

YARNUPINGS

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE ISSUE #2 JUNE 2022



northern
beaches
council





YARNUPINGS

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #2 JUNE 2022

Welcome to the second issue of Yarnupings for 2022

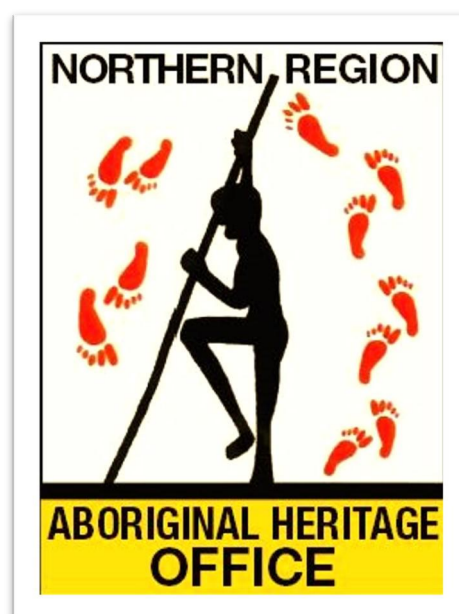
This issue highlights and celebrates Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. It's been a big couple of months. Mabo Day celebrated its 30th anniversary, Reconciliation Day inspired us to 'Be Brave, Make Change' and founder of the AHO, David Watts has retired (Whaaaaaat!!! See page 4 for details...)

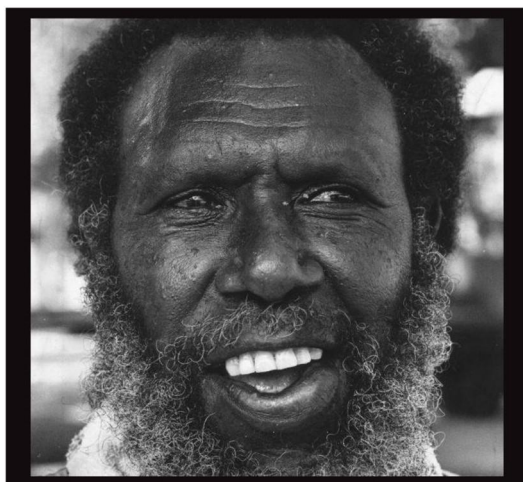
Please enjoy the second issue of Yarnupings for 2022.

The AHO Team— Dave, Karen, Phil and Susan.

In this issue...

• Picture of Serenity	3
• Staff News	4
• NAIDOC Week	5
• Reconciliation Week.....	7
• Land Rights in My Backyard.....	9
• Track of the Month	12
• News from Karen	13
• Mermaid Ponds....	17
• Ku-ring-gai Update	19
• Book Review.....	21
• Film Review	22
• Volunteer News	23
• Finger Limes.....	24
• Photo Gallery	25





MABO DAY

June 3rd 2022 celebrates the 30th anniversary of Mabo Day.

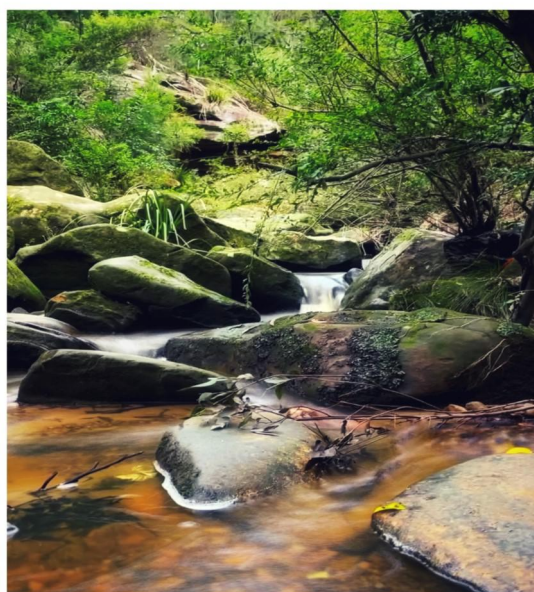
Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo from Mer Island, Torres Strait, fought for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of this land, thus overturning the notion that Australia was "terra nullius".

The Mabo decision also led to the Native Title Act 1993. Native Title recognises the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in land and waters according to their traditional laws and customs. Source: www.nativetitle.org



