



Killcare Wagstaffe Trust
keeping an eye on the environment

Killcare Wagstaffe Trust

Newsletter

October 2020

General Meeting

The next meeting is on Sunday 1st November at 9.30 am. The Maitland Bay Centre is still closed so the meeting will be held at the Wagstaffe Hall which is big enough to maintain appropriate social distancing.

2020

What a year! We hope it has not been too tough on you. This beautiful peninsula has been a perfect place to weather the global storm and many of us have taken the opportunity to become more familiar with its many wonders during this time of enforced restrictions.

There was no July newsletter or August meeting this year and we are making up for it with a bumper edition this time round. You will see that we are trying to not only “act local” but also to “think global” and engage with the pressing issues of climate change and extinction.

Putty Beach Dune regeneration work

Since the last newsletter the Council has awarded the Trust a \$7000 grant to have the Bitou bush removed from the gully to the left of the track to the beach from the first carpark. This was the last large section of Bitou at the southern end of the beach. It was beyond the scope of the small group of volunteers who regularly work on this end of the beach.



A professional team of regenerators has been engaged to complete the work. This has involved cutting pathways through the Bitou to clear a space around native vegetation and to access bitou for spraying.

The spraying has been done. At present the dead bitou looks a little unsightly but this will break down over the next few months, allowing the native vegetation to flourish. There is still a little follow-up work to be done by the contractors, which will be completed over the next few weeks.

Bike riders in the National park

At present bike riders are permitted to ride on fire trails in National Parks. They are not permitted to ride on walking tracks or through the bush.

Unfortunately, some riders are ignoring these restrictions in Bouddi NP. For example, A riding path has been carved out between the Hardy's Bay fire trail and the Hardy's Bay Club. This has involved cutting through tree roots, constructing ramps, laying down artificial turf – all things that are clearly not compatible with the conservation aims of National Parks.

Off trail bike tracks have also been carved out along the Daley's Point trail towards the Aboriginal carvings.

Areas of COSS lands have also been severely damaged by bike riders. The top of Blackwall Mountain and Kincumber Mountain are two examples.

The Trust would like to hear from anyone who has contacts with the bike riding community so that we can build a dialogue with the riders and address these problems. We would also like to hear about any other unauthorised bike tracks in the area. (killcarewagstaffetrust@gmail.com). The committee will also be writing to National Parks to urge that they repair the damage and enforce the restrictions that are in place.

Sunday Walks In Bouddi

Our members have enjoyed a couple of Sunday afternoon guided walks through Bouddi. These walks are designed to introduce members and friends to places of interest they might not have visited and to learn something of the heritage values and natural attributes of our glorious national park. They are also an opportunity to observe current issues such as weed control, trail erosion, and feral animals so that our organisation is better informed when advocating for protection and improvement.

The first walk was quite extensive. From the Lobster Beach track we walked along the ridge to enjoy the views from the highest point above Wagstaffe which is about 100m. It is much exaggerated in Bradleys 1789 watercolour done from Lion Island. It can be seen rising to the left of Box Head.



We then walked down to half tide rocks and back along the shore towards Kourong Gourong Point to investigate reports that a resident was claiming ownership of national park lands by installing a 'keep out' sign indicating it was private property. This has since been removed at the request of NPWS.

From here we inspected the walking track from the old rock pool up to Bulkara St. This trail is now severely eroded and, despite numerous submissions from the community and even an offer from the KTW community association to fund its repair, remains neglected and a priority issue for both our organisations.

The last walk was out to the 'balancing rock' above Little Box Head. This off-track adventure took the intrepid walkers through some beautiful wildflowers, past Aboriginal engravings and caves to enjoy stunning views and the rewarding sight of dolphins in Lobster Beach channel.



If you are interested in joining an upcoming walk, check the website for details.

Vandalism on the dog track



It is disappointing that some mature native vines have been cut at ground level along the dog track. The species cut include Monkey Pod, Wonga Wonga and Morinda. The Monkey Pod vine which was cut was at least 30 years old.

Native vines are an essential component of the ecosystem. They provide habitat for birds and mammals, as well as a food source. The vines grow up trees and enhance the canopy thus maintaining a healthy micro-climate, influencing temperature, light and humidity.

Monkey Pod Vine - *Parsonsia straminea*

National Bush Fire and Climate Plan

Everyone remembers the group of former fire chiefs that warned of the catastrophic risks and dangers prior to the last 2019-20 fire season and the necessary action to mitigate those risks. The Federal Government refused to meet with the group and rest was history. NSW experienced its most disastrous fire season, the Black Summer, while the Prime Minister holidayed in Hawaii. Our peninsula was spared from the impact of the Black Summer, but this will not always be the case as our past history has shown.

In February 2020, KWT ran a successful climate change meeting that featuring Bob Conroy, former Executive Director of NPWS, and a member of the former fire chiefs group. He set out in great detail the linkage between climate change, increasing global temperatures and the enhanced threat of devastating of bush fires.

The former fire chiefs group, now called Emergency Leaders for Climate Action (ELCA), held the National Bush Fire and Climate Change Summit 2020, in July, and published their National Bush Fire and Climate Plan. The report sets out 165 recommendations for urgent action. It can be downloaded from emergencyleadersforclimateaction.org.au.

The main recommendations are summarised here:

Response

- Better resource fire and land management agencies to manage fuels, and rapidly detect and attack new outbreaks
- Add a self-sufficient Australian medium and large aerial fire-fighting capability to fire services
- Better utilise Australian Defence Force support capabilities in emergencies

Readiness

- Create an Indigenous-led National Cultural Fire Strategy to complement and inform fuel management by agencies
- Increase the affordability and uptake of insurance for properties in disaster prone areas, a key factor in community resilience

Recovery

- Set up a national climate disaster fund to meet climate-fuelled disaster costs and build resilience - paid through a fossil fuel producer levy
- Better coordinate and resource wildlife recovery efforts
- Develop and implement a national climate change, health and well-being strategy

Importantly, the Report stresses that actions by the community and their local councils are at the heart of responding to the climate crisis, building the clean economies of the future, and developing greater resilience to worsening fire danger and other climate impacts. We can all write to our Federal and State MP s, relevant Ministers, as well as the Prime Minister himself and demand their detailed response and actions to the recommendations contained in the Report.

Proposed changes to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

The Trust wrote to Lucy Wicks expressing our concern about the Federal government's response to Graham Samuels review of the Act. Samuels reported that the Act was ineffective and called for new, legally enforceable national standards to protect the environment and enable sustainable development.

Instead, the federal government has proposed further weakening the power of the Act by handing back regulatory authority to the States. Clearly the government's response is far from adequate. We have asked Lucy to engage with us on this and are waiting for her response.

Outrage and Optimism podcast - <https://globaloptimism.com/podcasts/>

Outrage + Optimism is a weekly podcast that builds optimism about how we can meet the challenges of the climate crisis.

It is co-hosted by Christiana Figueres, who brought together the countries for the Paris Agreement, Paul Dickinson, and Tom Rivett-Carnac. The three are good friends, so there is an easy humour and unforced rapport between them from the first episode, though each brings a different perspective to keep the discussions interesting.

But why call it 'Outrage and Optimism'? This is explained beautifully in the first episode, where Figueres asserts that we need both in order to move beyond the climate crisis. She describes her despair following the Copenhagen climate negotiations, and her realisation that her belief that agreement was impossible would ensure the failure of all future talks. She intentionally changed her attitude, and slowly the mood began to change.

The podcast has gained a wide audience and received many awards and plaudits.