



## *Bushcare group gets new funding*

By Romaine Rutnam

### **Come celebrate with us!**

The Avoca Beach Community Association invites residents to an Open Day and Sausage Sizzle from 11am on Sunday 12 September at Bulbararing Reserve. This is an opportunity to celebrate the Association's recent winning of two grants to support the longstanding work of our Bushcare Group in that reserve.

One grant of \$5250 came from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust through Envirofund. It has allowed us to hire Gecko Environmental Management to eradicate noxious and environmental weeds from the particularly sensitive area of the riparian (creek bed) zone.

The second grant of \$2000 came from Gosford City Council, and will be used to try to improve community awareness and education and create a favourable identity among the residents who live immediately adjoining the 3.5-hectare Council-owned reserve. We also aim to improve knowledge of the Reserve and its values among our local real estate agents.

If you have never visited this special site, Bulbararing Reserve is bounded by Reynolds Road, Baronga Road, Cape Three Points Road, Otayba Place, Cabbage Tree Avenue, Rengbari Place, Ridgway Road and Gill Avenue.

The Open Day will include brief talks by Council's Sustainability Education Officer

and one of their Bushcare Officers, as well as the Central Coast Community Environment Network's Community Support Officer. It will also offer guided tours of the Reserve (limiting numbers to maintain safety and integrity of the site).

We will also use the day to launch a competition for neighbours and for Avoca Beach Public School students to design a green bin sticker for the "Good Neighbours of Bulbararing Reserve".

If you wish to attend the Open Day and BBQ lunch, please RSVP (for catering purposes and with any requests for vegetarian options) to Carol Gumley, Bushcare Convenor, on 4381 0175, by 12 noon Friday 10 September. Hope to see you there!



*Tree planting ceremony 26/7/04 to celebrate the new grants*



# president's message

**IAN ESPLIN**

At the Association's Annual General Meeting the current Committee members were re-elected and so I will be writing this column for another year. The year has got off to a good start with the completion of the CBD Upgrade and the new funds for the Bulbararing Bush Regeneration Project.

At long last the final stage of the CBD Upgrade is complete. The tables, chairs and umbrellas are out and we are seeing the alfresco vision for the village centre coming to fruition for springtime. The Southern side of the village enjoys a sheltered position with plenty of sunshine and over time as the Tuckeroos grow to maturity the full avenue effect will be realised.

The community seems to have adapted to the changed traffic and parking arrangements without missing a beat and it's now hard to remember how things were. At this point it is worth giving some recognition to some members of the Association whose perseverance over the years has played a part in achieving this result. In particular I'd like to mention Ron Leckie, Bill Robinson and Gordon McAuslan from the ABCA and the design engineer Stephen Green and Cr. Robert Bell from Gosford Council.

It's also now hard to imagine that the project was opposed vigorously by elements in the community at various times which had the effect of delaying the completion. We now have an ambitious new project for Avoca in the form of the cycleway/pathway (see adjoining article) and I'm hopeful that the community can be more unified in support. I encourage you to think about the proposal from a wide point of view and offer any positive criticism that you may have.

The regeneration of Bulbararing reserve is another project that has a long history. The current grants from the Federal government are a real shot in the arm for this long range project. This area of Avoca is unique in possessing trees which date from pre-European settlement. Much work has been already done and both native fauna and flora are slowly re-establishing themselves.

The new money is to be spent on remediation work concentrating on the gully area around the creek following the bushcare principle of working from the centre outwards. There remains a vast area of lantana fringing the regeneration area which is currently left as a buffer zone to protect the regenerated areas. Ultimately these buffer zones will be regenerated

themselves. It is a slow process to reverse the damage of the years and it was good to see a number of new faces at the recent ceremony (see front page) who will hopefully help swell the ranks of willing workers.

Finally we are very fortunate in this issue to be able to feature an article written by noted ornithologist Alan Morris about the abundant wildlife recently seen on Avoca Lake. The article includes photographs by the nature photographer Robert Quinlan. It's sobering to realise that this abundance is occurring as a natural response to the current drought conditions afflicting the inland areas of the country.

