

Locked Down Sydney

August 6th 2021

“and so it goes¹”

Wattamolla heading towards Little Marley



NPA Branch members might have tuned into the Zoom meeting we hosted on 28th July to hear about Fire Management in the Royal National Park, with Inspector Scott Deller and NPWS ranger David Croft. Some of you might also remember discussion on that evening about the hazard reduction burn between Wattamolla and the Little Marley Fire Trail and the lengths the staff went to check out the site before the burn to ensure the safety of assets such as the Coast walking track and one particular koala.

Two days prior to that presentation Faye and I checked out the burn from its northern edge, along the Little Marley Fire Trail. Today, early, before lots of people hit the tracks, we checked out its southern and eastern edge, from Wattamolla out to the cliffs on the way towards Little Marley. That gave me the added bonus of also checking out progress on the Wattamolla precinct rebuild. It's worth downloading the final precinct plan.² The current works are due for completion in October, weather and Covid allowing!

The next stage of upgrade works will commence on 26 April 2021 and will include:

¹ If searching for the origins ignore the Billy Joel reference. I always think of “Slaughterhouse-Five” by Kurt Vonnegut. The phrase haunts that book with intensity.

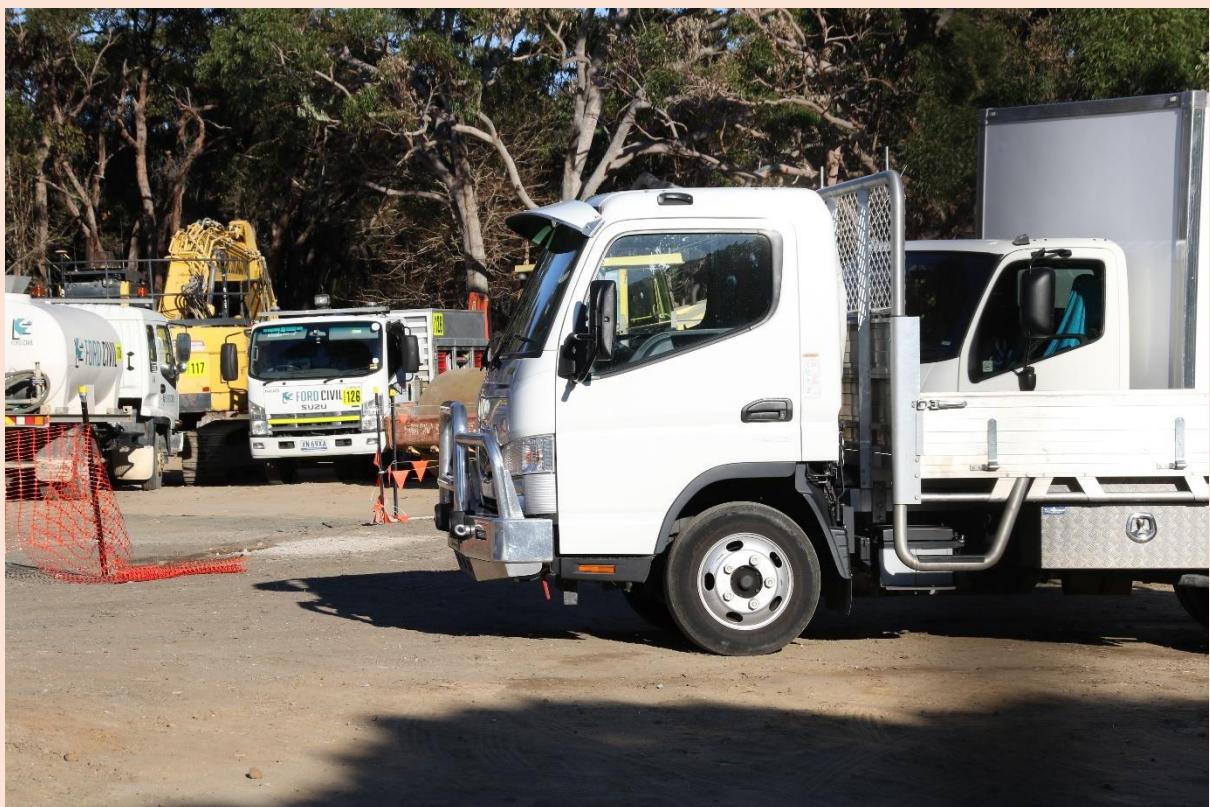
² <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/royal-national-park/wattamolla-visitor-precinct>

