



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### **Important Upcoming Stead Foundation Annual General Meeting – Saturday 10 October, 2009**

Please attend our upcoming AGM. Important decisions will be made concerning the future of Wirrimbirra and its relationship with the ANDCS and the dingo area within Wirrimbirra Sanctuary. One decision that must be made is in regard to the Stead Board's recommendation to withdraw from the Joint Operations of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and renegotiate a new relationship with the ANDCS.

This meeting will also elect members to the Board for 2010. If you feel that you have the necessary expertise, commitment and interest, please consider nominating for the Board.

There are many challenges ahead, including – how we will work with the ANDCS at Wirrimbirra; ensuring that all directives from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) are fulfilled; ensuring that the ANDCS meets its obligations to complete the construction of the dingo area; and the renewal of our Lease with the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

### **ANDCS termination of Contract with Fencing Contractor**

The ANDCS now has full control over the construction site. Their Fencing Contractor, Dennis Dutton, allowed termination of the Contract on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2009, and has since removed himself as the contractor from the construction site. This is enormously positive for the Stead Foundation as there is no longer a dispute between the ANDCS and their contractor, and the ANDCS now has no excuse not to complete the DPI directives, as issued to them by the Stead Foundation in April 2009. It must be noted that, until the ANDCS has its own DPI Licence, the Stead Foundation is responsible for any directives the DPI requires of the dingo area at Wirrimbirra. If the ANDCS does not complete the DPI directives, the Stead Foundation could be fined.

### **Update on ANDCS threat of legal action**

The Stead Foundation has yet to receive either verbal or formal written notification that the ANDCS has dropped its threat of legal action against the Stead Foundation. We will be giving a further update on this at the AGM.

### **ANDCS request for interim construction lease**

Since the Informal Members Meeting, the ANDCS has requested an interim construction lease – or 'Heads of Agreement' – to be followed by a negotiated sublease or 'Articles of Cooperation'. Any proposal needs the support of Stead Foundation members and the National Trust of Australia (NSW) as the owner of Wirrimbirra Sanctuary. Any sublease with the ANDCS must be in the context of the Stead Foundation's main Lease with the National Trust.

Please read page 2 for more details.

### **NSWTF Article about Thistle Harris**

Recently I was honoured to be appointed as the NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF) delegate to the NSW National Parks Association. Please read the attached NSWTF Journal *Education* article about the fascinating history of teachers working for the environment, particularly Dr Thistle Harris, the founder of Wirrimbirra Sanctuary. *Education* is distributed to 67,000 public school teachers.

### **Nature Conservation Council of NSW [NCC] World Environment Day Awards Night Dinner 31st October 2009**

I will be representing the Stead Foundation at this dinner which will celebrate the extraordinary effects of conservationists and environmental activists across the state. One award will be the Allen Strom Hall of Fame, named after Allen Strom, a former president of the Stead Foundation. If you are interested in joining me, please make your bookings direct with the NCC and request to sit at my table.

Contact details: [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au) – or phone: (02) 9279 2466.

Yours sincerely

Janine Kitson  
Stead Foundation President  
BA, Dip Ed, MA, Dip TEFL, M Ed, MA (Honours)

## Informal Members Meeting

Thank you to the members who contributed to the Stead Foundation's informal meeting of members on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009. It was reaffirming to have such constructive comments from so many members. The consensus was that members strongly endorsed the Stead Board's directions over the last nine months and congratulated the Board for its courage, determination and professionalism in resolving the myriad of complex issues – through the free mediation service provided by the Community Justice Centre – relating to the completion of the dingo sanctuary area.

Members supported, in principle, the concept that the Stead Foundation and ANDCS should operate independently within Wirrimbirra, with their own separate revenue streams – but with the Stead Foundation maintaining overall control. This was outlined in a document called the "Articles of Cooperation". However, members expressed strong views that there could be no negotiations with the ANDCS unless all threats of legal action against the Stead Foundation were dropped.

## National Trust News

### Talk by Dr Joan Webb

Dr Joan Webb, Stead Foundation supporter and biographer of Thistle Harris, will give a talk for Vienna Cottage, a National Trust Property on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November at 2.30pm at the Hunters Hill RSL Hall. Contact details: John Birch, Chair of Vienna Cottage, Phone: (02) 9816 1794

### Harpers Mansion, Garden and Maze, 9 Wilkinson Street, Berrima

Harpers Mansion is having a **Plein Air Art Show** from 25<sup>th</sup> September – 5<sup>th</sup> October, 10.30am – 4pm, to display the work of Southern Highland artists.

There will also be a tour and talk on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October at 11.30am called, "**A new 'colonial' garden: heritage or not? That is the question**" which will explore the evolution of this heritage garden over time.

Cost: adults \$7, children \$3, concession \$6, family \$15. Phone: (02) 4877 1508 or email [savwest@bigpond.com](mailto:savwest@bigpond.com)

Harpers Mansion is the closest other National Trust property to Wirrimbirra and it is important that we support one another wherever possible.



*Harper's Mansion gardens in autumn. Photo Linda Dunn.*

## Voluntary Conservation Agreement

The Stead Foundation is in the process of consulting the National Trust to seek a Voluntary Conservation Agreement to protect the significant conservation values of Wirrimbirra Sanctuary.

