



BUSHLAND NEWS

*KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY NEWSLETTER
Winter 2018*

The 2018 Katandra Open Season has begun so the sanctuary is now open every Sunday from 10am to 4pm until the end of October. The open days so far have been cool and sunny and visitor numbers have been good with a mixture regular visitors and other people discovering Katandra for the first time.

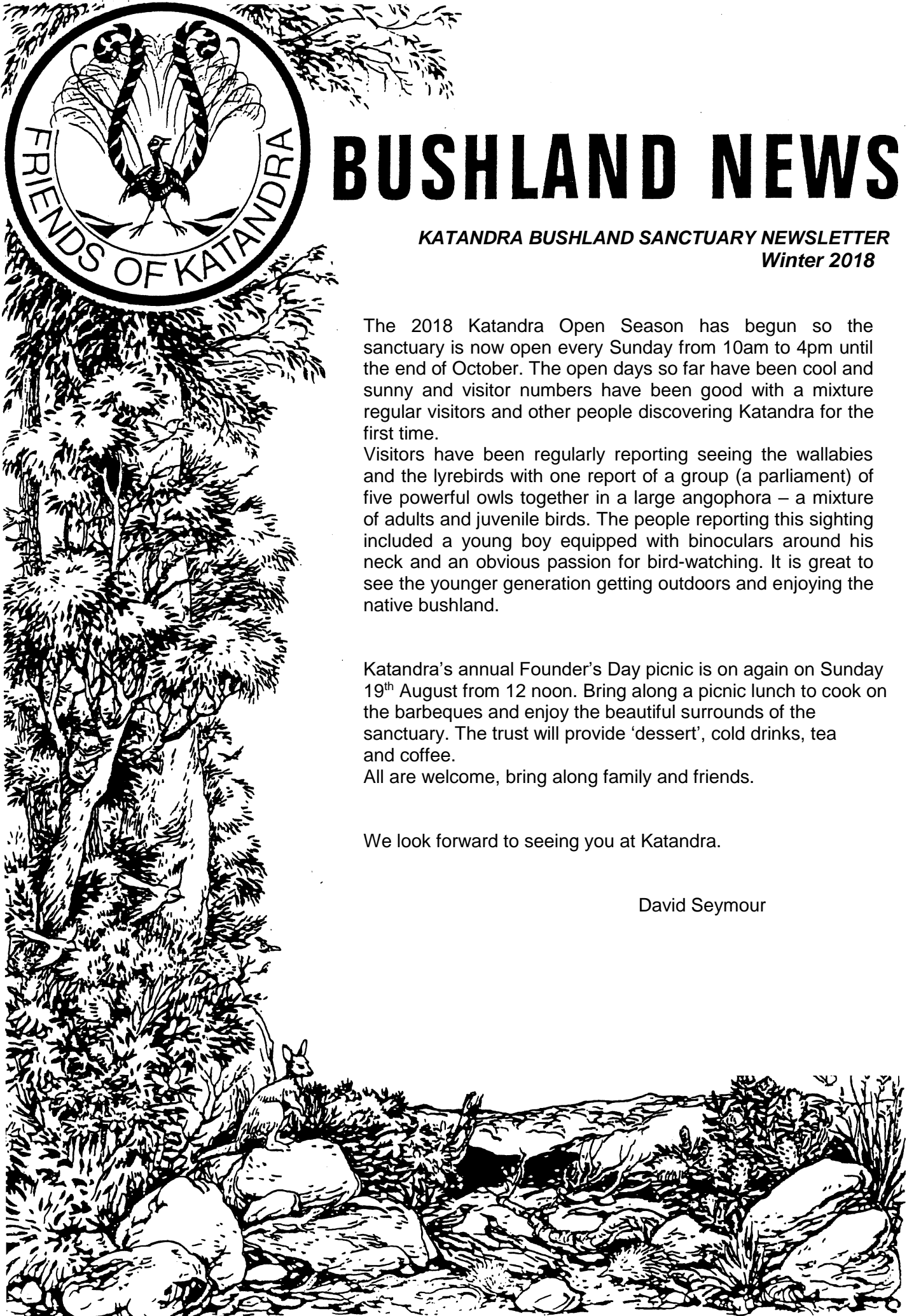
Visitors have been regularly reporting seeing the wallabies and the lyrebirds with one report of a group (a parliament) of five powerful owls together in a large angophora – a mixture of adults and juvenile birds. The people reporting this sighting included a young boy equipped with binoculars around his neck and an obvious passion for bird-watching. It is great to see the younger generation getting outdoors and enjoying the native bushland.