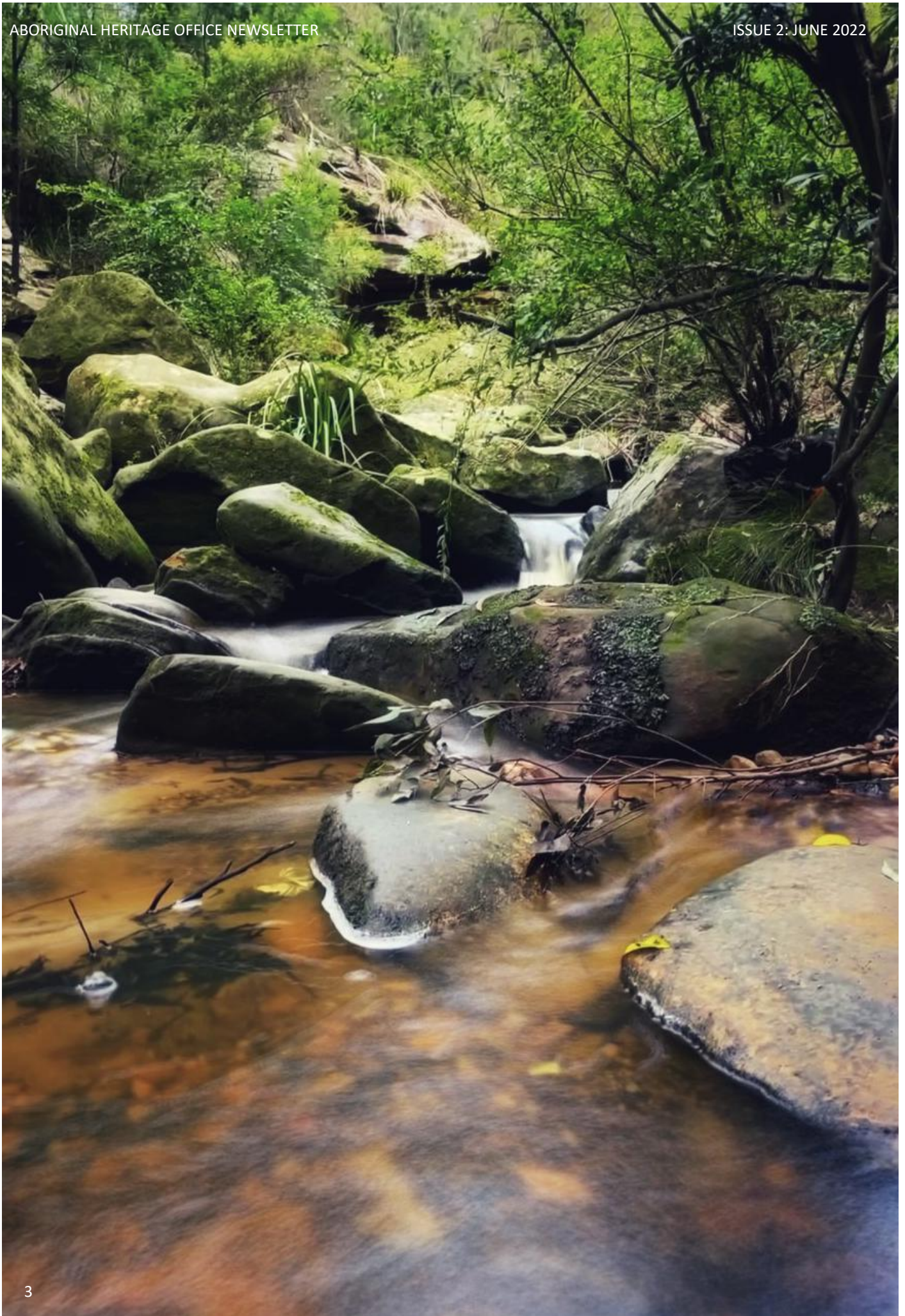
DAY AT THE BAY

Cabbage Tree Bay celebrated 20 years as a 'no take' aquatic reserve in May 2022. This special day saw locals and marine experts enjoy many festivities. There were Indigenous dancers, live music and walks and talks by our very own Karen Smith and Susan Whitby. It was a lovely day, celebrating the beauty of nature and the power that community has to protect it.



GREEN BATHING

'Green-bathing', the practice of immersing oneself in green areas. There are many places to enjoy green bathing across the Partner Councils. Whether it's a stroll by the ocean in the Northern Beaches, a hike through the bush in Ku-ring-gai or Willoughby, taking in the harbour views in North Sydney, wandering along the park tracks in Strathfield or exploring bush tracks in Lane Cove. There are a plenty of locations for you to enjoy. Try the digital version on the next page.

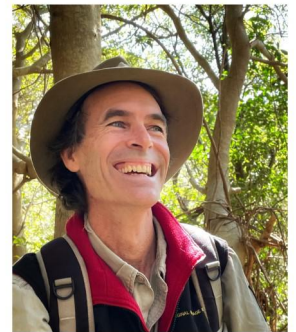


AHO Staff News

It's the end of an era. Dave Watts has retired. After 22 years Dave has handed over the reins and has now taken on an advisory role with the AHO. Don't worry, he will still be around the traps, helping us out. Phil has taken over the helm and is Acting Manager. Our next issue will highlight Dave's career but until then, we say thank you, thank you!!



Phil has taken up the helm and will steer the AHO ship into the future. Phil is not only acting in the Managerial role, but he is also busy methodically working through an update of the Aboriginal sites for the Partner Councils. We wish Phil all the best in his new role.



After a fabulous holiday travelling the breadth of our country, Karen has returned to an exciting and busy schedule. She has given great talks including 'The Saltwater Women' during Reconciliation Week for Northern Beaches Council. She was also involved in the Reconciliation Week programs for our other Partner Councils. Karen spoke on World Environment Day and is gearing up for a busy NAIDOC Week educating schools and the general public and celebrating Aboriginal culture.



Our Yarnupings designer and editor and Volunteer Co-ordinator, Susan, has won two Highly Commended awards in Capture Magazine's Australasia's Top Emerging Photographer 2022. Her work regularly features in Yarnupings and she is excited to continue taking photos for you to enjoy.





GET UP! STAND UP! SHOW UP!

3-10 JULY 2022

We have a proud history of getting up, standing up, and showing up.

From the frontier wars and our earliest resistance fighters to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities fighting for change today—we continue to show up.

Now is our time. We cannot afford to lose momentum for change.

We all must continue to **Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!** for systemic change and keep rallying around our mob, our Elders, our communities.

Whether it's seeking proper environmental, cultural and heritage protections, Constitutional change, a comprehensive process of truth-telling, working towards treaties, or calling out racism—we must do it together.

It must be a genuine commitment by all of us to **Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!** and support and secure institutional, structural, collaborative, and cooperative reforms.

It's also time to celebrate the many who have driven and led change in our communities over generations—they have been the heroes and champions of change, of equal rights and even basic human rights.

Getting Up, Standing Up, and Showing Up can take many forms.

We need to move beyond just acknowledgement, good intentions, empty words and promises, and hollow commitments. Enough is enough.

The relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous Australians needs to be based on justice, equity, and the proper recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights.

Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up! with us to amplify our voices and narrow the gap between aspiration and reality, good intent and outcome.

Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!



NAIDOC WEEK

3-10 JULY 2022

#NAIDOC2022 #GetUpStandUpShowUp

Aboriginal Flag designed by Mr Harold Thomas. Torres Strait Islander Flag reproduced by kind permission of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, designed by the late Mr Bernard Namuk.

facebook.com/NAIDOC
@naidocweek
@naidocweek

Stronger, Ryhia Dank (Nardurna)

I created this piece after reading this year's NAIDOC theme. I knew straight away I wanted to do a graphic piece centred around our flags with text highlighting what we have been through and are still fighting for. I feel that this piece being black and white allows us to focus on the detail and messages in the artwork.

In this artwork I have little bits of me and my family. I have included a crocodile for my late granny. She was one of the strongest women I know and was never afraid to speak her mind and stand up for family and Country. I have also included my family's dancing stick, this is present as a reminder that we will always have our Country, Kin and Culture. There are also symbols to represent us as a community. People gathered around a camp, a spear and boomerang to represent our strength, water, trees, animal tracks and non-human entities to show our connection to Country.