A Voluntary Conservation Agreement is a joint agreement between landowners and the Minister for the Environment. The Agreement provides the opportunity for land to be permanently conserved – not just under current ownership, but for all future owners.

The National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) works with people and communities to protect and conserve nature, Aboriginal heritage and historic heritage in NSW.

Voluntary Conservation Agreements are part of the NPWS Conservation Partners Program. This program includes Voluntary Conservation Agreements, Wildlife Refuges, Land for Wildlife, and other options that support conservation on private and public land.

## National Trust's 2009 Committees Conference

It was disappointing that the Stead Foundation was not officially invited to attend this year's National Trust's Annual Committees Conference in Wagga Wagga in July. The 2009 conference was for National Trust committees but not properties. We hope there will be a change to this policy for the next Committees Conference in 2010, particularly as the Stead Foundation was invited to previous National Trust's Committees Conferences.

## Stead Foundation support for National Trust Heritage Garden

The Stead Foundation was pleased to support a National Trust grant application for a Heritage Vegetable Garden at the National Trust property, the Norman Lindsay Gallery. The project hopes to create a community garden to inspire people to grow their own vegetables. The Norman Lindsay Gallery is also holding Organic Gardening Workshops.

Contact details: Phone: (02) 4751 1067  
Email: [info@normanlindsay.com.au](mailto:info@normanlindsay.com.au)



*Falconbridge, via Springwood, Blue Mountains, home of Norman Lindsay (1879-1969), one of Australia's most controversial, exceptional and prolific artists.*

## Birds'n'Bugs @ Wirrimbirra

Wirrimbirra's visitors learnt all about the birds and the bees at our Birds'n'Bugs day on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August. "Bug Man" (aka entomologist Stephen Fellenberg) entertained the crowd with his hands-on bug shows, including trips to the Strom Garden pond looking for water bugs. The Budgerigar Society of NSW once again brought along some magnificent birds to show, and also donated the proceeds of a raffle to Wirrimbirra, which was greatly appreciated. The Wallaby Playgroup Mums ran some fantastic activities for the littlies, and Wollondilly Shire Council's "Dilly Wanderer" bus was also here providing information and kids' activities.

**THANK YOU** to all our wonderful volunteers who came to help on the day. If you are ever available to lend a hand at any of our special events, please come along – we'd love to see you!

... ISSUES ...

## NOT SO HIGH IN KU-RING-GAI Campaign

The planning issues affecting these northern Sydney suburbs, which include critically endangered Blue Gum and Turpentine-Ironbark Forests, have implications for all areas of NSW where a planning panel can and will decide on developments over \$10 million, regardless of environmental concerns.

Visit the website – [www.notsohigh.org.au](http://www.notsohigh.org.au) – and see a utube video link of how the Ku-ring-gai planning panel disregarded local concerns about the environment.

## FROG DAY

at Wirrimbirra

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November**

10am – 3pm

- \* Hands-on Frog Shows \*
- \* Froggy Activities \*
- \* Stalls \*
- \* Displays \*
- \* Hot & Cold Food \*

Educational fun for the whole family!



**ENTRY IS FREE**

But your donation as you arrive will be greatly appreciated and will help the work at the Sanctuary continue – CFN12076

## Update on Threats to National Parks – from legislation

Despite widespread condemnation at public meetings across New South Wales, there is concern that the Shooters Party will push through their legislation to allow the hunting of native wildlife in National Parks (*Game & Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill*).

It is also deeply concerning that the State Government appears determined to 'open up' New South Wales National Parks to commercial tourism interests by changing the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*.

Please write to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate Change & the Environment, Carmel Tebbutt (Email: [dp.office@tebbutt.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dp.office@tebbutt.minister.nsw.gov.au)) and your local member, opposing the proposals of the Shooters Party's *Game & Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill* and the Government's proposals to change the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* to permit new commercial tourism developments in National Parks that will bring damaging infrastructure into our parks and diminish their habitat and conservation values.

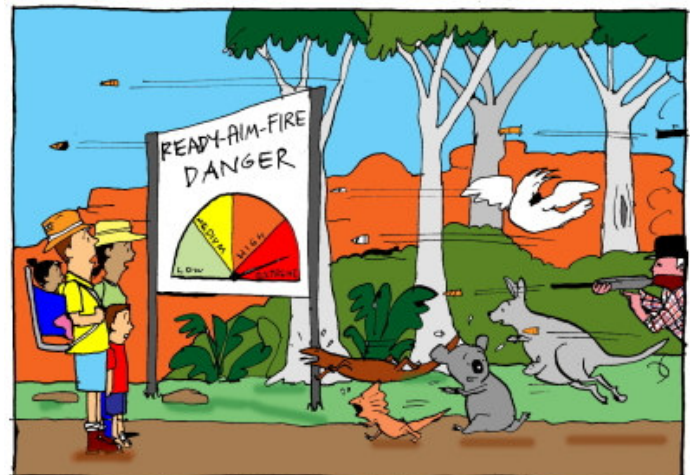
For further details view [www.npansw.org.au](http://www.npansw.org.au)