Katandra's annual Founder's Day picnic is on again on Sunday 19th August from 12 noon. Bring along a picnic lunch to cook on the barbeques and enjoy the beautiful surrounds of the sanctuary. The trust will provide 'dessert', cold drinks, tea and coffee.

All are welcome, bring along family and friends.

We look forward to seeing you at Katandra.

David Seymour

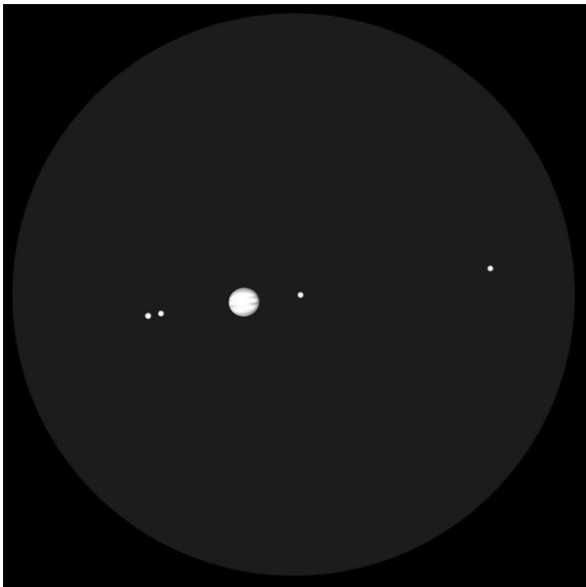


The Sky over Katandra

If you have recently looked up to the sky in the evening you would have been treated to the sight of three extra bright “stars”. If you take a closer look you will notice that they are not twinkling, that is because they are not actually stars, they are planets.

The bright white planet low in the western sky is Venus – often referred to as the “Evening Star” as it is generally the first “star” seen in the evening sky as night falls. It is also known as the “Morning Star” when it appears in the morning sky.

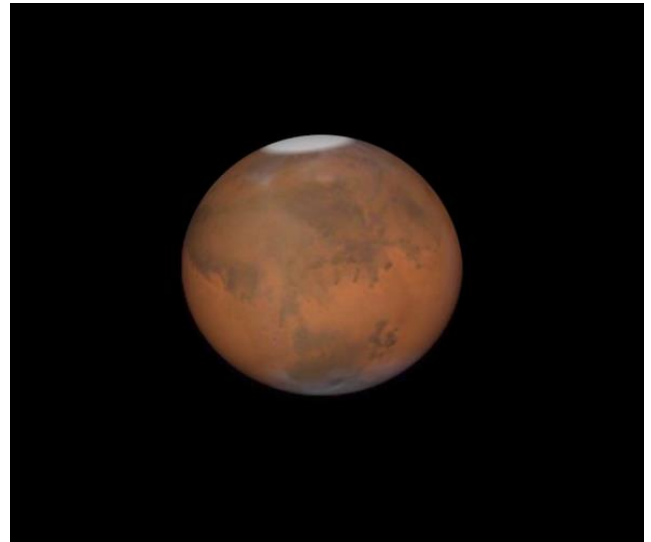
The bright, slightly yellowish “star” high in the sky is Jupiter, the largest planet in our Solar System. Through even a small telescope one can see four of the 79 moons that are known to orbit Jupiter (twelve of these moons were only discovered in the past few months).



