



Govetts Leap Catchment Group

Advocating for the environment in the Blue Mountains



Newsletter – Spring 2026

Govetts Leap Catchment Group (GLCG) was established in 2022 with the goal of advocating for the environment in the catchment area of Govetts Leap Brook in Blackheath. We are a group of conservation volunteers with extensive experience in bush regeneration. The group has continued to actively pursue that goal.

This is the first of a what we hope will be a regular newsletter on the activities of Govetts Leap Catchment Group and what is happening in the Blackheath catchments.

Catchment Update

Work on the Prince George stormwater drainage continues as GLCG watches with interest. One of the pines has been removed and mulched allowing another settling pond to be added. The significant rainfall events earlier in the year allowed identification of some areas where overflows were happening, and these have been reinforced with coir logs. There have been more areas mulched and planted with indigenous species.

The Braeside end of Clarence Rd was previously identified as a site where a stormwater structure would be beneficial. Work on a neighbouring property allowed temporary easier access to this site, making it an ideal time for the structure to be built. The structure was completed in October last year with extra plantings added in autumn. GLCG has been watching the site to ensure it is working well. Volunteers coordinated by the Catchment Group have also undertaken 35 person-hours of bushcare below the structures where large Himalayan honeysuckle and privet had reestablished.

Hat Hill Creek

The GLCG has recently expanded its area of interest to include the Hat Hill Creek catchment. This initiative follows observations by group members of extensive Himalayan honeysuckle infestations along the upper sections of the creek, as well as concerns raised by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) regarding weed entry into the National Park downstream.



Hat Hill Creek

The area of focus in Hat Hill Creek extends from the swamp in the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens down to the culvert below the former Blackheath Sewage Treatment Plant, where the creek enters the National Park.

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Govetts Leap Catchment Group

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Weeds

A major focus of Govetts Leap Catchment Group is on weeds. We would like to see the natural areas of the catchments free of weeds so that the native vegetation and animals can thrive. We undertake various activities to address the weeds.

Bushcare

Weed management within the National Park and surrounding BMCC natural areas of the catchment is largely addressed by Bushcare groups with occasional assistance from contractors or the BMCC Natural Areas team. GLCG members are actively involved with Bushcare groups within the catchment including at Sutton Park, Valley View and Prince Edward Streets, Prince George Street, Centenary Reserve and the NPWS Braeside Groups.

Spring Flowering Weeds

With spring many plants have flowers. This often makes them easier to identify. It is also when they set seed. If you are unable to remove weeds, then deadheading is a shorter-term solution to slow their spread. The flower heads can be removed at any time before the seeds are mature. The flower heads should be put in the green bin.

[Portuguese heath](#) has already started flowering and is visible along the highway. In some places [broom](#) and [gorse](#) have been flowering. Their bright yellow flowers make them easy to spot. The white flowers of [cherry laurel](#) are not as prominent. [Jasmine](#) while fragrant, can cause allergies as well as being a bushland invader.

The BMCC [Weeds of the Blue Mountains](#) Booklet contains methods to contain these weeds and many others. All the priority weeds for our area are listed [here](#).

BEWT Program

The Blackheath Environmental Weeds Team (BEWT) was set up by GLCG in conjunction with the [Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre](#) (BANC) to support residents who have received a weed notice where the resident has either financial or physical impediments and is unable to comply with the notice. BEWT assists with weed removal for the resident following a referral by a BMCC Weeds Officer and the resident registering with BANC. Most GLCC members have registered with BANC as volunteers to provide this service.

GLCG has recently undertaken over 50 person-hours of work on a property in West Blackheath under this program. This involved treating extensive holly and various other priority weeds.

Weed Awareness

GLCG has created weed awareness posters that are displayed at the Blackheath Growers Market and on noticeboards around the town.

These focus on specific weeds that are of particular concern and are flowering and prominent at the time. GLCG also ensures that the BMCC Weeds [booklet](#) is available where you see our posters at the market.



Weeds on Large Properties

Whilst weeds in the National Park and BMCC managed natural areas are controlled, GLCG has strong concerns that significant weed infestations on some larger properties adjoining the National Park are not being adequately addressed. The weeds on these properties continue to adversely impact the National Park with ingress of weeds and weed seed. GLCG would like to seek a path toward achieving better control of weed infestations on larger properties within the Govetts Leap Brook catchment.

While GLCG does not operate as a Bushcare group, members of the group have undertaken 150 person-hours of voluntary work to address large flowering gorse and Himalayan honeysuckle infestations on three strategically located large properties adjacent to the National Park. This action was taken due to the scale of the problem and the need for immediate action. The work was done with the permission of the landholders.