NAIDOC Week 2022 annually acknowledges and celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the Aboriginal Land Rights (1972) and 50th Anniversary of the 1992 Mabo decision (Mabo v Queensland (No 2)) (1992).

naidoc.org.au



By Karen Smith

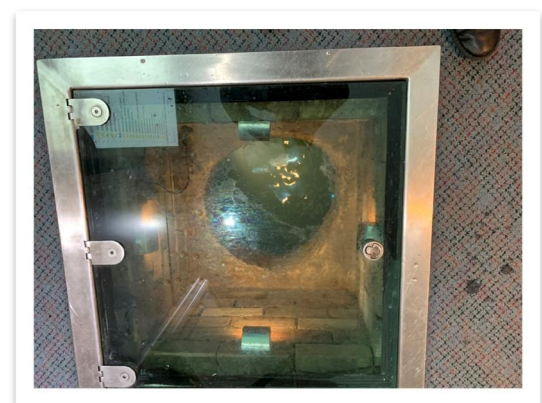
The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2022 is Be Brave, Make Change

During this week I went to Mary McKillop Place to speak at the beginning of the annual conference for the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The property on Mount Street North Sydney has had a recent development adding an accommodation wing.

On their property they have located three old wells. Although used in the early days by European people it made me wonder about how Aboriginal water sources were taken over by newcomers. This is what happened on the Canning Stock Route.

We wanna tell you fellas 'bout things been happening in the past that hasn't been recorded, what old people had in their head. No pencil and paper. The white man history has been told and it's today in the book.

But our history is not there properly. We've got to tell 'em through our paintings. — Clifford Brooks, Wiluna, 2006



In this photo you can see how one of the wells has been shored up by brickwork. The Sisters have protected the well by enclosing it under a heavy glass lid. This is kept under lock and key and the water is drawn for special events, not to be drunk but used in ceremony. After the heavy rains of the last few months the well is very full.

Unfortunately, the glass lid holds many reflections not enabling a good photo.

This same week I also was the Master of Ceremonies for the 25th Children's Voices of Reconciliation. It was a beautiful fine morning with many schools from the Lane Cove area participating letting their voices be heard and ring true in the morning air. The children enjoy their participation and the many family and friends and residents of Lane Cove come to witness these wonderful children. The schools that participated were the Birrahlee Kindergarten, Greenwich Public School, Lane Cove Public School Year 4 Choir, Lane Cove Public Senior Choir, Lane Cove West Public School, Currambeena Primary School, Wenona School, Hunters Hill High School. As an added bonus dancers from Tribal Warrior performed with their songman.



Lane Cove Public School Lane Cove Council's 25 year anniversary of the Children's Voices of Reconciliation



Tribal Warrior performing at the 25th anniversary of the Lane Cove Council Children's Voices of Reconciliation



Land Rights In MY BACKYARD

By Phil Hunt

People in the northern beaches area have been hearing about the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council's proposals for several lots of land. Most have bushland and are undeveloped. It is said MLALC is the largest single land owner in the area. Whether you agree or not with the idea that some or all of this returned land should be developed like so much else adjacent to it, it is helpful to do some background research.

When reviewing these or any proposals for land 'won back' through the *NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* it is useful to do three things:

- Reflect on the history of Aboriginal land dispossession and conflict in NSW

- Review each proposal as objectively as possible using standard environmental and heritage criteria

- Consider the above two points and the existing planning and conservation framework and examine ways that it could be improved to provide better outcomes for all parties

Firstly, there have been very few ways in which Aboriginal people have been able to get their own land back from those who took it and from the various governments, agencies and individuals that have had ownership and management of it since 1788. Each Aboriginal clan owned and had responsibility for all the land of their area. Then, as the new frontier moved, they were effectively evicted and stripped of their title. All the benefits that come from land – shelter, resources, em-

ployment, inheritance, good standing, intergenerational wealth and so on – were forcibly taken.

It might be presumed that the native inhabitants of any land have an incontrovertible right to their own soil: a plain and sacred right, however, which seems not to have been understood. Europeans have entered their borders, uninvited, and when there, have not only acted as if they were undoubted lords of the soil but have punished the natives as aggressors if they have evinced a disposition to live in their own country. (Select Committee, 1847)¹

Over time small parcels of land have been set aside for Aboriginal people in recognition of the injustices and inequalities that they had experienced due to dispossession, and also just to have some place for the 'sole of their feet'². Following this, the actual fair use of that land has been restricted or limited in some way, or in many cases Aboriginal families have been evicted again (eg with the Soldier Settlement Scheme after WW1 where Aboriginal reserves were revoked and given to returned soldiers).³

Land Rights In My Backyard cont...

The ALR Act 1983 is a more recent attempt (albeit nearly 200 years after the First Fleet). It has sought to provide a mechanism for a government created structure that would facilitate land claims for vacant crown land (ie land that no agency had a particular use for at that time –the equivalent of ‘scraps’).⁴ Across NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils have had many challenges and some would say most claims have been refused or delayed, and when won, have then created management burdens on what really amounts to non-profit community groups. For example the costs for rates on newly reacquired land. Some land has years of illegally dumped waste. Management issues like weeds or illegal motor bike tracks bring pressures on the new owners to install fencing, carry out bush regeneration and much more. A small organisation still celebrating the return of a patch of ground that no government agency could prove an already established greater use for would be suddenly faced with a huge series of management issues and costs.

The wider community expectation that Aboriginal land, especially bushland, should be added to public green space for the enjoyment of all is problematic. While adjacent suburbs became filled with homes, swimming pools, BBQs and the occasional park, this newly claimed Aboriginal land was expected to remain a public useable space, a conservation zone, a buffer from urban sprawl.

This same flawed assumption – that Aboriginal land is continuous with public land and green spaces – was evident in Darkinjung LALC’s 2012 development application to Wyong Council for the

construction of a 251-dwelling manufactured housing estate on the edge of Lake Munmorah at Halekulani. It attracted the highest number of submissions in the history of the council, most of which were objections. Of the submissions, 2,157 related to ‘Save the bushland’ and ‘Save the bush for future generations’. In an apparent appropriation of the discourse of Aboriginal connection to Country, residents expressed their opposition to development and their connection to the bushland over their lifetime. In the author’s analysis of the submissions, residents referenced a ‘green corridor’ and ‘public access way’ over what was freehold Aboriginal LALC land. (Heidi Norman, 2017)⁵

The ALR Act does not allow land claims to be ‘gifted’ to the community or sold below market rates. The LALCs need to find ways to produce income when they often have no money to develop income generating activities. How do communities with lower levels of income, education, business experience, and investment networks find capital in order to simply manage the new acquisitions let alone generate income opportunities?



