



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation

## Custodians of North Head

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### Happy New Year

If you would like to volunteer to help either the Education or Nursery group, now is the time.

### Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

It's been 10 years since we first opened at North Head. We started out in the building 21 which is behind our current building.

We're seeking additional volunteers to help staff our community education room in Building 20 on North Fort Road at North Head. Help others learn about the wonders of North Head and the rich mix of interests to be found there. Staffed by volunteers on a roster basis, our community education room opens from 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays. We'll help you get to know the information available and you'll meet plenty of interesting visitors – many of them keen to share this great environment. If you are interested, or want more information, please contact Judy Lambert at [tswombat@optusnet.com.au](mailto:tswombat@optusnet.com.au).

### Native Plant Nursery

Help us maintain and plant out plants grown in our Native Plant Nursery. The best way to see what we do is to join us on a Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and 12 noon. Morning tea is usually at 10.30am. For more details email [northhead@fastmail.com.au](mailto:northhead@fastmail.com.au) Or just turn up and ask for Jenny.

### Ocean Care Day



Katie and Kath at our Ocean Care Day stall.

Thank you to Kath Pearce for organising and manning our Ocean Care Day stall. Thank you to Katie Meyer and Pam Francis for staffing the stall.

### General Meeting

Our next General meeting is on Saturday 23 February 2019 at 2pm in Bandicoot Heaven (Building 20). Our guest speaker is Dr. Viyanna Leo, Wildlife Ecologist at North Head Sanctuary for Australian Wildlife Conservancy. Her talk is **Ecosystem restoration in a fragmented urban environment**. Everyone welcome.

### A Word about Ticks

Peter Macinnis

Ticks are bloodsuckers, and I think we all know to be careful, but do we know enough? Catherine Enright decided we should know more and set up a meeting for volunteers with Professor Sheryl van Nunen. Here are the highlights.

There are some 70 species of tick in Australia: 16 of them may attack humans, and 95% of all the bites are from the Australian Paralysis Tick, *Ixodes holocyclus*, which is found east of the Great Dividing Range, wherever it is moist enough.

The female lays several thousand eggs which come out as larvae, less than a millimetre across. While ticks are arachnids with eight legs, the larvae have just six, moving up to eight at the next stage, as nymphs. Between 1912 and 1989, there were twenty fatalities, mainly children, but the last death was in 1945. The tick most commonly lodges behind the ear and causes unsteadiness, a loss of coordination, lethargy and paralysis: the pupils dilate, and the victim gets a headache. These are the alarm signs to watch for, and the tick needs to go, *but it has to go in the right way*, and the one pictured here was *not* treated properly.



When I was young, the standard habit was to use tweezers to pull a tick out. If you look closely at the top of the picture, you can see the stylet, the part that the tick drills in with, and you can even see the barbs there. I collected this specimen in 2009 on Barrenjoey. As was then the norm, I treated it with methylated spirits,

and when it failed to let go, I got my wife to pull it out with tweezers. It hurt! She put it in a dish, and so I discovered the barbs when I put it under the microscope. Most mammals (except humans) have a sugar molecule in their blood. It is called alpha galactose (often shortened to alpha gal or alpha-gal), and this sugar triggers an allergic reaction later, when sensitised people eat meat that contains alpha galactose. That includes beef, pork, lamb, kangaroo, goat and venison. If you are a meat eater (and I am), that leaves you at risk of missing out on your favourite foods.

Because of those barbs, the tick's body is always squeezed as you pull it, and some of the fluid it has taken out can be injected back into the victim. The blood the tick got from its last meal from most non-human mammals contains alpha gal, so squeezing the tick with tweezers is a Bad Idea, because when this foreign blood is injected into our blood, it sets us up for an allergic reaction to mammalian meats.

That is why the advice now is summed up in a slogan: **Freeze, don't squeeze.** If you get a tick, your pharmacist will be able to sell you a freezer spray like the ones used to freeze off warts, or even, in 2018, specially prepared tick freezer systems. Freeze the tick, killing it, and leave it there to drop off. This is an important message to get out there.

Next month, I will write something about ways of reducing the risk of tick bites.

### ***Cryptostylis erecta***



Or Bonnet Orchid, a terrestrial orchid is out now. Flowering period December to February although they had finished by the start of January. Photo taken 08 December 2018 by Jenny Wilson

### **Ecological Society of Australia's (ESA) Annual Conference**

Geoff Lambert

In late November Judy and Geoff Lambert travelled to the Ecological Society of Australia's Annual Conference in Brisbane, to present the results of some of NHSF's research work. The presentation was entitled "Comparing ground and UAV surveys after fire in an urban bushland" and was related to our attempts to "restore" degraded Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS), through the use of fire. The full paper can be downloaded from the NHSF web site

(<https://www.northheadsanctuaryfoundation.org.au/action/Research.htm#Research>). A screen shot from the presentation is shown below. The answer to the question posed in the screen shot is maybe - it's complex.

The underlying question of this longitudinal project:  
Can we test whether THIS ...

... can turn THIS ...

... back to THIS?

HAZARD REDUCTION BURN 2012  
The fire crew are standing opposite Quadrat Q23, to be examined in later slides.

### **Third Quarantine Cemetery**

Jenny Wilson

Greetings – I noticed an article earlier in the year of your search for unidentified graves and photographs of the



WW1 soldiers who died at the North Head Quarantine Station and I hope some progress has been made. If another article appears you may like to include a photograph of Pte Hector Fraser HICKS who has an identifiable gravesite next to Nurse Annie Egan. Hector was my grandfather's best friend and when he returned from the war himself Hector's mother

gave him the photo as a memento still in our family records. The attachment below my grandfather ordered himself that clearly states his name and photograph. Best Regards Kathryn White.