



# BUSHLAND NEWS

**KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY NEWSLETTER**  
**Spring 2018**

It has been a very dry winter and spring in 2018. This made for ideal conditions for the Rural Fire Service to carry out an environmental / hazard reduction burn in a small part of the Sanctuary. While the burn will no doubt help reduce any fire risk to neighbouring properties due to the build-up of fuel material within the Sanctuary since the last fire in 1994, another main reason for the burn is to maintain the bushland in a healthy condition (see article inside for further information).

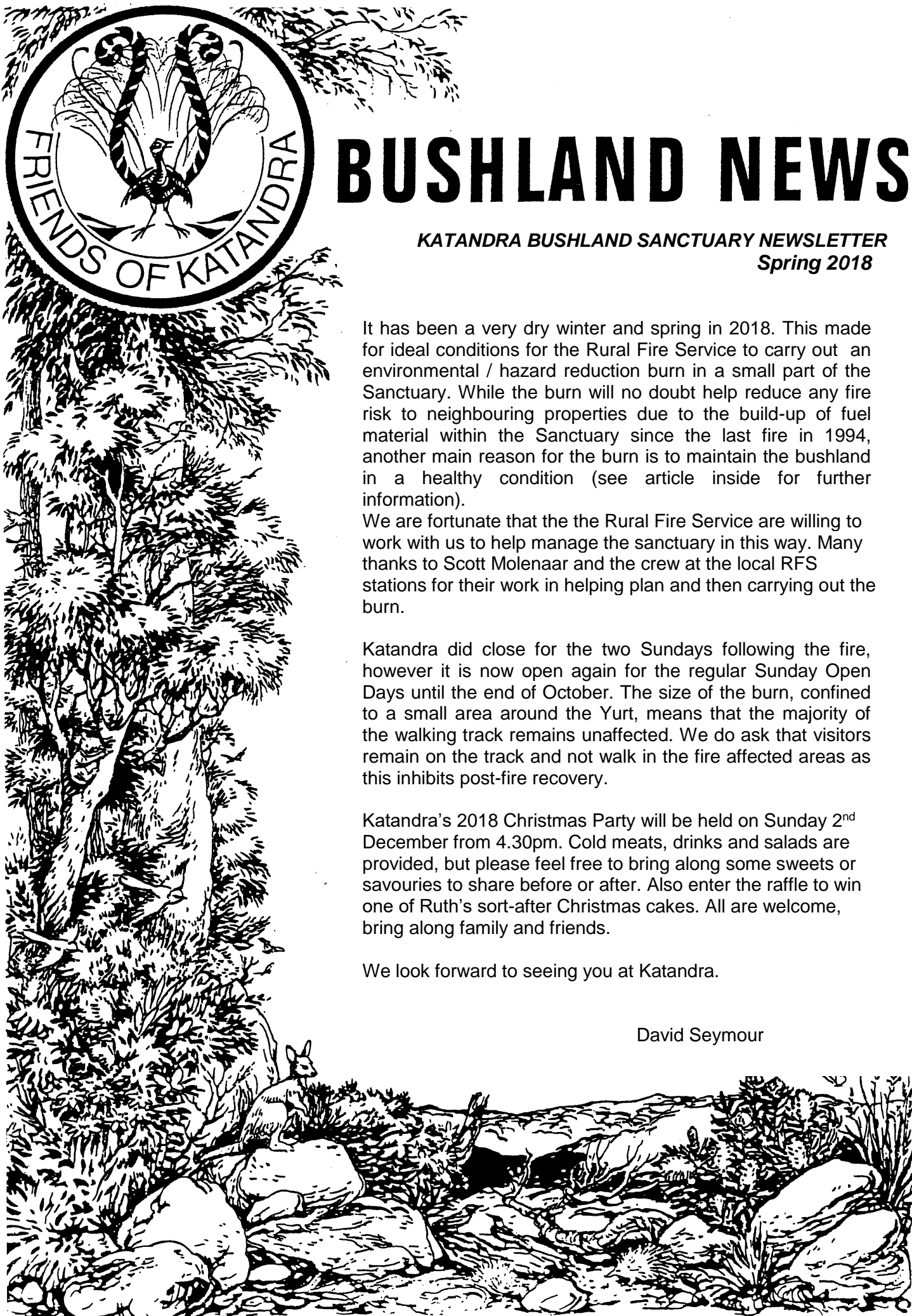
We are fortunate that the Rural Fire Service are willing to work with us to help manage the sanctuary in this way. Many thanks to Scott Molenaar and the crew at the local RFS stations for their work in helping plan and then carrying out the burn.

Katandra did close for the two Sundays following the fire, however it is now open again for the regular Sunday Open Days until the end of October. The size of the burn, confined to a small area around the Yurt, means that the majority of the walking track remains unaffected. We do ask that visitors remain on the track and not walk in the fire affected areas as this inhibits post-fire recovery.