Land Rights In My Backyard cont...

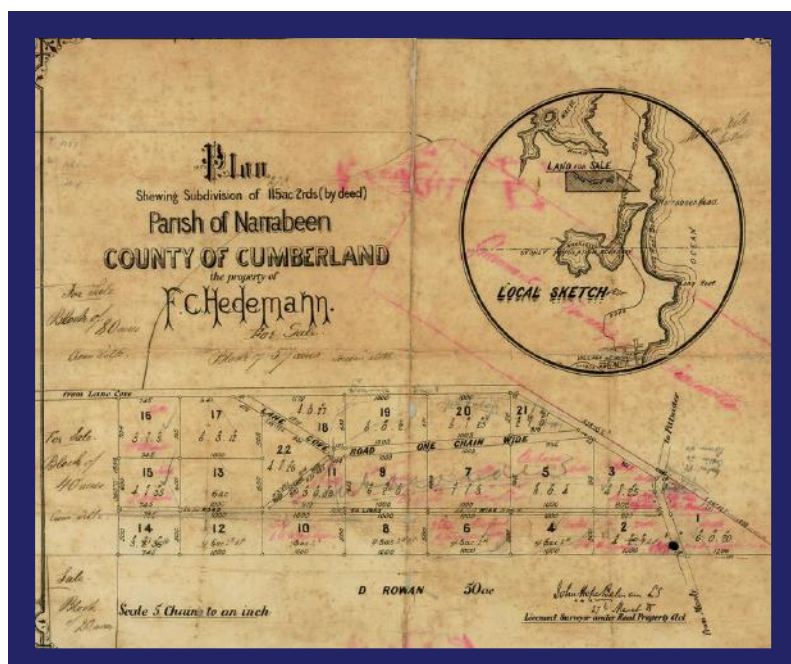
One of the main difficulties is that the 'scraps' eventually become some of the only remaining undeveloped parcels of land left and their perceived value by the wider community alters. The expectation that Aboriginal people should not develop land increases the discord. While the rest of us enjoy our residential living, we are not comfortable seeing bushland turned into the same thing.

Many Aboriginal people would be against the development of any bushland. Yet no matter who is responsible for an area of land, it takes resources to manage it properly. LALCs are required to look after their land and also generate income to run their services. NSW legislation sets restrictions and limitations on how this is done. The legislation was largely created and modified by non-Aboriginal people voted in by the wider public. Like many things in this area, it is complex and there are no easy solutions. What is clear is that LALCs' successful land claims in Sydney, small in the scheme of what was once fully controlled Aboriginal land, have now become large and precious in a 21st century city.

This article is not a defence of any LALC decision or proposal. It simply a summary of some of the issues involved. If the outcomes of the process are not ideal, and given that more and more LALC land is becoming a hot local planning issue, now is the time to work on strategies that allow all parties to benefit, including for the land and environment on which we all depend.

References:

- Select Committee on Aborigines, *Report*, House of Commons, 1837 in Henry Reynolds & James Dalziel, *Aborigines and Pastoral Leases-Imperial and Colonial Policy 1826-1855*, UNSW Law Journal 1996: p323.
- See Henry Reynolds, *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers, and Land* regarding Chief Protector [in Tasmania] George Augustus Robinson's warning in 1846 that "unless suitable reserves are immediately formed for their benefit, every acre of their native soil will shortly be so leased out and occupied as to leave them, in a legal view, no place for the sole of their feet"
- see Heather Goodall's 'Invasion to Embassy' or: <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p72191/pdf/article018.pdf>
- Indeed, there was even *An Act for regulating the Sale of Waste Lands belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies 1842*
- Heidi Norman 2017, in *Transforming the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the NSW Government: Aboriginal Affairs NSW research agenda 2018-2023*.



Parish Map of Narrabeen, County of Cumberland, 1885 Subdivision Plan.

The first land grant in the northern beaches was in 1826. The land was granted to an ex-convict, Jenkins.

References:

- Northern Beaches Library Local Studies
- <https://northernbeaches.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/9120>
- Pittwater Online News
- <https://www.pittwateronlinenews.com/narrabeen-creek-history.php>

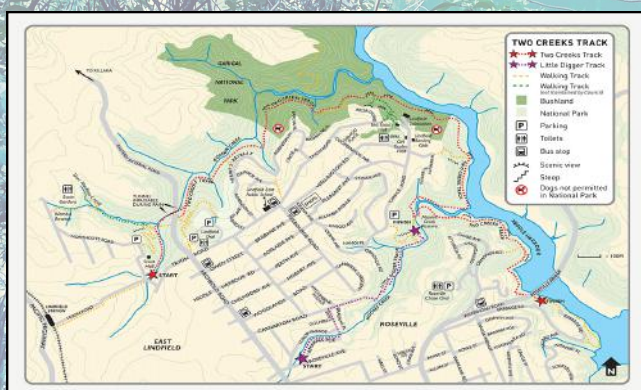
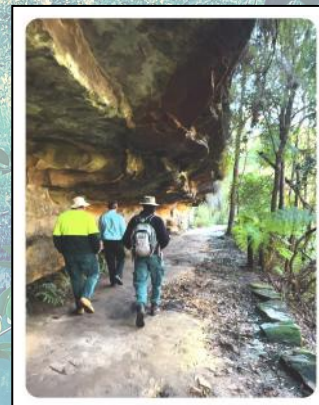
This edition's track of the month is Ku-ring-gai Council's

Two Creeks Track

The track is well known by locals who use some of the side access points to do their favourite loops.

This long walk circles East Lindfield, descending beside Gordon Creek to Middle Harbour and continuing along Middle Harbour to Roseville Bridge. Along the way you will see post-war cobbled tracks and stonework, views of mangrove forests, salt marsh and sweeping water vistas and vegetation communities ranging from moist gullies to Sydney sandstone gully bushland.