Jupiter and its 4 moons (Image - Club d'Astronomie de Saint-Louis)

The real show-stopper of the moment is the bright reddish “star” low in the eastern sky, Mars, appearing extra-large as it is nearing a close approach to Earth. (It was slightly closer in 2003 when it was the closest it had been in nearly 60,000 years). During this year’s approach Mars will reach maximum brightness on the 27th July. If you were lucky enough to look at Mars through even a fairly small telescope back in 2003 you would have been able to see a polar icecap and possibly other surface markings on its orange/red disk.

Part of the motivation for Harold Seymour when he donated the land to create Katandra was that he wanted future generations to be able to enjoy



Mars as seen through a telescope (Image – NASA)

the local bushland “as Captain Cook would have seen it”. It is quite humbling to think that these astronomical events have been occurring in the skies not only since Cook’s time but for billions of years (one billion years is 1000 million years). This length of time is difficult to imagine, particularly when you consider that the first land animals appeared on Earth about 400 million years ago, the first flowering plants 125 million years ago and the Australian continent completed its separation from Gondwana only 45 million years ago.

Many people are not aware that Cook’s discovery of the east coast of Australia was part of a secondary aim of his voyage to the South Pacific. His primary reason for his journey was to observe the 1769 transit of Venus across the face of the sun from near Tahiti. This event only occurs four times every 243 years (pairs of transits 8 years apart followed by long breaks)



Transit of Venus (photo - Williams College Transit of Venus Team)

and it was realised that the distance from the Earth to the Sun could be more accurately determined by precisely timing the transit from different vantage points around the world. Once Cook had successfully carried out this task he was to open a sealed letter to receive instructions for the next designated task, exploring the South Pacific region. The last transit of Venus across the sun, seen not only from Katandra but from all around the world, was in 2012, it will not occur again until 2117.

Another exciting astronomical event that will be seen from Katandra (and the rest of Sydney) will be the total eclipse of the sun on 22nd July 2028. Assuming no cloud, this eclipse will result in the sun's shadow, up to 230 km wide, moving from the Kimberley region in Western Australia through Sydney then across to Dunedin in New Zealand. Katandra will be in totality from 2.00pm for over 3 minutes. The last total solar eclipse seen over Katandra occurred on 26th March 1857.



The sun's corona as seen during a total solar eclipse (image -Aubrey Gemignani/NASA)

Grey Butcherbird (*Cracticus torquatus*)

Butcherbirds are songbirds native to Australia, consisting of at least six different species. They are related to the magpie and have a distinctive rich melodic song. This song can be sung by only one individual, but more often it is sung in duet or as a group, with different group members singing different phases sequentially and often it is not obvious that two or more birds are singing.

The Grey Butcherbird has a black head and face with a thin white collar, a grey back and white underparts. The tail is black with a white tip. The



A Grey Butcherbird tending to young in a nest at Katandra (Photo – Stan Scotchmer)

wings are grey with areas of white. The grey and black bill is large, with a small hook at the tip of the upper bill. The females are slightly smaller than the males.

Grey Butcherbirds are found in a range of habitats, from open forests, woodlands and rainforests to suburban areas. They inhabit areas right across central and southern Australia with a separate population in the Kimberley region, but are absent from the deserts of northern central Australia.

Being aggressive predators, Butcherbirds prey on small animals, including birds, lizards and insects, as well as some fruits and seeds. Butcherbirds get their name from their habit of hanging captured prey on a hook or in a tree fork, or crevice. This is done to support the victim while it is being eaten or to store several victims for later. Grey Butcherbirds can often be seen sitting on an open perch searching for prey which, once sighted, they pounce on. Feeding normally takes place alone, in pairs or in small family groups.

The bowl-shaped nest, made of sticks and twigs and lined with soft fibres or grasses, is normally located within 10 m of the ground. Female butcherbirds lay between two and five eggs in a clutch, the eggs being incubated by the female however young birds are fed by both parents. The young birds will remain in the breeding territory for about a year, and help the parents raise the young of the following season.

Their aggressive nature means that they are very territorial when a nest or newly fledged chick is around. If a person was venture too close, a butcherbird will swoop, flying straight at one's head, sometimes striking with enough force to draw blood. Other birds such as the noisy miner are often noticeably absent from areas around a butcherbird nest.

Katandra website: 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**

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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PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660