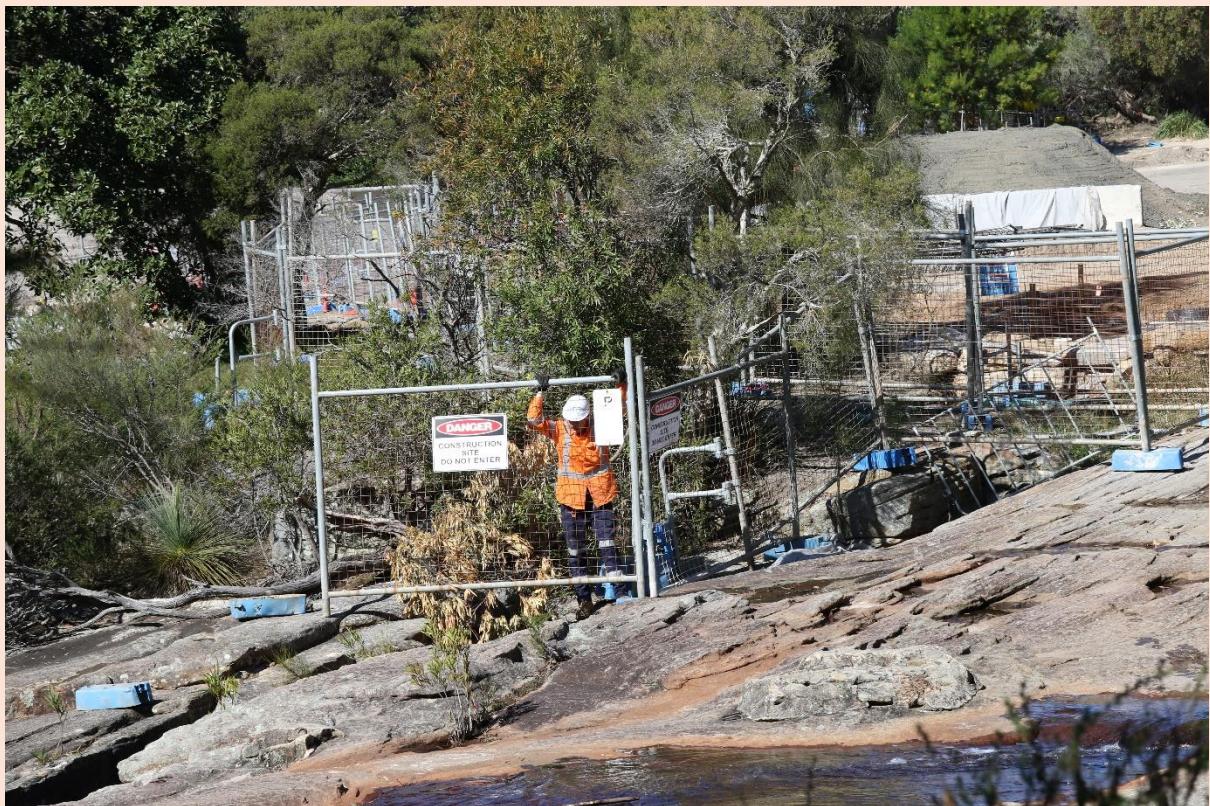
- reconfiguration of the lower loop car park to create additional shaded open space for picnics, and provide for safer bus drop-off and accessible parking
- upgrade of picnic areas including new shelters and BBQs
- new viewing platform and safety fencing
- landscaping, pathways and tree planting that will improve the visual amenity of the site
- new drainage works that will help protect Wattamolla lagoon.

Once complete these works will provide a safer, more accessible and improved visitor experience.³



³ Ibid





The Coast Track through the works



Where has the barrier gone?

But it was now time to check the HR burn and how it was looking a couple of months later!





