested that Canterbury-Bankstown Council include covered picnic tables behind the building, but these have not yet been included in the plans. Council is currently inviting the public to comment on the proposed license agreement with two sporting clubs.

If you support access to the facility by local community and environmental organisations, please let the council know by providing feedback at [Have Your Say](#) before Tuesday 7 July.

Susie Cornish and Chris Jordens
WCPS Committee



Pat Thomas checks out the plantings at Waterworth Park, on the banks of Wolli Creek. Verdict? Very good.



2025 - Balloon vine root



2026 - Volunteers track down weeds in the site near the footbridge

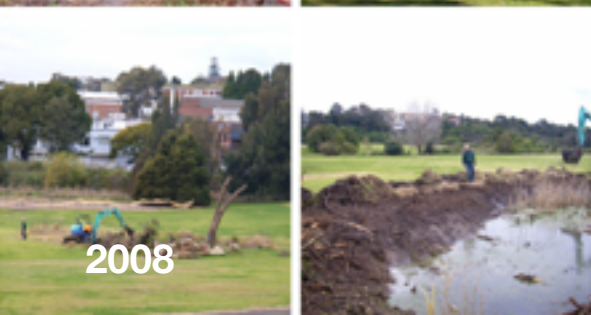
CHANGES IN TURRELLA RESERVE BUSHCARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Once a month on Thursdays, Maggie Aitkin's bushcare team work on maintaining the vegetation around the pond in Turrella Reserve, first regenerated in 2008. Both the team and paid contractors also do less regular weeding in the plantings along to the creek near the footbridge. This area was first cleared of weeds and planted out with She-oaks in 2009.

The word was put out for extra volunteers to do a Sunday session to help tackle the vines near the creek, mostly Madeira Vine and Balloon Vine. It was a good opportunity for people who can't attend during the week to try out bushcare. In spite of persisting light rain, 11 volunteers showed up to do some excellent, diligent work. New volunteers asked many careful questions, to check that they weren't pulling out a native plant instead of a weed. They tracked down Madeira Vine corms on the ground and the beginnings of new vine infestations in the trees.

For a bushcare site to be successful, it's not just a one-off 'slash and remove' attack on weeds that is needed. The site also needs regular ongoing attention to keep vines and encroaching weeds at bay. Many exotic weed species are faster growing opportunists, compared to many natives, which are adapted to surviving in poor soils and slower growing. Ongoing meticulous effort is certainly paying off.

If you would like to find out more about bushcare, see wollicreek.org.au/protecting/bushcare, or come along to a session, by contacting Paul on bushcare@wollicreek.org.au.



2008



2023



Photos by Julia Frecheville



JACKSON TRACK IMPROVEMENTS AT TURRELLA RESERVE

As part of the government's commitment to improving accessibility (see story on page 2), NSW National Parks is already upgrading some sections of walking track in the Regional Park. A contractor recently finished the entrance to the Jackson Track, where it heads uphill from Turrella Reserve towards Jackson Place.

The track has been transformed. Several boulders have been removed and the path has been smoothed out, with a crushed sandstone bed. A swale above the path has also been dug out, to soak up and divert water from above the path. As Julia says, some people, and their kids, will miss scrambling over the boulders and feeling 'that little bit of wildness'. But there will now be much better drainage and less muddy quagmire in wet weather.

Large boulders at few other sites have made track access difficult for some. National Parks has also added a step to the head of the Girrahween Track where it leaves Turrella Reserve.



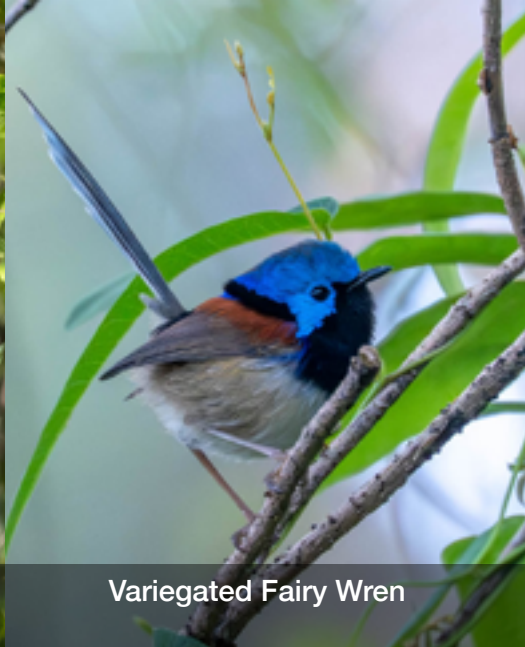
Old Jackson Track in wet weather



New step on Girrahween Track below Nannygoat Hill



Juvenile Little Heron
Bird photos by Dave Noble



Variegated Fairy Wren



Fan-tailed Cuckoo, from eBird

BIRD SURVEY SIGHTINGS ON THE GIRRAHWEEN TRACK

Once a month on a Sunday morning, the Girrahween Track bird survey team meet at Fauna St, below the Earlwood shops car-park, and walk through to the metal steps that lead down to the Flying-Fox camp. Many of you know Dave Noble's passion for taking terrific bird photos. Have a look on david-noble.net/blog/.