The track has been receiving some well deserved maintenance and it is a mammoth job, requiring extensive planning and preparation, sourcing of materials and the logistics of how to bring it all in. Covid and La Niña have created some extra challenges. Ku-ring-gai Council's Daniel Svensson told us a few leech and rain stories to make us even more grateful for the sturdy track makers we have in the region. The track works have started from the north and they are hoping to reach Echo Point Park by the end of next year. Most of the finished result will be walked on and enjoyed by people long into the future.



Distance: 7.5km return

Duration: 1.5 hrs one way

Difficulty: Moderate – steep, rough sections and steps

<https://www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Things-to-do/Bushwalking-tracks/Two-Creeks-Track>

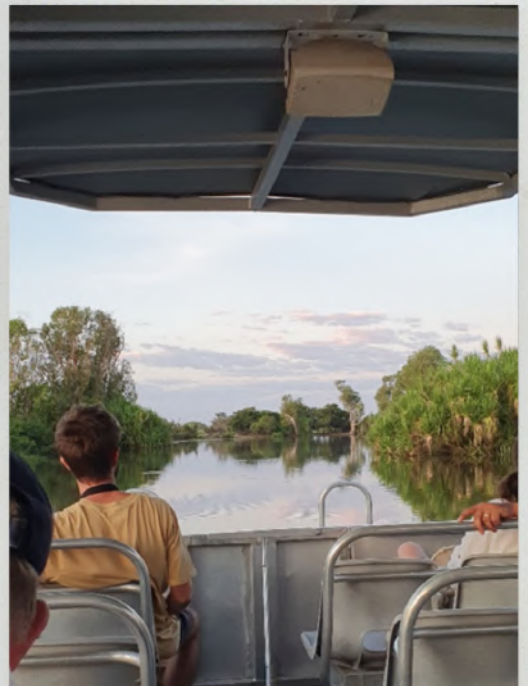
News from Karen

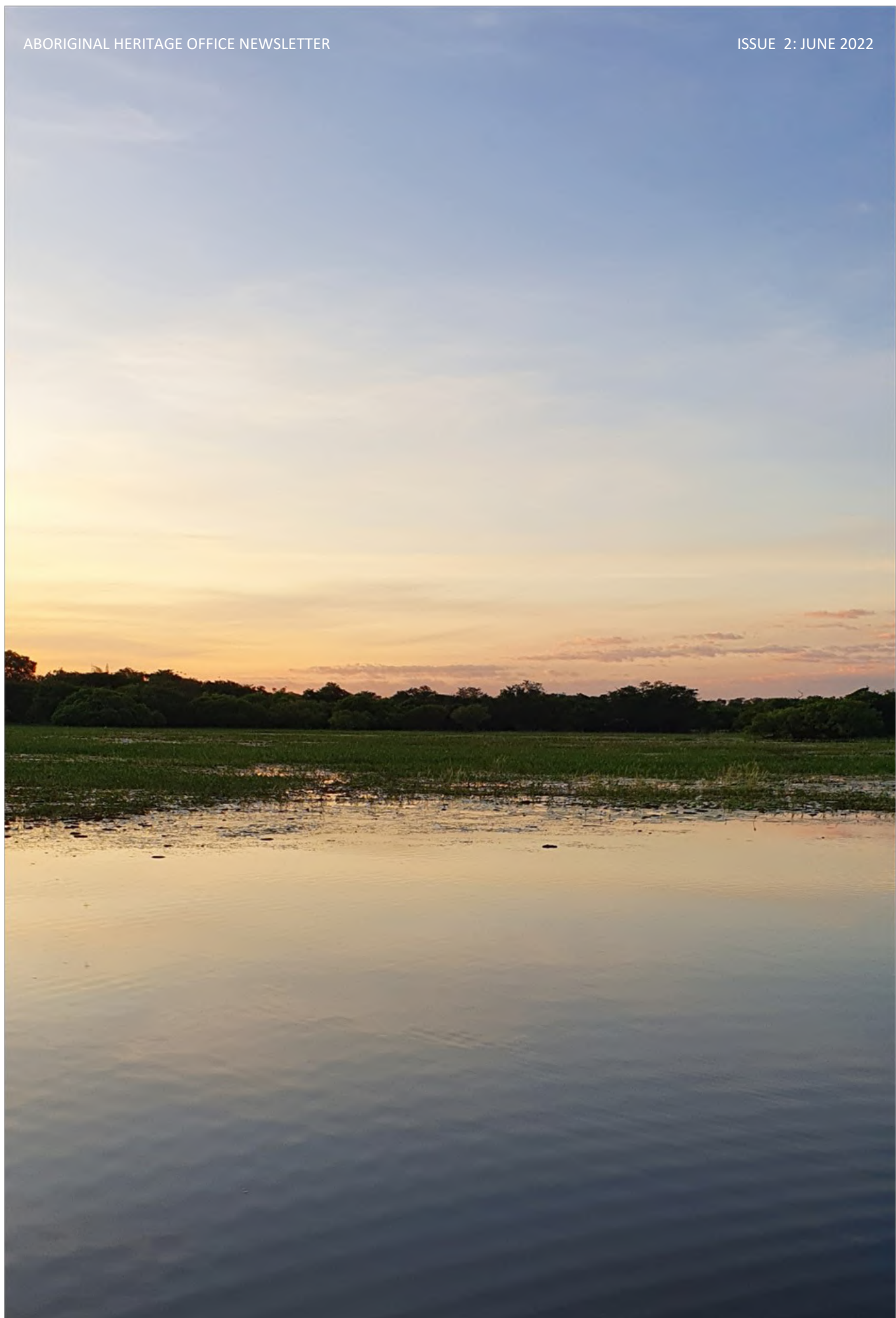
The AHO Education Officer, Karen Smith, has been busy for more than one reason.

A holiday which was a life-changing experience with my sister to the top-end of Australia, learning from Aboriginal People about their Country. Reconciliation Week began as soon as I returned to Sydney with many wonderful events held by the various Councils.

Below are some of my stories that I hope you enjoy.