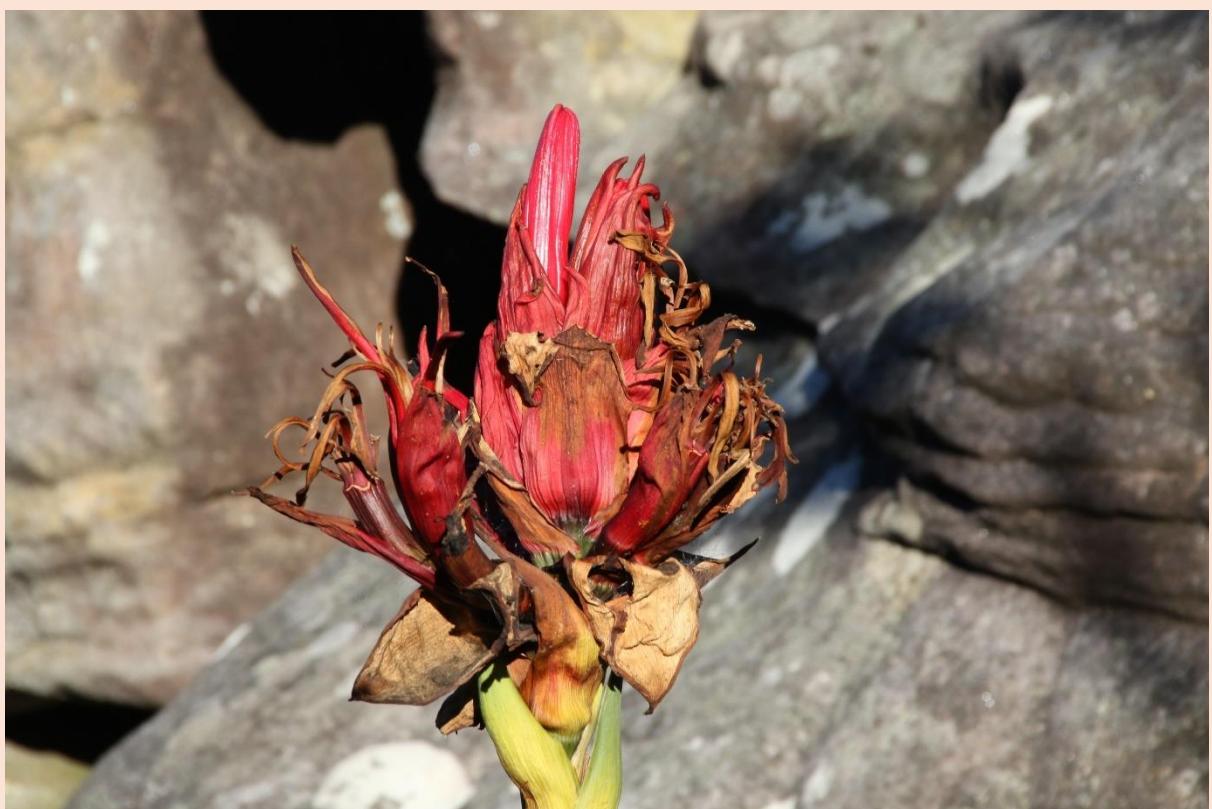
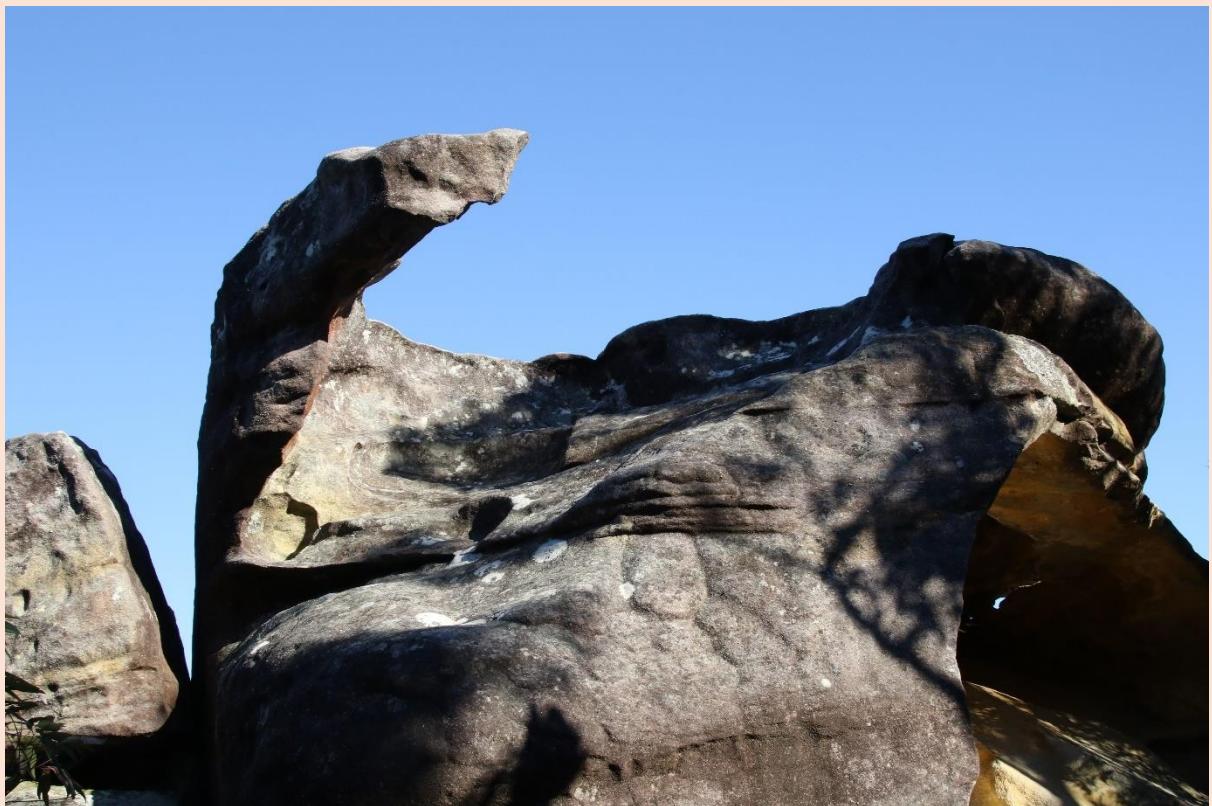
Triglochin rheophilum

