



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation

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northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au

Newsletter No 9 September 2011

## Thank you Judy

At our AGM on 13 August 2011, Dr Judy Lambert stood down as President after nine years in the chair. She was one of the founding members of North Head Sanctuary Foundation and has been a driving force behind the group. We thank her for all her hard work on our behalf. She is staying on the Committee and will help the new President, Matthew Taylor.



## International Conference for Environment Centres & Community Activists

8 to 11 September 2011 at North Head

Please have a look at the program, there are things to do on the weekend, too many to list, see [www.mec.org.au](http://www.mec.org.au) and remember it's not too late to book.

## Enjoy Spring- Wildflower walks with Geoff

Geoff Lambert will again be leading walks to enjoy the beauty of North Head. Each walk will be 2 to 3 hours and easy walking.

Please wear enclosed shoes, wear a hat and bring water, insect repellent and sunscreen.

The walks will depart from the Trust Visitor Centre, Gatehouse Building at North Head.

|          |              |        |
|----------|--------------|--------|
| Saturday | 10 September | 1.30pm |
| Sunday   | 11 September | 2pm    |
| Saturday | 17 September | 2pm    |
| Monday   | 3 October    | 10am   |
| Sunday   | 9 October    | 10am   |

Free but bookings essential: Jenny Wilson at [northhead@fastmail.fm](mailto:northhead@fastmail.fm) or 0414 735 350

## The Stony Range Botanic Garden Spring Fair

Is on Sunday 4 September from 9am to 4pm. Native plants will be for sale, guided walks 10am & 2pm, activities for children & sausage sizzle from 11am. More details 9451 1883

## Education Centre – Bandicoot Heaven



Come and see what our new centre looks like now. We are open every weekend, from 10am to 4pm.

A BIG THANK YOU to all who helped get this room ready, especially Judy and Geoff Lambert and Jennie Minifie who painted the floor and Judith Bennett, Ken Higgs and Peter Bennett who did the main construction work. Others helpers include Peter Nash, Matthew Taylor, Kathy Ridge, Toni Stevenson and Jenny Wilson.

Julie Nettleton will show her botanical prints and cards on 10 & 11 September between 11am and 2pm, so call in for a chat.

## *Lasioptalum rufum*



or Rusty Petals is an erect shrub to one and half metres tall. Leaves are narrow and long and the flowers are reddish outside and lighter inside. In flower now, have a closer look during your walk. Note - photo taken in full sunlight which makes the flowers look lighter.

## Native Plant Nursery

Planting out continues and our areas to plant out keep increasing but its rewarding work watching the plants you planted out grow.

## Fire on North Head, Part II

by Geoff Lambert

It is thought that Aboriginal people used fire on an approximate 15-20 year cycle on North Head although it has also been said that the frequency there was somewhat greater than this because of the area's significance.

That all came to a halt with the advent of Europeans- thereafter nearly all fires were wild fires. The first we have a definite mention of was on 24 Nov 1855 and in the succeeding years to 2003, there have been reports of at least 40 wildfires, burning areas from 0.01 hectares (oh yes!) to 320 acres (nearly all of North Head).

Typical reports read as follows:

SMH 6 Nov 1951: Troops of the 1st Field Regiment use knapsack fire extinguishers to fight fires which broke out in 40 acres of scrub in the quarantine station, North Head, yesterday.

SMH 9th Nov 1951: About 150 soldiers desperately fought a bushfire which threatened buildings and equipment at the School of Artillery at North Head yesterday afternoon. At one stage, the fire threatened the married quarters, and was up to within feet of one building when soldiers got it under control. By midnight all the fires were under control.

In the summer of 2003-04, NPWS supervised the first new ecological burns since 1788. The most recent fire on North Head was in March 2009- a small fire lit by arsonists near the Hole-in-the-Wall.

Fires have burned over the whole of North Head at various times, including through the Collins Flat rainforest. However, the bush usually quickly recovers- aerial photos taken in 1929, 1930 and 1936 show that North Head was devastated by a fire in 1930 but, by 1936, all signs of this fire seemed to have vanished.

The attached photo shows the area just up the hill from our building after a fire in 1950. It is hard to realise that the bush in this area ever looked like this!



Page 82 from History Of The School Of Artillery\_Page\_1\_Image

## Q Station Community Days

Sat 10 & Sun 11 Sept 10am to 3pm

Offerings on the days will include cooking demonstrations, food stalls, afternoon tea, history tours & lectures, exhibitions and kids' activities.

Q Station Lecture Series – talk on Sun, 11 Sept at 11am will be 'Wine and health': Philip Norrie  
**Free but bookings essential**, phone 9466 1500

## Farewell Nelika

By Judy Lambert



It is almost two years since NHSF members welcomed the Australian Wildlife Conservancy's Dr Nelika Hughes to North Head. Since then we've had the pleasure of sharing several projects with Nelika and have benefitted from her great skills and commitment as AWC's Wildlife Ecologist and from her knowledge of bandicoots and other creatures on North Head.

But, sadly for us (and presumably also for AWC) Nelika has "had a better offer".

At a small function organised by the Sanctuary Foundation's Nursery Group on Friday morning 19 August, we said farewell to Nelika.

By the time you are reading this newsletter Nelika will be living in Antwerp, Belgium, where she has a post-doctoral research position studying the bubonic plague-carrying gerbils of Kazakhstan.

Nelika has been a great person to work with. We'll miss her greatly and hope that some time in the future, her strong attachment to North Head might see her back again. In the meantime, we extend to her our thanks and best wishes for a new and exciting part of her career.

## Sanctuary Foundation aims:

'The Sanctuary for biodiversity will honour the natural and cultural significance of North Head. It will be a safe place for flora, fauna and people, a living laboratory promoting the spiritual and biological value of Sydney Harbour.'