In Kakadu, we had a wonderful journeying on the morning and evening boat tour with Yellow Water Cruises and our Aboriginal Guides. We listened to yarns about living with family and mob in this Country. These images hardly do the tours justice with much birdlife many crocodiles and this beautiful waterway being only a small part of the Kakadu Park which stretches almost 20,000 square kilometres. I found it interesting that Kakadu Park is the only National Park that had an entire river system in its boundaries, the Alligator River. Even this name, of course named by historians, is wrong as the reptiles you see are crocodiles. Also the name Kakadu was a historical mistake and most likely refers to the name of the clan Gaagudju.





News from Karen continued...

On the morning tour I was in awe of the guides stories of the mighty Sea Eagles that live in the park. This connected me back to Northern Beaches Country and made me think of what once was (but I'm happy to hear they are nesting in Middle Harbour this year!)."

Each Sea Eagle has its own territory and we passed so close to them, sometimes seeing their nests up high. Sometimes the Sea Eagle was fishing perched on a branch, eyes looking and their powerful bodies ready to take flight.



News from Karen continued...

<https://parksaustralia.gov.au/kakadu/do/tours/yellow-water-cruises/>

Seeing Kakadu from the air was extra-ordinary but it was a very scary flight with the small plane dropping and buffeting in the wind. Due to gripping tightly I was unable to take photos, but the sight of the Arnhem Land plateau was awe inspiring and one I will never forget.

This mighty plateau stretches for 32,000 squared kilometres. The centre of the plateau lies east, south- east 350 km from Darwin. It has no road systems and comprises its own bio- region, so big that it is defined by its own ecological make-up. "The plateau of western Arnhem Land is the most significant region in the NT for biodiversity. It contains far more of the Northern Territories endemic species than anywhere else." *

In Kakadu deep cut narrow gorges on the plateau's western perimeter holds waterfalls and also many Cultural Stories from the people of Kakadu.

It is astonishing to think that the plateau includes the headwaters of some of the largest river systems in the Northern Territory, including the Katherine (Daly), Mary, South Alligator, East Alligator, and Mann Rivers, plus tributaries of the Roper River.

See more information at this wonderful resource https://dipl.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/242073/16_westarnhem.pdf





A COMMUNITY THAT REFUSES TO BUCKLE

By Malcolm Fisher

Sydney is blessed to still have remnant natural bushland scattered throughout its suburbs. The problem is that bushland areas are extremely sensitive to invasive weeds and can be completely overwhelmed by introduced species brought here from around the globe and planted by gardeners who are oblivious of their harmful impact. Natural areas are also fast disappearing under the bulldozers as the thirst for “endless growth” seems unquenchable.

In the hinterland behind Manly’s famous beaches lies a beautiful nature reserve, comprising 930 acres. A small creek was dammed here in 1892 to create a water supply for the growing settlement and the catchment was thus subsequently protected to preserve water quality. In later years it became Australia’s only war memorial created by conserving natural bushland –hence its formal name “Manly Warringah War Memorial Park” (otherwise known as Manly Dam)

At the turn of the century a significant corner of this rare paradise was transformed into a housing estate, despoiling the main feeder creek of Manly Dam in the process. The creek was home to a rare climbing fish thought to have existed here for 90 million years (before the separation of the super continent, Gondwanaland).

Members of the community held rallies, vigils, protest marches and even the world’s first environmental golf

tournament (The “Save Manly Dam Golf Classic”) They were passionate about the environment, well organised and refused to give up. Eventually an idea emerged...why not try and restore an area of bushland along the same creekline? That place was called Mermaid Pools, on Manly Creek at Manly Vale.

Mermaid Pools got its name from the girls who used to slip away to the pool to swim naked. In those days the water was crystal clear, the bird-life rich and varied and the bushland vibrant and colourful. There is still a rare pocket of coastal rainforest beneath the rocky overhangs of Mermaid Pool which echoes a long distant era.

Many things have since happened to help restore the tarnished jewel of Mermaid Pool, kicking off on ‘Clean Up Australia Day’ 2002, when 4 tonnes of rubbish were removed by 71 volunteers. Subsequently the Clean Up Australia organisation adopted the project as a ‘Fix Up’ Site. Volunteers recognised the fact that introduced weeds from around the globe were out competing the vulnerable native plant species and grants were gained to employ contractors to carefully remove them. But weeds such as Privet, Asparagus Fern, Lantana, Morning Glory and a host of others are unusually 17