This thought emphasises what a precious resource this lake is and how important it is in a context beyond just the local one. Being in the fortunate position of living next door to these beautiful but also vitally important habitats is a responsibility as well as a privilege.

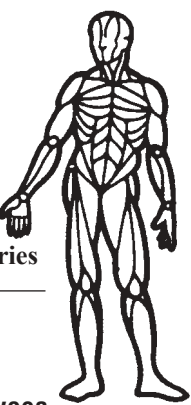
I hope you enjoy reading this issue and as always we welcome any contributions you may be able to offer.



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# cycleway update

**IAN ESPLIN**

In August representatives of the ABCA and the Chamber of Commerce attended a meeting chaired by Councillor Chris Holstein to discuss the new cycleway and footpath project. The response from Council was very positive.

Firstly we learnt that a cycleway along Avoca Dr. from The Scenic Rd. roundabout to the village area is currently part of the overall network planned. In addition, cycleways and footpaths in general are being increasingly heavily promoted due to the benefits for environmental sustainability as well as for the health benefits to the community of increased walking, jogging and cycling.

Up to now the highest priority for the Council has been the connection between Woy Woy and Gosford along Brisbane Water. This is intended to be used for commuter usage as well as recreation. As this nears completion and when future funding becomes available then projects such as ours will become viable.

All agreed at the meeting that it is worth starting the planning and design process now so that the concept is well developed in terms of technical details and costs and also understood by the local community. As well as the financial obstacles, there will be significant environmental considerations due to the proximity of the route to the sensitive ecosystem in the lake.

There are also some alternative options regarding the final route and it would be helpful if the pros and cons of the options were considered by the community so that hopefully some consensus could be reached. Cr. Holstein emphasised that without this, obtaining funding is made much more difficult. It is likely that any proposal will be broken into a number of stages and so agreement on the priority of the various stages is also needed.

The overview of the plan so far is:

- The cycleway will be "off-road" that is it will be separate from the road surface rather than a simple widening.
- It will be a "shared pathway" of 2.0 to 2.5m in width suitable for use by pedestrians, joggers and cyclists.
- It will be on the Northern side of Avoca Drive from Townsend Ave to Heazlett Park and will include a cantilevered extension to the bridge over the lake.
- It will connect to the existing footpaths around the Round Drive and Cape Three Points Rd. with pedestrian refuge crossings.
- Along the lake edge several viewing platforms would be included to allowing people to see the multitude of birds that inhabit the rear of the lake and the natural flora environment.

From Heazlett Park an extension of the cycleway/footpath would ideally connect to the beachfront area at South Avoca providing the unification which the public part of Avoca lacks being essentially divided into the village and South Avoca zones. How this is achieved is open to debate. One suggestion is to connect to the beachfront from Heazlett Park via Ficus Ave and then to South Avoca either along Avoca Drive or more scenically along the beachfront area.

We will provide updates in this newsletter as and when they come to hand. In the meantime we can have a dialogue about any issues that people feel are relevant and hopefully move forward toward realising this new vision for Avoca.



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# avoca lagoon

## important for waterbirds

There is no doubt that the Gosford Council coastal lagoons provide an important habitat for waterbirds. The varying water levels of the Lagoons, their degree of salinity at any one time which in turn may affect the presence of sea grasses and the extensiveness of the sea grasses, together with the presence or absence of natural vegetation & reedbeds fringing the Lagoons, all play a role in determining what birds use the Lagoons. On one occasion in recent times, Wamberal Lagoon was very low and had extensive mud flats, which the local residents were not too pleased about, but the migratory waders, particularly Pacific Golden Plovers, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Red Knots, all birds list on International Treaties that Australia has with China and Japan, found the conditions ideal. In 2001, it was Cochrane Lagoon's turn, in that the salinity and sea-grass levels were just right for a flock of 400 Hardhead Duck to spend the winter feeding there at the onset of the drought in western NSW.