Katandra's 2018 Christmas Party will be held on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December from 4.30pm. 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. All are welcome, bring along family and friends.

We look forward to seeing you at Katandra.

David Seymour



## Environmental Burn in Katandra

A small section of the Sanctuary was recently burned as part of an environmental / hazard reduction plan. This burn was carried out on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July by the Rural Fire Service (RFS) as the very dry weather experienced through July made conditions suitable. Katandra was then closed for two weeks of the Open Season straight after the fire. Initially this burn was scheduled to be carried out in early April, however unplanned fires in other parts of Sydney meant that RFS resources were urgently required elsewhere.

The last fire to burn in the Sanctuary was in 1994 when a severe fire swept through many parts of northern Sydney in the heat of January. This fire burned through most of the Sanctuary as shown in the aerial photograph below.

Other fires that have swept through the Sanctuary, or parts of the Sanctuary, in the last 50 years were in 1977 and 1979.



Research into fire regimes considered necessary to avoid the extinction of floral species suggest that parts of the shrubland / heath areas of the Sanctuary face decline if they are subject to two successive fires in less than 5 years, or with an interval of greater than 15 years. In Wet Sclerophyll forest areas decline is expected if successive fires, of any intensity, occur less than 50 years apart or if no fire occurs for more than 200 years. In littoral rainforest areas no fire is acceptable.

It has now been almost 25 years since the 1994 fire, so some areas of the bushland are well overdue for a fire. In the past “natural” fires have been frequent enough to not require intentional burns to be put in place within the Sanctuary. However, these days, with more surrounding land being cleared for development, more fire breaks being put in place and more backburning operations occurring, natural fires are much less likely to occur. It is quite possible that the fire frequency in Katandra will no longer ever be “natural”.



*An aerial view of Katandra after the January 1994 fire. The green areas show the line of the creeks which did not burn.*

Local bushland areas such as the Kuring-gai Chase and Garigal National Parks are usually affected by medium to large-scale bushfires every 10-20 years. In addition to the 1979 and 1994 fires, other fires have occurred in the summers of 1943/44, 1957/58 and 1968/69. The impact of these fires on bushland in Katandra is not fully recorded.





It is well accepted that long-term fire exclusion will cause declines in the floral species population within the Sanctuary. Over the past few years the bushland in areas of the Sanctuary has become noticeably more open as many of the dense shrubs in the understory die off due to the extended time between fires. If this continues some floral species may potentially be lost from the seed bank affecting any regeneration after a fire.

There is also potential for loss of fauna if the vegetation is modified such that it no longer provides habitat suitable for vulnerable fauna species, particularly to animals that require dense shrub cover. This loss of cover could be a result of too few fires, too frequent fires or fires that are too severe. It is for this reason that the Katandra Trust has had negotiations with RFS to put in some controlled burns within the Sanctuary. These burns however do need to be carefully planned and controlled.

Extreme wildfires can be destructive to the flora and fauna particularly if successive fires occur that totally scorch or consume the tree canopy. Fauna can also suffer from lack of food sources if too large an area is scorched. Some rock orchids growing in the Sanctuary were lost in '94 fire due to its severity. This fire also burnt slowly through small areas of wet sclerophyll forest, rainforest and estuarine vegetation, but was reported to be of very low intensity and did not



kill the trees. Even so, it is important that fire is excluded from these areas in the near future if declines are to be avoided.

The Trust plan is to create a mosaic of fire age through the suitable areas of the Sanctuary by burning only small sections at a time. The burn carried out in July only covered an area of approximately 1 acre (of the total 30 acres). This area near the yurt at the entrance to the Sanctuary is predominantly open woodland type of vegetation. The size of the burn and lighting pattern used was such to allow easier escape by fauna and maintain established food sources nearby. Once regeneration has occurred these other nearby areas might possibly be in need of a similar burn. Photos taken before and after the burn will record the progress of regeneration. The timing of this burn works well with other bushland areas outside but adjacent to the sanctuary which were burned a few years ago and are regenerating well.

Bushland is extremely vulnerable to damage by people walking through the cleared areas after a fire. After the large 1994 fire the Sanctuary was unable to open for the whole of the next season. The small size of this recent fire will allow visitors to keep coming, giving a first-hand view of the regeneration over time. There will be a lot of vigilance and work ahead to keep out exotic weeds which will no doubt also flourish after the fire. Again, the small area of this burn will no doubt help keep these weeds under control.

In addition to the environmental benefits, the controlled fire also reduces the risk of fire damage to infrastructure in the sanctuary, as well as in neighbouring properties, should a catastrophic fire occur due to the unnatural build up of ground fuel loads.



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