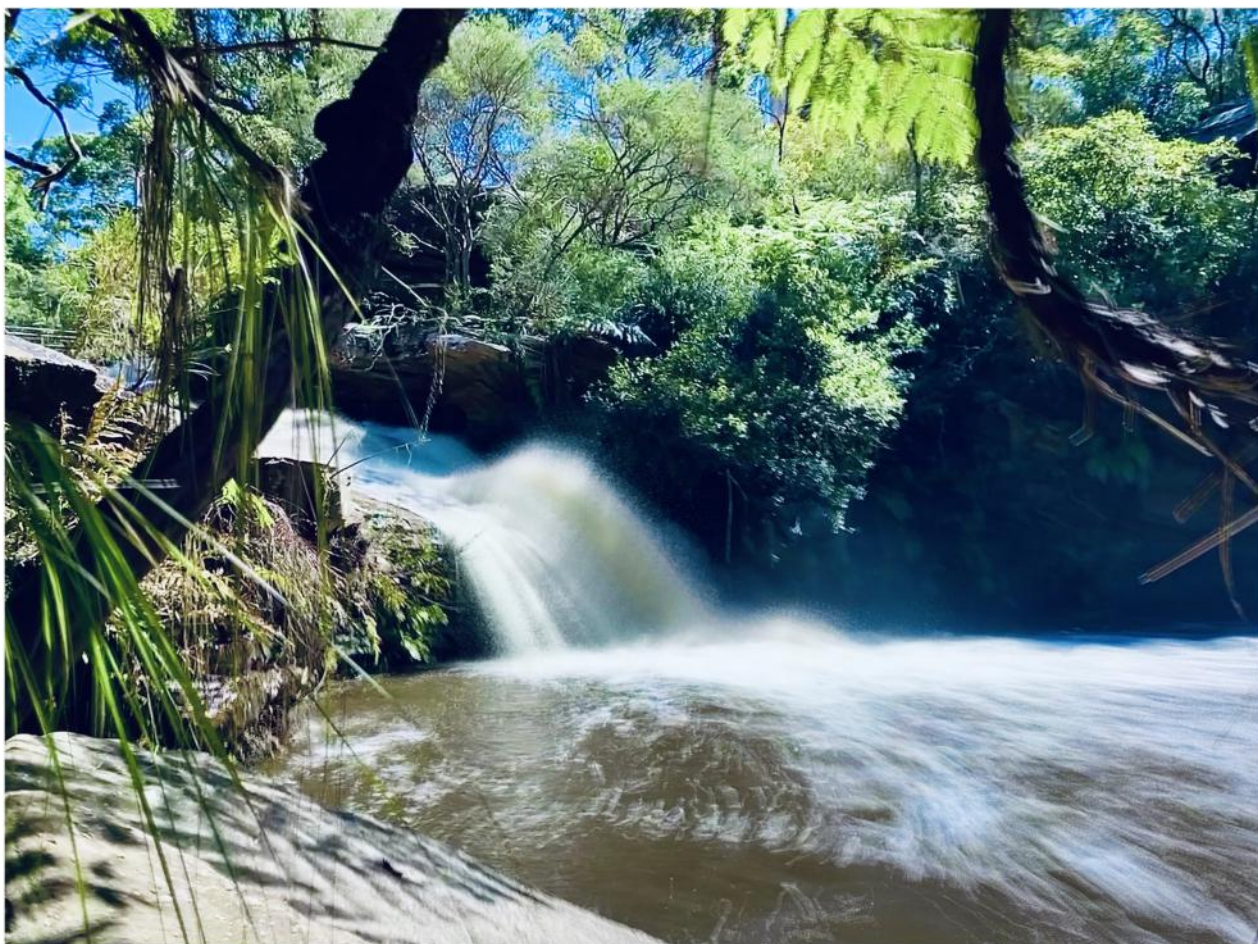
tenacious, so the community has had to learn how to identify and extricate them. A hardy bunch of locals have since been involved in “Bush Regeneration” on the site ever since and volunteer through the Northern Beaches Council Bushcare program. They have also created educational brochures, produced nesting boxes for the local wildlife (such as birds and possums) and stencilled messages on drains to encourage people not to drop litter in the streets (which is carried via stormwater drains to the beach).

After a 40-year absence, bandicoots have returned, Swamp Wallabies have been spotted and the Dwarf Green Tree Frogs still survive in the reed beds. There are 10 types of native fish that call this waterway

home. Accumulated silt, exotic weeds and other obstructions have interfered with their ability to spawn.

The Return of the Mermaids project continues unabated despite all setbacks and the parent organisation Save Manly Dam Bushland remains in campaign mode to fight ongoing damaging development proposals.

Our community group is now equipped to advocate for environmental conservation far more widely than just our own backyard. We are battle hardened, informed and resourced to make our voices heard on a broader level. And groups such as ours are finally getting traction as an extinction crisis is revealed and climate change begins to bite. The moral of the story is to never, ever, ever give up.



ANOTHER BIG UPDATE

By Phil Hunt

The Ku-ring-gai Council site monitoring has been completed. The total figures were adjusted as we were able to clarify some poor data on the NSW government database (see [Yarnupings 2014 August](#) about data problems). Three sites were confirmed to be in other Council areas and six in National Parks well away from Council boundaries and not likely to be affected by any Council activity or decision. Of the 97 actual sites the majority comprise of rock shelters (52%). This category includes *rock shelters with art* (19%), *rock shelters with middens* (16%), *rock shelters with deposit* (6%) and *rock shelters with potential archaeological deposit*. The next major category is *rock engraving sites* (22%), although 13 of these have not been relocated, most feared destroyed during 20th century urban development. There are also *grinding groove sites* (8%), an *open artefact scatter site*, a *scarred tree*, and one area of *potential archaeological deposit* (PAD). These sites are mostly found in bushland reserves nearby to Middle Harbour Creek estuary and its tributaries in the east and the Lane Cove River and tributaries in the west, as well as in bushland reserves elsewhere, such as Turramurra and North Wahroonga. There are also sites within private land.

There are some magnificent landscapes, forests, rivers and creeks and it is inspiring to see how the Councillors, Council staff and residents are working to protect the area. We get the occasional leech during field work. Think of our Council colleagues – one officer tackling 20 leeches in just one morning's work carrying out important research into micro-bats. Councils are like icebergs. What you see is only a fraction of the story.



Beautiful dragonfly resting on Phil's measuring tape.
Not so beautiful found resting on Susan's leg.



KU-RING-GAI GALLERY

Images by Phil Hunt

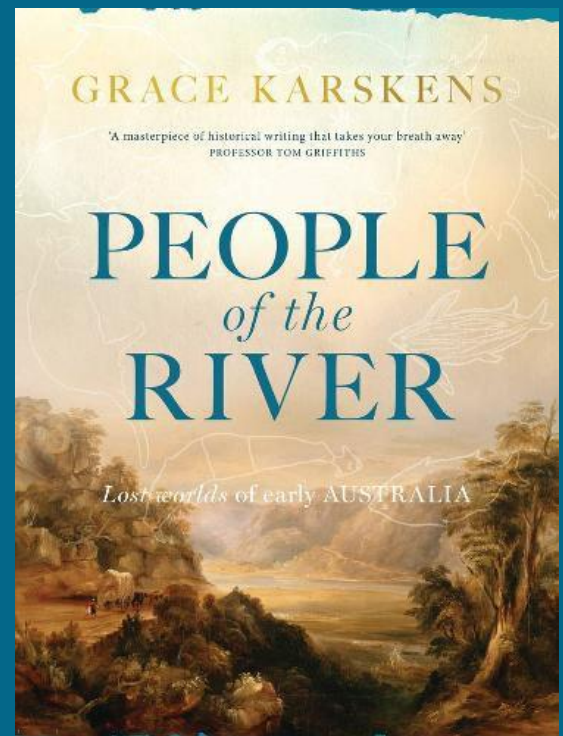


People Of The River: Lost Worlds Of Early Australia by Grace Karskens

Sometimes finding a book to read is a story in itself. I found this book at my mother's, who'd received it as a gift from my brother. Like a tourist seeing a bridge over a river, I stopped to have a quick peek. Before I knew it I was caught. I borrowed it for a few days, which turned to several months. At each new chapter I hoped I'd be able to skim through it like you can with many histories of Australia. I often just look up the index for references to Aboriginal people and go straight to those pages. I was encouraged to read a new history of Gregory Blaxland some time ago, one of those explorers who opened the door to the invasion of Wiradjuri lands beyond the Blue Mountains. There were just 3 or 4 references to Aboriginal people in that book, all quite negative and simplistic. For example Blaxland's son was 'murdered' by Wiradjuri warriors on 'his' farm. Imagine being a young Wiradjuri student in Bathurst or Orange and reading yet another history of a man who had such a profound impact on your people and it left your story out?