This winter it was the turn of Avoca Lagoon to provide an excellent drought refuge for waterbirds particularly for Black Swans, Grey Teal, Chestnut Teal and Eurasian Coot. It is the usual pattern that the number of Black Swans on the Central Coast is at its lowest in winter, and highest in late summer. This is because the Tuggerah Lakes, Brisbane Water and the coastal lagoons provide a refuge and safe moulting area for the post breeding birds that move to the coast as the inland lakes dry out during the hot summer. Swans are flightless for about 2-3 weeks per year as they undergo their annual moult and need large secure areas in which to do this and some of the big quiet bays of the Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water provide such conditions. Up to 4000 Black Swans use these lakes

each summer. However following autumn rains and the filling of the inland lakes and the smaller ponds and waterways, the Swans depart to breed and normally don't return until the wetlands are drying out in early summer. Swans may not breed until they are four years of age so that usually some of the immature birds stay behind and continue to feed in the coastal lakes and lagoons. The continuing drought however is the reason that there are more Black Swans here than usual at this time of the year.

During July 2004 there were 560 Black Swans on Avoca Lagoon which is a very high count and indicates that the seagrass beds are obviously at a level that the Swans can easily reach. Swans feed by putting their long necks down into the water, up to depth of a metre and bite off the growing sea-grass. If the water is too deep then the sea-grass could be out of reach of the Swans. In addition conditions are so good that a number of pairs of Swans have already nested and hatched their cygnets while other birds are still sitting on eggs. Coastal Lagoons can be important nurseries for breeding Swans and this year Avoca is providing the right conditions.

Avoca Lagoon is also important for ducks particularly Black Ducks, Grey Teal & Chestnut Teal which are present in their hundreds and in addition there are a number of pairs of the uncommon Australasian Shoveler. These ducks are all "dabbling" ducks in that they obtain their food, mainly seeds of water plants, the green sea-grasses & algae and some crustacean by dabbling on the surface or up-ending and dabbling in the soft mud. With over a 1000 ducks and swans present on Avoca Lagoon, you can see that it is acting as an excellent drought refuge.

Other waterbirds are present too like flocks of Little Black & Little Pied Cormorants that feed on small fish; Eurasian Coots that also dive to get the sea-grasses, Great Egrets & White-faced Herons that feed on fish, frogs and tadpoles; Dusky Moorhens & Purple Swampheens that feed on emergent grasses and vegetation around the wetland edges; Royal Spoonbills filter the water for small insects and crustacea and the Australian Darter, catches small fish by spearing them. Masked Lapwings and Black-winged Stilts patrol the shallows looking for insects and crustacea too, while overhead Whistling Kites & White-bellied Sea-eagles look for fish or prey upon injured birds and carrion.

### Acknowledgements:

Alan Morris is the retired (2000) Manager, for the Central Coast Region, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, lives at Bateau Bay, and he is now a part time Environmental Consultant.. He is the organiser of Central Coast Group, of Birding NSW. This organisation meets monthly, the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm at the Tuggerah Progress Hall, Anzac St Tuggerah. the Club has monthly outings and 3-4 camps per annum. Members take part in a variety of surveys, particularly of Threatened Bird Species such as Regent Honeyeaters and Swift Parrots, and assist with the management of the Little Tern colony at Karagi Point sandspit at The Entrance, where the Little Terns nest annually.

Robert Quinan is a Maths teacher at a Central Coast High School. His interests are golf, fishing and bird watching and photography and is the editor of the central Coast Group, Birding NSW's newsletter. He lives locally.

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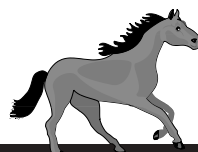
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Here is a full list of birds seen at Avoca Lagoon during June & July both on the water and in the fringing vegetation. Can you identify all of them? Can you add to the list? If so, let me know (Alan Morris, Tel 43342776).

