

# Connectivity

## 2023 Greater Sydney Landcare and Bushcare Forum and Awards

Friday 2 June 2023 - Katoomba Leura Community Centre and  
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre



# Acknowledgement of Country



Local Land Services (LLS) acknowledges we operate in and deliver services throughout Country of First Nations\* people. LLS recognises First Nations people hold a continuous and deep connection to Country and this in turn holds significance to the broader community.

For First Nations people, Country takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape. It includes landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, the sky and sea as well as sacred places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, ceremony, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings, and people: past, present and future.

LLS recognises and respects Elders and cultural knowledge holders, both past and present, while acknowledging and respecting the unique and diverse enduring cultures and histories of all First Nations people.

LLS recognises that Caring for Country, the protection and promotion of First Nations cultures, heritage, land management practices and spiritual beliefs are paramount to the relationship with Country and that this benefits the whole community. By supporting self-determined futures and strengthening cultural values for First Nations people, LLS can contribute towards improved relationships and resilient sustainable communities.

\*Please note: the term First Nations people and communities, honours the unique physical and spiritual relationships to Country and acknowledges the diversity of cultural, social, economic and political structures held by the distinct First Nations of this continent.

# Program

10.00	Registration and morning tea
10.45	<b>Aunty Sharyn Halls</b> <b>Chris Tobin</b> <i>Welcome to Country</i>
11.20	<b>Vanessa Keyzer</b> <i>Local Land Services Welcome</i>
11.30	<b>Michelle Ryan</b> - Western Sydney University, Cattai Hills Environment Network (CHEN) <i>Hawkesbury-Nepean Platypus Project - Connecting communities with their waterways</i>
11.50	<b>Aunty Sharyn Halls</b> <b>Chris Tobin</b> <b>Brad Moore</b> <i>Cultural Burning panel discussion</i>
12.20	<b>Lunch</b>
1.20	<b>Trish Doyle MP</b> <i>Greater Sydney Landcare Awards Ceremony</i>
1.50	<b>Sam Willis</b> – Community Environment Network (CEN) <i>COSS Connection and Rehabilitation Project – Improving habitat connectivity across the landscape</i>
2.10	<b>Mike Purtell</b> - Fitzgeralds Creek Catchment Group <i>Bushcare/Landcare connections within the Fitzgeralds Creek Catchment</i>
2.25	<b>Lilly Schwartz</b> – Cattai Hills Environment Network (CHEN) <i>Connecting koalas and community – monitoring koalas and wildlife in Hills and Hornsby District</i>
2.40	<b>Emmanuela (Manu) Prigioni</b> – Farm it Forward <i>Socially connected farming around our towns and cities</i>
3.00	<b>Field Trips</b>
4.30	<b>Finish</b>

# Guest Speakers

**Aunty Sharyn Halls** is a well-known and highly respected Elder and Traditional Owner from the Gundungurra Nation of the Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands, having tirelessly worked for the recognition, protection and care for Ngurra (Country) for many decades. Aunty Sharyn has achieved this at formal levels through the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement, a result of the long Gundungurra struggle for Native Title, as well as by being directly involved in on-Country outcomes aiming to heal Ngurra from the changes brought about by colonisation. Since 2010, after attending the Indigenous fire workshop in Bizant, Cape York, Aunty Sharyn has advocated to return cultural fire to her Ngurra, with a positive step forward in 2022 with the return of the first 'Right fire for Country' in Gundungurra Ngurra for at least 150 years.

**Chris Tobin** is an educator, artist, activist, historian and Traditional Owner from the Dharug Nation of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, who shares his knowledge and passion for his Ngurra (Country), culture and history with school children through to senior citizens, and everyone in between, overseas visitors and locals alike. Chris has advocated on the need to recognise and respect Dharug Traditional Owners and ongoing connection to Ngurra since the 1990s, witnessing many successes but also setbacks. In 2010, Chris attended the Indigenous fire workshop in Bizant, Cape York and has worked since then to support the return of cultural fire to Dharug Ngurra, being involved in fire projects at Yellomundee Regional Park and more recently in endangered woodland communities of Western Sydney, having not had cultural fire for possibly 200 years.

**Dr Michelle Ryan** is a senior lecturer in Ecology and Environmental Science at Western Sydney University. Working with Cattai Hills Environment Network, the Hawkesbury-Nepean Platypus Project began in 2018 using environmental DNA to determine the distribution of platypus in the mid-Hawkesbury catchment. This project has developed to investigate the distribution and health of platypus populations throughout the Hawkesbury-Nepean River catchment. This project works closely with local community groups and citizen scientists to ensure sustainability of the platypus population in the Greater Sydney Basin.

**Sam Willis** is the CEO of the Community Environment Network (CEN), a not-for profit community organisation based on the Central Coast. Sam has a background in Environmental Science and Education and a passion for citizen science. Sam enjoys managing the diversity of projects and programs the CEN runs whilst also participating in other committees such as the Central Coast Wetlands, Central Coast Council Catchments to Coast Committee, Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre and the Greater Sydney Landcare Committee.