## Excerpts from a letter from a young visitor, whose family stayed for the weekend recently (we think she loved it!)

Dear staff and volunteers of Wirrimbirra Sanctuary,

I love the sanctuary and everything in it. I also really love all the native plants. The frog pond is awesome. I forgot to mention the possum, it's so adorable. I love how the wallabies eat, it's so polite. One day we saw a mother wallaby's pouch bobbing and then a baby wallaby popped out its front paws and head. The cabins are so warm and cosy in winter and the bunks are so comfortable. The dingoes have such a lovely howl and the emus are like totally awesome. The wombat is totally cool except that you hardly see him. I love how the kangaroos hop so high. I love how one of the cockies speaks to you, it's cool. I love all the different birds. I absolutely love all the different colours. The possum also is sweet how it eats and all. I love the display under the possum (box) with the snake skin, nests and the dead bat in the jar. That's so cool. WIRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY RULES FOR LIFE!!!!

From Melanie.



... ISSUES ...

## A Bush Christmas

at Wirrimbirra  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 7pm



A true-blue Aussie celebration of Christmas  
with the Wollondilly Country Music Club

**EVERYONE WELCOME**

## WALLABY PLAYGROUP CLOSES

We are sad to report that the Wallaby Playgroup, which has run at Wirrimbirra for many years, closed down recently. The current Mums who were running the playgroup were devastated at having to close, but a continued decrease in numbers meant it was no longer viable. We have been extremely grateful to the playgroup Mums for their wonderful involvement in Wirrimbirra's event days over the years.

## Wirrimbirra hosts another UWS student

Wirrimbirra is currently hosting a student from the University of Western Sydney (UWS) for six weeks. Michelle is the fourth UWS student we have hosted in recent years. She is studying a Bachelor of Animal Science, and her Industry Service Learning placement at Wirrimbirra will contribute to the progress of her development as a zoo veterinarian, which is her ultimate goal. During her time at Wirrimbirra, Michelle is getting involved with all aspects of the running and management of the Sanctuary, asks lots of questions, and is seldom seen without her notepad. Like other UWS students before her, Michelle fits in extremely well as a Wirrimbirra volunteer.

## Walk Against Warming International Day of Action

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December join the millions of people across the world taking positive action on climate change in preparation for the United Nations Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen. Contact details: [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au)

## 'Ahimsa', a National Trust property at Cheltenham

Dr Joan Webb, biographer of Thistle Harris, led a bushwalk to 'Ahimsa' through the Lane Cove National Park on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2009. She recounted her memories of attending a protest meeting organised by Marie Byles in the 1970's to stop an oval being built on bushland she recognised as an ecotone (where two vegetation types meet). Marie Byles (1900-1979) was the first practising woman solicitor in New South Wales, as well as being a mountaineer, feminist, and environmentalist. She was a bushwalking colleague of David G. Stead, and her brother, Balder Byles, worked with Thistle Harris in her campaign to create Kosciusko National Park.

## Catherine Hill Bay Campaign

Congratulations to the National Trust on the successful Catherine Hill Bay Campaign. The NSW Land and Environment Court has endorsed the National Trust's long campaign to protect the coastal mining town of Catherine Hill Bay, near Newcastle, which is surrounded by bushland. The Land and Environment Court rejected an earlier approval by the former Planning Minister, Frank Sartor, for a 600-home Development Application in the area (photo on the last NT E-news).

## Wirrimbirra's Animal Sponsorship program

An annual Animal Sponsorship is one way you can greatly assist Wirrimbirra without actually having to be here.

2009/2010 Sponsorships are due now. If you paid in the couple of months leading up to July, you are already included as a 2009/2010 sponsor – please check the date on your Sponsorship Certificate.

As well as having their name displayed on our Animal Sponsors' board which is situated near the entrance to the Wildlife Walk, sponsors now receive a Sponsorship Certificate, complete with a photo of their animal, thanks to our new colour printer purchased early this year as the result of a successful Grant application. Sponsors also receive our quarterly Newsletter.

**Wirrimbirra's birds and animals still waiting for sponsors for 2009/2010 are:  
the red-necked wallabies, swamp wallabies, native fish, sulphur-crested cockatoos,  
galahs, rainbow lorikeets and budgerigars.**

Your sponsorship goes towards providing day-to-day care, purchasing food and produce, veterinary care, and maintenance of the enclosures and aviaries.

We receive wonderful support from Bi-Lo Tahmoor, whose green waste we receive on a daily basis. This ongoing supply of fruit and vegetables is an excellent supplement to the diet of our captive native animals, and we greatly appreciate this support from Bi-Lo. However, additional produce supplies have to be purchased every month to ensure our animals are being provided with everything they need for a complete nutritionally-balanced diet to maintain their overall wellbeing in a captive environment.

Because we try to keep sponsorships affordable, more than one sponsor is generally needed for each animal and bird. Sponsorship payments are classed as donations and are therefore tax deductible.

A Sponsorship Application Form is now available on our website – [www.wirrimbirra.com.au](http://www.wirrimbirra.com.au)