Black Swan	Australian Wood Duck	Mallard	Pacific Black Duck
Australasian Shoveler	Grey Teal	Chestnut Teal	Hardhead
Little Pied Cormorant	Little Black Cormorant	Australian Darter	Australian Pelican
White-faced Heron	Great Egret	White Ibis	Royal Spoonbill
Whistling Kite	White-bellied Sea-eagle	Purple Swamphen	Dusky Moorhen
Eurasian Coot	Black-winged Stilt	Masked Lapwing	Silver Gull
Caspian Tern	Crested Tern	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Brown Cuckoo-Dove
Rainbow Lorikeet	Laughing Kookaburra	Superb Fairy-wren	Spotted Pardalote
Yellow Thornbill	Noisy Miner	Lewin's Honeyeater	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
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# avoca spotlight - reg davis

## AVOCA RESIDENT WINS TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIP

Reg Davis is one of 83 people nationally to be awarded a Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship in 2004. Reg is a clinical psychologist who has lived in Avoca Beach for 21 years and runs a private practice here. He has also worked for Central Coast Health for 23 years, currently as their School-Link Coordinator in Children and Young People's Mental Health.

Reg plans to leave this month to travel for eight weeks in the USA and the UK, to study the use of computer software applications in promoting mental health in schools. "There are significant developments in those countries, where multimedia, education and health are working together to address issues such as bullying, depression and mental health stigma in schools", Reg says.

His interest in this area came out of the success of the release of "OutaSite: intergalactic guide to high school", the educational CD

ROM he produced for Central Coast Health in 2002.

Reg believes computer based multimedia provide rich opportunities for making students interested in thinking about mental health issues. They allow them to engage in activities that increase their understanding in ways that are both fun and informative. Such resources, he has found, are particularly useful for students who don't like being at school.

Reg sees an increasing difference between the worlds of school and outside. About 50% of today's teachers will reach retirement in the next five years. Too many of these teachers think in ways that young people increasingly don't, Reg believes. "Kids today tend to learn digitally: in a randomised, problem solving, multi-tasking and non-sequential way, rather than linearly through text." He is keen to use his new skills to improve all students' chances to be their best, mentally as well as physically.



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ALL WELCOME



# letters to the editor

## AVOCA BEACH REVIEW - BRIAN THOMAS

Brian Thomas is the sort of chap all communities need. Luckily, Avoca Beach has him as our Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, where he works closely with the local police in keeping a watchful eye. There are some basic steps he suggests you take when going away. Notify the police. Make sure everything is securely locked. Cancel newspaper and other deliveries. Give a trusted neighbour a key and ask them to keep an eye on your house/apartment.

Brian moved to the area in 1989 because of the lifestyle, and was attracted to the Community Association

because he felt this was a group who cared for the progress and environment of Avoca and who made a difference. Brian and his wife Sue were members of Drug Arm, a voluntary organisation set up to help people, particularly youth, affected by drugs. Brian became the Assistant Co-ordinator for the Central Coast and also established the Newcastle branch.

Brian is well equipped to help young people in need, being a retired teacher and Assistant Regional Director of Education in Victoria, before settling here. He was also asked to join the Woy

Woy Youth Cottage, which is a youth support group, offering accommodation and assistance to troubled young people.

With the end of the year and the party season approaching fast, Brian has some advice for parents and young folk alike. If you have a party, he suggests you advise the local police and ask them to discreetly patrol past the venue. Always screen the people entering the premises. Remember that early warning is the best policy. With his years of work with youth, Brian has a wealth of experience.

*Avoca Beach Community Association Inc.*  
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**ABCA** is a community group for residents and non-resident property owners which tries to protect the relatively relaxed lifestyle that Avoca's village character and natural beauty offers. We support and initiate plans which promote this lifestyle and work to oppose proposals that threaten it.

ABCA meets at 7.30pm on the first Monday of each month in the CWA Hall (next to the Bowtells Garage).

The Association's newsletter The Avoca Beach Review is published every three months and hand delivered to all households.

It is financed by advertisements from local businesses who can show their support for the community and promote themselves to the community through the advertising. Rates \$40 for 6cm x 6cm.

Contributions and letters are welcome. Please send to:  
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