



# BUSHLAND NEWS

*KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY NEWSLETTER  
Autumn 2018*

The beginning of 2018 has been extremely dry with some exceptionally hot days. The rain that has fallen over the last few weeks has been well received by the bushland, but a lot more is needed. The power of nature has been demonstrated with high winds snapping the trunk of a large, and seemingly healthy tree deep within the Sanctuary – see the pictures inside. One positive out of the dry summer has been the lack of growth of weeds in Katandra. Because of the hard work of volunteers over many years, weeds within Katandra are not a major problem. Where they do spring up is mainly along the creek lines, but with so little water there are not many.

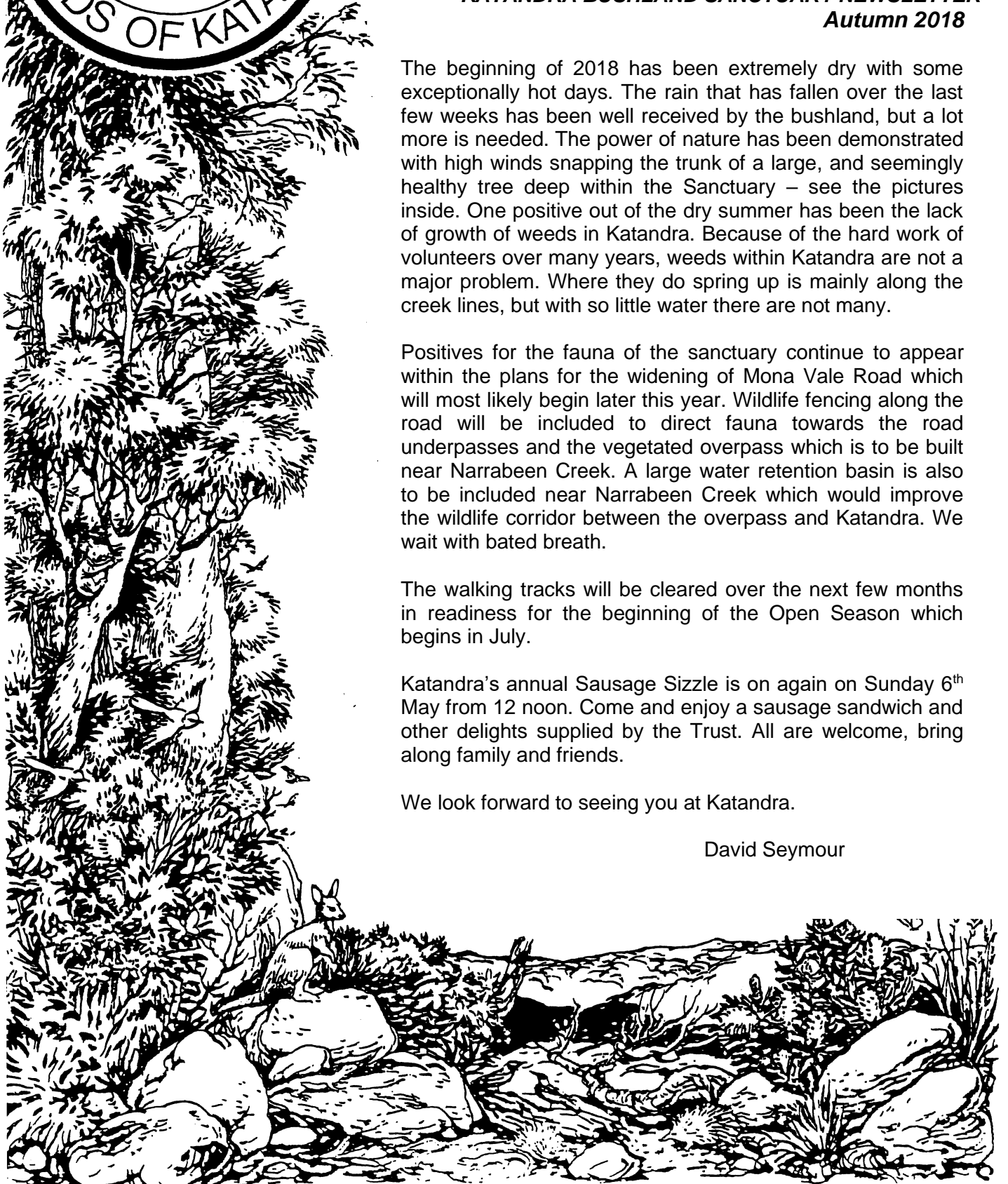
Positives for the fauna of the sanctuary continue to appear within the plans for the widening of Mona Vale Road which will most likely begin later this year. Wildlife fencing along the road will be included to direct fauna towards the road underpasses and the vegetated overpass which is to be built near Narrabeen Creek. A large water retention basin is also to be included near Narrabeen Creek which would improve the wildlife corridor between the overpass and Katandra. We wait with bated breath.