Removed Himalayan honeysuckle on one of the properties

Agapanthus

GLCG is planning a happening in February to encourage deadheading of agapanthus. Watch our [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for details of this.

Weeds & Property Sales

When a property changes hands the buyer is often unaware of the problems of priority weeds on the property they are purchasing. Under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 the owner of a property has a duty to take action to prevent the introduction and spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants. The costs of addressing weeds can be substantial, and this cost is often not known by the purchaser, nor is the vendor required to disclose it.

GLCG is concerned that properties with significant weed problems change ownership without a buyer being aware of the scale of the problem and potential costs involved. GLCG would like to increase awareness of this and has discussed this with Council.

To address this lack of knowledge GLCG is recommending that purchasers obtain a weed inspection as part of the conveyancing process, in the same way that a pest inspection is recommended when properties change hands.

The long-term aim is for landowners to appreciate that if they do not control weeds, they will have an ever-increasing liability that is likely to reduce the value of their property.

Blackheath Golf Club

Blackheath Golf Club recently lodged a DA to remove 85 mature trees including 46 natives. Govetts Leap Catchment Group has lodged an objection to this removal valuable habitat. We are also concerned about the effects of the golf course redevelopment on the neighbouring National Park.

In 2023 members of GLCG spent 150 person-hours removing priority weeds from parts of the golf course.

Golf Ball Guessing Competition

GLCG held a guessing competition at the Blackheath Growers Market in October last year. Many hundreds of balls had been removed from the Brook during bushcare sessions in the National Park. Blackheath Golf Course is located in the catchment next to Govetts Leap Brook.



The guessing competition was intended to raise awareness of Golf ball pollution in the catchment and the potentially damaging environmental effects as golf balls break down in the natural environment.

The competition was won by a traveller from Queensland who guessed 384, which was closest to the 380 golf balls we had collected. He received a bunch of waratahs from a member's garden.

For more information on the effects of golf balls see [here](#).

Meetings

GLCG representatives have met with BMCC and NPWS in formal meetings held every three months at either BMCC chambers or the NPWS Heritage Centre. The most recent meeting was held in June 2026. It was a productive meeting with many issues covered.

GLCG greatly appreciates the accessibility and cooperation of BMCC and NPWS staff in facilitating this liaison and in responding to GLCG concerns. As a "grass roots" community group with a long and close association with the Govetts Leap Brook catchment area, GLCG has been able to map and highlight weed and drainage "hotspots" affecting the catchment and provide useful information to BMCC.

As a trial, it was decided that meetings would be held every 4 months with direct communication with the appropriate departments within Council reducing the need for more frequent meetings. This would be combined with on site meetings as necessary.

Gardening with Natives

Gardening with Native Plants is on for a second year. On Sunday 25 October the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, Lawson will host a series of talks and a native plant market. Saturday will see a series of Masterclasses. Details and registration is [here](#).

Weeds Workshop

Blue Mountains Weed Action are planning a workshop on weeds later in the year. Watch their [site](#) for details.

Catchment Update (continued)

The Govetts Brook Hazard Reduction Burn had been scheduled for many years. It took place during a favourable weather period in early April 2026. NPWS is expecting mass germination of gorse along Govetts Leap Brook. Braeside Bushcare Group will be returning there in the coming months to attack an anticipated gorse germination event.

A Hazard Reduction Burn also took place in Sutton Park in April 2026. Sutton Park Bushcare Group will be monitoring the burnt area for emergence of weeds.

A drainage channel has been dug in Sutton Park behind the properties on Chelmsford Ave. The channel was not designed to reduce sediment and nutrients, as is current best practice. BMCC Natural Areas plan to rework the channel in the coming financial year.

BMCC has started installing new bushcare signs on all the bushcare sites. These contain a QR code for information on joining your local bushcare group.



Stormwater structure at the end of Clarence Rd

Hat Hill Creek (continued)

Despite these weed threats, recent field surveys by GLCG members have revealed a thriving local ecosystem. Key wildlife sightings include a previously unrecorded population of bare-nosed wombats, a spotted-tailed quoll, and a long-nosed bandicoot. The Rhododendron Gardens swamp at the top of the catchment remains a critical biodiversity stronghold. It is one of only a handful of known sites hosting the endangered sedge *Carex klaphakei*.



Bare-nosed wombat in Hat Hill Creek

To address the infestation promptly and effectively, GLCG has undertaken direct bushcare action with the permission of local landholders. Volunteers have already completed work along a creek line across many properties. Full restoration of this catchment will require several hundred person-hours of ongoing effort. To support these efforts, the GLCG is encouraging neighbouring landholders to manage weeds on their properties, upslope from the creek.



Spotted-tailed quoll in Hat Hill Creek