**Lilly Schwartz** coordinates the Hills-Hornsby Rural Koala Project, a volunteer-run citizen science project on the distribution and population density of koalas in the Hills and Hornsby areas. Lilly grew up in Glenorie and is passionate about getting local community involved with conservation. Lilly's use of citizen science builds bridges between local residents and scientific communities, while documenting the presence of wildlife in Northwest Sydney.

**Mike Purtell** has been involved in the Blue Mountains Bushcare movement for over 30 years, working two Bushcare sites in Springwood - Deanei Reserve and Else Mitchell Park. As well as working two bushcare sites, Mike is active in the wider protection of local catchment through participation in the Fitzgerald Creek Catchment Group. Mike's contribution to bushcare in the Blue Mountains has been recognised with a 'Legend of the Year' award.

**Emmanuela (Manu) Prigioni** is an artist, regenerative grower, co-founder and coordinator of Farm It Forward, a social enterprise linking residents with unused land to young people passionate about growing local food. Her passion for socially engaged food growing was born in 2014 when she overcame postnatal depression through growing and restoring her home garden, and reconnecting to place and community. After completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Media Arts and working as a part-time lecturer at UNSW Art and Design, she completed a full-time Diploma of Permaculture at The National Environment Centre, TAFE Riverina Institute, a Milkwood Permaculture Design Course, and Permaculture Teacher Training with Rosemary Morrow. She also studied soil microbiology by completing studies with Dr Elaine Ingham. Her work has involved regular public speaking, coordinating the Farm It Forward social enterprise and taking part in local community work.

## Field Trips

### Caring for Country with Garguree Swampcare

David King, Gundungurra man and Gully Traditional Owner, will welcome you to The Gully. David will then take you on a walk and talk through this special place. Learn about the history of The Gully, its significance to Traditional Owners and the role of Garguree Swampcare in bringing community together to Care for Country.

### Water stories in The Gully

After a Welcome to the The Gully from Gundungurra man and Gully Traditional Owner, David King, you will join the Blue Mountains City Council Healthy Waterways team. The team will take you through a hands-on water monitoring session in the Gully. Learn about the water management challenges in the Gedumba Creek Catchment, plans for dealing with stormwater and the important role Garguree Swampcare group plays in rehabilitating the catchment.

### Gathering Place

Join Gundungurra Elder Aunty Sharyn Halls at Dyindinggang (Gundungurra) Dyinbarri (Dharug) 'The Sisters' gathering place at Echo Point to learn more around the cultural significance of one of the most visited, but often not acknowledged Aboriginal Places in Australia. Learn about the broader connections of this cultural landscape with Gundungurra Ngurra (Country) to the surrounding area and beyond, and the importance of Caring for Country for current and future generations.

### **Socially engaged food growing around our towns and cities**

This field trip will showcase a regenerative micro market garden in the heart of Katoomba. The Blue Mountains Food Co-op, in collaboration with Farm It Forward, acquired usage and established the Blue Mountains Co-op Plot. The aim of the plot is to raise awareness of the importance of growing local food, creating meaningful local community connection whilst nurturing community health, wellbeing, food security and disaster preparedness.

Find out more at <https://www.farmitforward.com.au/>.

### **Visit Blue Mountain City Council's Planetary Health Precinct**

Find out about Blue Mountains City Council's plans to regenerate the former Katoomba Golf Course site, the location of an endangered peat swamp located at the top of the water catchment. It's part of a Planetary Health Precinct which is already home to Council's Planetary Health Initiative, National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute. The Planetary Health Initiative is pioneering systemic change, which includes a proposed Sweet Water demonstration site, and a place for learning from First Nations peoples, as well as Landcare, Bushcare and Council's Healthy Waterways team. Additionally, the Initiative has created hyperlocal news sites, where it shares solutions stories, including those from Bushcare and Landcare. The goal is for these stories to engage the wider community, particularly young people, to become part of #GenerationRestoration.

Find out more at [www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/planetaryhealth](http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/planetaryhealth)

### **Into The Blue (the Mountains World Heritage Interpretative Centre) – Self-guided**

The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre is offering forum participants free access to their high-tech, interactive exhibition that explores the natural and social landscapes of the Greater Blue Mountains.

# Support

This Forum is proudly supported by Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, a service of Blue Mountains City Council.

We gratefully acknowledge support from the Blue Mountains City Council, with particular thanks to the Bushcare Team, First Nations Team, Healthy Waterways Team and the Planetary Health Initiative Team.

We thank award sponsors for their generous donations to the award recipients, namely Taronga Conservation Society Australia, Australian Geographic, Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens and Greater Sydney Landcare.

A warm thank you to the presenters and the field trip leaders who have prepared and shared their knowledge, stories and wisdom with the Greater Sydney Landcare and Bushcare community today.



This initiative is made possible by the NSW Landcare Program.  
A collaboration of Local Land Services and Landcare NSW  
supported by the NSW Government.