The walking tracks will be cleared over the next few months in readiness for the beginning of the Open Season which begins in July.

Katandra's annual Sausage Sizzle is on again on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May from 12 noon. Come and enjoy a sausage sandwich and other delights supplied by the Trust. All are welcome, bring along family and friends.

We look forward to seeing you at Katandra.

David Seymour



## The power of nature



*A large tree in Katandra, still standing but with its trunk snapped in half and the remnants on the ground below.*



## Sarsparilla

Sarsparilla is a name associated with a number of different plants, some of which are not closely related to each other.

The traditional sarsparilla drink was made from the root of Jamaican Sarsparilla (*Smilax ornata*). It has long been used by many indigenous people for its claimed medicinal properties including reducing joint pains, skin irritations and to kill bacteria. The sarsparilla softdrink is actually not made using the sarsparilla plant, it was primarily flavoured using plants from the sassafras genus of plants. Now days sarsaparilla soft drinks and cordials don't contain any sarsparilla or sassafras, instead they contain other natural and artificial flavourings to mimic the taste.

Katandra is home to a number of plants that use the sarsaparilla name – Austral Sarsparilla (*Smilax australis*), Sweet Sarsparilla (*Smilax*

*glyciphylla*) and the unrelated False Sarsparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*)

**Austral Sarsparilla** (*Smilax australis*), also called Barbed Wire Vine, is a slender vine that grows in wet sclerophyll forest and rainforest along the northern and eastern coasts of Australia. The stem and branches have short sharp spines, with the stem not exceeding 2 cm in diameter. The dark green leaves are tough, leathery and are up to 10 cm long. At the base of the leaves is a pair of coiled tendrils which aid in climbing and clinging as the vine scrambles over trees and shrubs. New leaves are soft and pink when they first appear.

The plants are dioecious (have male and female flowers on different plants) and so are not self-fertile. Before fruit can set both male and female plants must be present. The ripe fruit is round and black, 5 to 8 mm in diameter.

The flowers are small, greenish white to cream, hanging downward in groups on fine stalks. *Smilax australis* is food for the larval stage of a number of native butterflies.

**Sweet Sarsparilla** (*Smilax glyciphylla*) is very similar to *s. australis* but is less robust, has narrower, smaller leaves and no prickles. The sweet tasting berries were used medicinally in the earliest days of the colony for treating scurvy, coughs and chest complaints. In correspondence to England in November 1788, Dennis Conisden, a First Fleet surgeon well known for his use of native plants for medicinal purposes, wrote: *"I have sent you some of the sweet tea of this country which I recommended and is generally used by the marines and convicts as such it is a fair antiscorbutic as well as a substitute for tea which is more costly."* ("antiscorbutic" means "effective against scurvy")



*The fruit and leaves of Smilax glyciphylla*

**False Sarsparilla** (*Hardenbergia violacea*) occurs right along the south-eastern coast of Australia and in Tasmania. It is a moderately vigorous climbing plant that rarely covers other plants so extensively as to cause damage. Its glossy dark green leaves are up to 10 cm in length. The flowers are usually purple, however pink, white and other colours can occur. As the *Hardenbergia* genus belongs to the pea family Fabaceae it's flowers are the typical "pea" shape