Grace Karsken's book is not like this. It is a fabulous intertwining of different people's perspectives and a breathtaking level of research and analysis. What stunned me first was some of the archaeological discussion presented. Susan Whitby (the AHO's fabulous Volunteer Coordinator, Newsletter editor, DA reviewer) and I have talked about how it is a shame so much information is effectively locked up in archaeological reports and documents produced in the environmental impact assessment process. Grace Karsken's has found her way in! Not only that, she has managed to see through the froth and bubble to get to the real sub-

BOOK REVIEW



stance. She also weaves Aboriginal people through the entire history, where they actually have been all along, not just at the start or as a tokenistic gesture.

I admit it, the relief to be reading such a great book was mixed with the impatience of having such a heavy pile of pages still sitting with me that I was not able to 'finish off'. My mother was more patient. I heard it took Grace ten years to put together. This is a resource that will be many more years a staple for anyone wanting to get a better understanding of the Dyarubbin region, the mighty river that has shaped, is shaping and will always shape the land and people in its vicinity. For further book reviews click on the link: [More information](#)

Film Review - Lake Of Scars



I was scouting around for events to participate in for National Archaeology Week 2022 and came across a showing of The Lake of Scars at the Randwick Ritz. The documentary reads like this:

“In a corner of Victoria exists a link to an ancient culture. A place of astounding beauty and rare archaeological and environmental significance, it is being degraded on an annual basis. As the clock ticks, an unlikely partnership could see it saved for future generations. The Lake of Scars is as much a portrait of a hidden facet of history and environment as it is a musing on what reconciliation can look like in Australia. While exploring the beautiful, mysterious scarred trees, middens and stone scatters along these wetlands, we meet the people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, who are working against the clock, to preserve and promote what they can. With organic relics at its heart, the film examines the preservation of culture and environment as our protagonists fight for scarred trees to be preserved, for middens and stone scatters to be protected and recognised, for environmental flows of water to be allowed into the seasonal lake, and for a ‘keeping place’ to be built.”

I had to go and see it.

And I’m so glad I did. This documentary is visually stunning about an extraordinary piece of Aboriginal cultural history. In fact, it’s more than that. It’s a documentary about a piece of world history. The Lake at Boort, Victoria is the largest collection of scarred trees in the world. The trees are enigmatic, delicate and in desperate need of protection.

The lack of funding for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage is not a new story. But perhaps this film can illuminate the issues and reach a broader audience which may help to elicit change.

This film is Directed by Bill Code and Produced by Christian Pazaglia. I highly recommend that you see this film.

For more information about the documentary or to contribute to their post-production fundraising, head to Documentary Australia.

<https://documentaryaustralia.com.au/project/the-lake-of-scars/>

By Susan Whitby

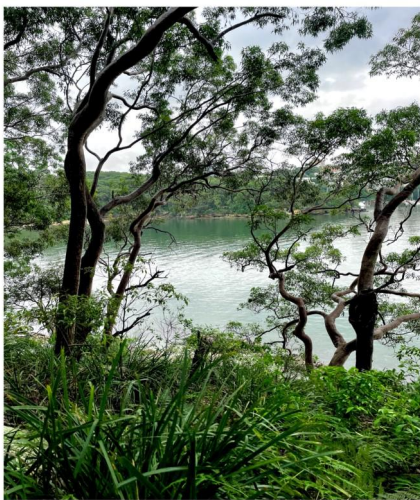
Volunteer News

National Volunteer Week 2022

National Volunteer Week was 16-22 May, 2022. National Volunteer Week is a celebration of volunteers and the amazing work that they do. The theme this year was Better Together.

Better Together— that's exactly how the AHO views our volunteers. We are better together. The diligent monitoring of sites by more than 100 members of the public ensures that the Aboriginal cultural heritage sites across the northern part of Sydney and in Strathfield are observed and cared for regularly. And we have seen the benefits of this care over the years and in particular this past year. Fresh graffiti has been reported and acted upon swiftly, either removing any traces or minimising the damage. Large rubbish items have been removed from overhangs by Councils and storm damaged middens have been managed.

The Aboriginal Heritage Office sincerely thanks all of our Volunteers. Your time and effort is appreciated.



There was a small but enthusiastic group of volunteers who turned up to the Volunteer Week walk around Berry Island. The heavy rain kept many away, however we were lucky that the rain cleared in time for the walk. We wandered along the Gadyan Track (as named by David Watts himself having designed the interpretive walk and officially opened by Auntie Jenny Monroe in 2000!) talking about the beauty of the place and how special it is, the remnant bushland, the engravings, the middens. We also talked about Aboriginal sites as being part of the landscape with Berry Island part of the Sydney Harbour marine environment. The waters surrounding Berry Island are estuarine so the middens are full of oysters, mussels, cockles and whelks. It was a lovely morning and we plan to host another volunteer catch up later in the year, when the weather is warmer and hopefully drier. Thanks to everyone who turned up. It was lovely to see you.

Finger Limes

USE FINGER LIMES
FOR YOUR CITRUS
POP THIS WINTER

HIGH IN VITAMIN C,
THESE NATIVE FRUITS
ARE A PERFECT
INCLUSION IN YOUR
WINTER RECIPES



Capture Photo Entries

AHO Heritage Officer, Susan Whitby, was recently awarded Highly Commended awards in both the Open Category and Landscape Category of the Capture Magazine's Australasia's Top Emerging Photographers 2022.

We asked Susan why she likes taking landscape photos.

"We live in such a beautiful place, whether its by the ocean or in the bush or amongst the edginess of the city. Sharing the beauty of the outdoors fills me with joy."

Congratulations, Susan. We look forward to seeing more of your photos in upcoming issues of the AHO's Yarnupings.

