



Killcare Wagstaffe Trust

Newsletter

January 2018

General Meeting

Sunday February 4th at 9.30 am
at the Maitland Bay Information Centre.

All visitors and residents are welcome

Guest speaker. TBA

Happy New Year to all.

A recent well attended committee meeting got the Trust off to a good start. Among the agenda items were:

No Plastic Bags campaign.

This seems to be going well with all retail outlets still on board. The initial run of both calico and hessian bags has just about run out and new bags are on order. This next run will not be subsidised so the retail price has to reflect the manufacturing costs. Hessian bags will sell for \$4 and the calico for \$2.

Dealing with the Council

Several people mentioned frustration with dealing with the new Council despite them promising a "customer focussed" approach. We decided to approach the Mayor (Jane Smith) and the other two Councillors from our ward (Jeff Sundstrom and Rebecca Gale Collins) to introduce ourselves and work out how to get our correspondence answered directly and comprehensively and hopefully get a few key personnel that we can approach directly for information.

Fox Baiting and Wildlife numbers

We have always strongly supported the fox baiting programs run by Council and the NPWS. We are concerned that there is no new data being collected other than anecdotal reports of an increase in vulnerable fauna such as echidnas, swamp wallabies and bandicoots. Without more systematic and formal surveys continuing funding remains vulnerable. We will begin collecting old data that is available and work at a Ministerial level to encourage the funding of proper data collection.

The Commons

We had a short discussion about the value of using the term Commons to talk about all the natural and cultural resources that we own collectively but are managed by various levels of government.

Cicadas

After a few relatively quiet years we have just had a bumper summer for cicadas. No-one seems to know why they choose particular years to come out in such numbers. In fact there is much about these creatures still to be discovered.

Cicadas exist all over the temperate and tropical world with over 1000 species recorded. Australia has the most and the greatest variety of species with several hundred known species. Well over 20 of them are found on the Central Coast.

They are the loudest of all insects, exceeding 120 decibels at close range, close to the pain threshold of the human ear. On the other hand, the call of some species is so quiet that they can barely be heard at all.

They have great names, probably bestowed by children. Some describe their appearance such as Greengrocer, Yellow Monday, Red eye, Black prince and Floury baker. Others describe their call: Sandgrinders, Red roarers, Green whizzers and the Southern squeaker.



Life cycle

Cicadas have three distinct life stages — egg, nymph and adult.

Females lay two or three hundred 3mm eggs in their favoured tree, The relationship between the different species and the vegetation they prefer to live in and on is still poorly understood. The eggs take up to four months to hatch as nymphs.



Cuts made in a branch to lay eggs

The tiny, spindly nymphs leap to the ground and burrow in, digging a tunnel to a tree root, where it latches on to feed on sap. They feed through a specialised proboscis called a rostrum. This is a thick, needle-like protrusion that penetrates the root's flesh and sucks up nutrients from the xylem.

Cicada nymphs are quite active under the ground where they stay for years at a time. How many years is still a matter for debate - estimates range from 3 to 10 years. It probably varies between species and is affected by the climate.

When the time is right, sometime after rain between September and November, they dig themselves out and climb up a nearby tree. At this stage they have a hard shell.

The nymph attaches itself firmly to the bark and then a lengthways split appears in down the back of the shell. Over a couple of hours the adult cicada emerges and unfurls its wings by pumping fluid into them. The empty shells are commonly found dried out and attached to vegetation.



The adult cicada immediately after emerging from its shell by Alan Kwok.



After a short time for rest and recuperation, the adults spend a few weeks dedicated to eating their fill, calling like mad and hopefully having sex.

The adults, like the nymphs, have a straw like protuberance to suck sap from the tree, and if alarmed have been known to fly off, leaving it embedded in the tree's flesh.

How Cicadas Sing

The males of each species has it's own distinctive call which is performed to attract a mate. They tend to group together when calling which increases the total volume of noise and makes it hard for birds to locate them. Some species call in waves with just a few individuals at first then more and more joining in until a deafening crescendo is reached, which drops as more individuals stop calling. This behaviour might also reduce the chance of being eaten.

The sound is produced by organs called tymbals, which are situated on each side of the base of the abdomen. Each tymbal consists of a ribbed membrane that has an internal muscle attached to its centre. The membrane buckles inward when the muscle contracts and snaps back to its neutral position when the muscle relaxes. Sound is produced by both movements in much the same way as pushing an empty can in and out

Rapid contraction and relaxation of the muscle can produce sounds at such high frequency that we hear a continuous note.

Different species have developed different ways of modifying and amplifying the note produced. Air chambers in the abdomen, flexing the abdomen into different positions, clapping their wings while calling and variations in tymbal structure all vary the sound produced.

The Bouddi Commons

The idea of the Commons is an old one. Initially it was a colloquial term for common grazing land that could be used by all members of a community.

William Forster Lloyd was a British writer on economics best known today for one of his 1833 lectures on population control in which he introduced the concept of the overuse of a common by its commoners (i.e. those with rights of use and access to it). It was in an individual's short-term interest to add extra livestock to the Common but if everyone did it the resource would eventually collapse.

This idea was developed by the ecologist Garrett Hardin, in a famous paper published in 1968 called "The Tragedy of the Commons". Hardin extended the idea of the commons to include all shared lands and resources and argued, as did Lloyd, that unregulated access led to over exploitation and possible collapse of these resources. This expanded idea of the Commons has proved to be very influential.

The commons can be defined as the cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society, which are held in common and not privately owned. It includes not only land air and water but also cultural institutions and resources. It belongs to us all and it is in our best long-term interests to manage it well.

Applying the idea of the Commons to the Bouddi peninsula is a useful exercise as it emphasises a sense of common ownership and the responsibility of the local community in contributing to its management. An incomplete list would include:

Lands	Bouddi National Park Council lands COSS lands Reserves Road reserves Beaches
Water	Ocean Brisbane Water and its catchments Marine life
Air	
Cultural	Visual amenity Pretty Beach School

We don't have the problem of under-regulation. Our commons is regulated by a bewildering array of different government departments with their rules, regulations and policies.

Some of these work well, for instance the national Park with a clear mission and dedicated staff. Others, such as Council regulated parts of our Common don't do too well with a lack of rigour and consistency in enforcement and often dealing with a lack of funds.

There is always a pressure on the commons, through over exploitation, privatisation, non compliance with rules, poor management, unco-ordinated management, and under funded regulation.

In many ways the Trust exists to protect the extent and quality of the Bouddi Commons. Constant vigilance is required along with a willingness and ability to interact with the different levels of government to argue for better management.

As Elinor Ostrom, a 2009 Nobel prize winner in Economic Sciences, said:

"There is no reason that bureaucrats and politicians, no matter how well meaning, are better at solving problems than people on the spot, who have the strong incentive to get the solution right."