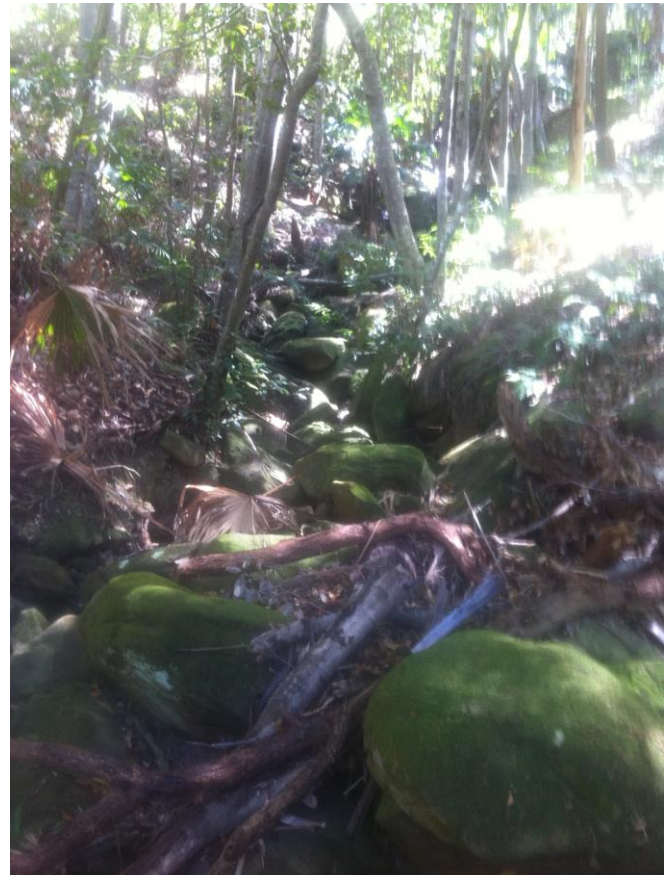
*Hardenbergia violacea* in flower in Katandra



The similarity of the flower shape of *Hardenbergia violacea* to that of another of the pea family of plants, *Platylobium formosum* is quite obvious in these pictures.

## Crown of Newport

Katandra is situated along the Mona Vale escarpment, a steep ridge primarily made of Hawkesbury sandstone. There are many other similar ridges and areas along the Northern Beaches that have a similar "feel" to them when one walks through, however most are not as well preserved as Katandra. One small pocket of such bushland is the Crown of Newport Reserve, a steep gully that runs down from Bilgola Plateau to Newport below. It is well worth a visit but does require a level of fitness to ascend the steps. The boulder lined creek runs under a canopy of remnant rainforest and over some small but quite spectacular waterfalls. The Crown of Newport reserve track is accessed from the end of Hillslope Road in Newport or from above down the track that begins between two houses at the end of Kanimbla Crescent on Bilgola Plateau.



*Crown of Newport Reserve Newport*

Katandra website: [www.katandra.org](http://www.katandra.org)

### **KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY**

Foley's Hill, Lane Cove Rd, Ingleside NSW  
Department of Lands Reserve No 86487  
Founder: the late Harold Alfred Seymour  
Managed by Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust.  
Phone: 0431857407

OPEN: Every Sunday: July, August, September,  
October

HOURS: 10 am — 4 pm

ADMISSION: \$3 donation

### **KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY TRUST PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660**

President: David Seymour  
Vice-President: David James  
Secretary: (acting) David Seymour  
Treasurer: Peter Hammond  
Minutes Secretary: David Malin  
Bushland News Editor: Marita Macrae

(Cover Design by the late Walter Cunningham)

**Enquiries: phone 0431857407 or by email  
[information@katandra.org](mailto:information@katandra.org)**

### **Volunteers are needed**

If you can assist on maintenance days or with  
welcoming visitors to Katandra on open days,  
please phone 0431857407

### **DIARY DATES 2018**

#### **SAUSAGE SIZZLE**

**Sunday 6th May, 12 noon**

Enjoy a sausage sandwich and  
drinks provided by the Trust.

#### **FOUNDER'S DAY**

**Sunday 19th August, 12 noon**

Bring your lunch to cook on the wood burning  
BBQs. The trust will provide 'dessert', drinks, tea  
and coffee.

#### **CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**Sunday 2nd December, 4.30 pm**

Cold meats, drinks and salads are provided, but  
please feel free to bring along some sweets or  
savouries to share before or after. Also enter the  
raffle to win one of Ruth's sort-after Christmas  
cakes.

#### **SANCTUARY MAINTENANCE 2018**

(3rd Sunday March–November)

9 am Sunday 18 March

9 am Sunday 15 April

9 am Sunday 20 May

9 am Sunday 17 June

9 am Sunday 15 July

9 am Sunday 16 September

9 am Sunday 21 October

9 am Sunday 18 November

#### **PUBLIC OPEN DAYS 2018**

Each Sunday of July–October

10 am – 4 pm

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Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust  
PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660