Last survey, we were joined by eagle-eyed Michael Bui, a keen bird surveyor from the Inner West Environment Group (IWEG). He's got sharp eyes and was great at spotting many smaller birds. We were thrilled to see a flock of Variegated Fairy Wrens and a pair of Golden Whistlers.

Early in the morning, Laura had heard the distinctive descending trill of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo in Turrella Reserve, which seems pretty late in the season, as we usually only hear it in summer. These Cuckoos are partial migrants and can migrate to New Guinea and New Caledonia for winter. Although we didn't see it later on during the survey, we did hear it up that end of the valley.

To come along to a bird survey, check out wollicreek.org.au/protecting/citizen_science/#surveys and contact annfardell@inet.net.au.



Australasian Figbird and
Red Wattlebird



Golden Whistler female
Bird photos by Dave Noble



Golden Whistler male



Surveyors Chris King, Pat Thomas, Dave Noble at back,
Michael Bui and Laura Zusters in front



Paul Craven at the 2016 Beverley Grove protest, talking to the media

Photo supplied by Deb Little

VALE PAUL CRAVEN LONGTIME WCPS MEMBER

Paul Craven was a very longtime member of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, from the early days of the protests against the M5 motorway and WestConnex. He died late last year from a long illness, apparently a rare auto-immune disease.

Paul had a great love of the valley and was active in the WCPS campaigns against the then Roads and Traffic Authority's (RTA) proposed destruction of the Bexley Rd bushland from 2009, for the site of a tunnel entrance for the New M5. This RTA-owned bush had been promised by the RTA to become part of the Regional Park.

In 2016, the government finally agreed to move the tunnel entrance further west, but this threatened Beverley Grove, the rare remnant ironbark woodland between the Canterbury Golf Club and the M5 motorway. Paul became very committed to the protests against the needless destruction of this woodland to provide parking bays for construction equipment. But despite people's dedicated efforts, the bulldozers moved in on National Threatened Species Day 2016 and the woodland was destroyed.

To read more about these WCPS campaigns, go to the [WCPS Update Sept 2016](#) and wollicreek.org.au/achievements/.

In June 2011, Paul also established a bushcare group at Stotts Reserve, 3.75 hectares of terrific diverse bushland, near the Regional Park in Bexley North. The bushcare group has been very successful and is now managed by Bayside Council. See their ongoing work at facebook.com/StottsReserveBushcare. Paul will be well remembered by those who worked on the Reserve with him and fought alongside him.



Paul at back, second from the left, Stotts bushcare group 2012

Photo by Laura



Brown Goshawk and Golden Orb-Weaver Spider
by Dave Noble

WINTER WONDERS TO LOOK OUT FOR ON YOUR WALK



Coral fungus *Clavulinopsis amoena* and Earth Star fungus
by Dave Noble



Acacia *Suaveolens*, Hop Bush and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos
by Laura Zusters



WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER?
[CLICK HERE](#)

WCPS T-SHIRTS

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

T Shirts are \$30 each



You can order from [our online shop](#).

We currently have a range of sizes available for adults
See website for further details.

CALENDAR

Bush Regeneration

Paperbark - 1st Sat of mth - 6th Jun, 4th Jul, 1st Aug, 5th Sep, 9am
 Bray Ave - 2nd Sun of mth - 14th Jun, 12th Jul, 9th Aug, 113th Sep, 9am
 Johnston St - 2nd Wed - 10th Jun, 8th Jul, 12th Aug, 9th Sep, 9am
 Undercliffe - 3rd Fri - 19th Jun, 17th Jul, 21st Aug, 18th Sep, 9am
 The Bluff - Sat after Undercliffe - 20th Jun, 18th Jul, 22nd Aug, 19th Sep 9am
 Turrella - Thurs 25h Jun, 23th Jul, 27th Aug, 24th Sep, 8.30am
 Details of locations via bushcare@wollicreek.org.au. Let them know if you are coming.
 Always check dates and times 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

Events

Next Bat Watch picnic March 2027
Next Annual Dinner 15 October 2027

Guided Walks

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

Committee Meetings

Weds 6.30pm, 22nd July, 23rd Sept, 25th Nov with AGM
 Held online. To attend please contact info@wollicreek.org.au

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All articles and photos by Laura unless otherwise credited

See previous issues of the Update at
wollicreek.org.au/about/publications/publications/

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