As David mentioned on 28th July, the creek lines were left unburnt.



The fire exposes the old track lines and the erosion along them.







Lots of unburnt patches within the HR zone



Note the clean lines along the edges of the track to protect it from the burn



Callitris muelleri ... one only, and survived the fire well



The line is so pleasing to the eye

And do note the passing lanes!



On the heath ridges the burn was intense



But already returning



Gahnia returning to growth



In this area a Brown Goshawk was stalking prey



Unfortunately, there is clear evidence mountain bike riders are using the Coast Track

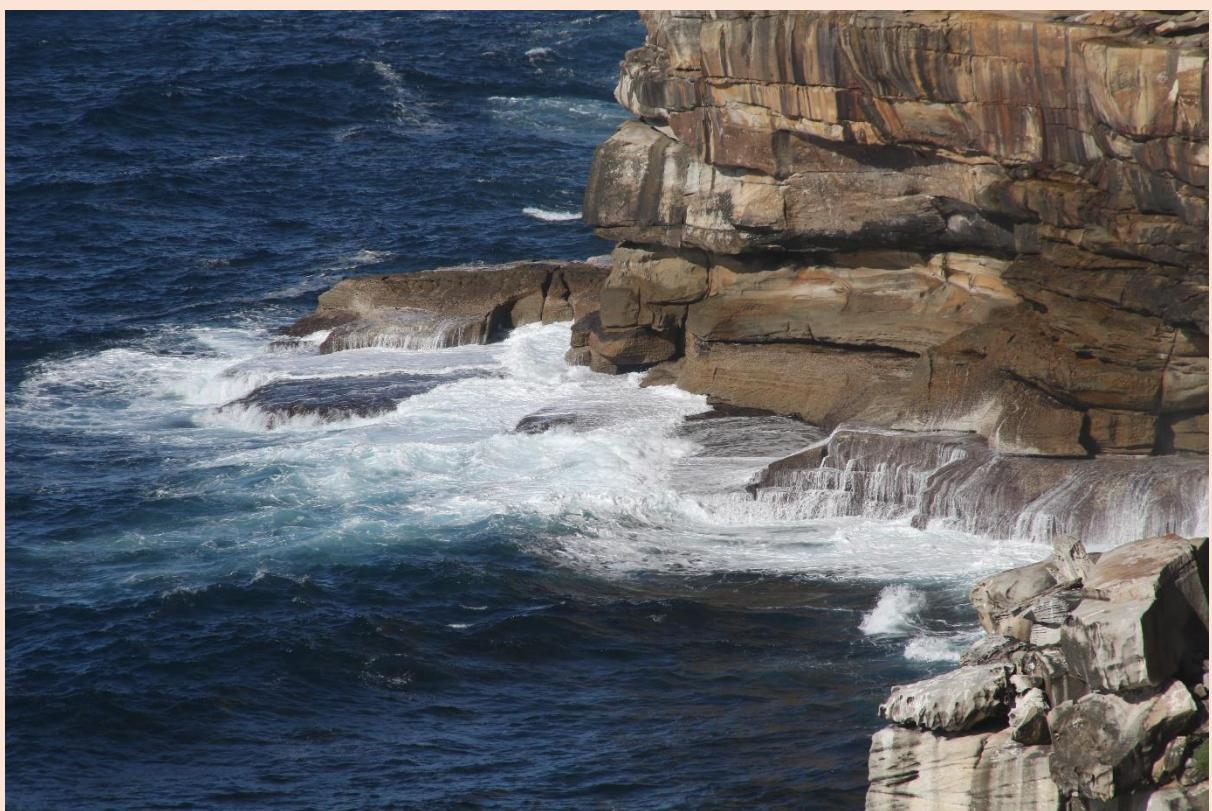


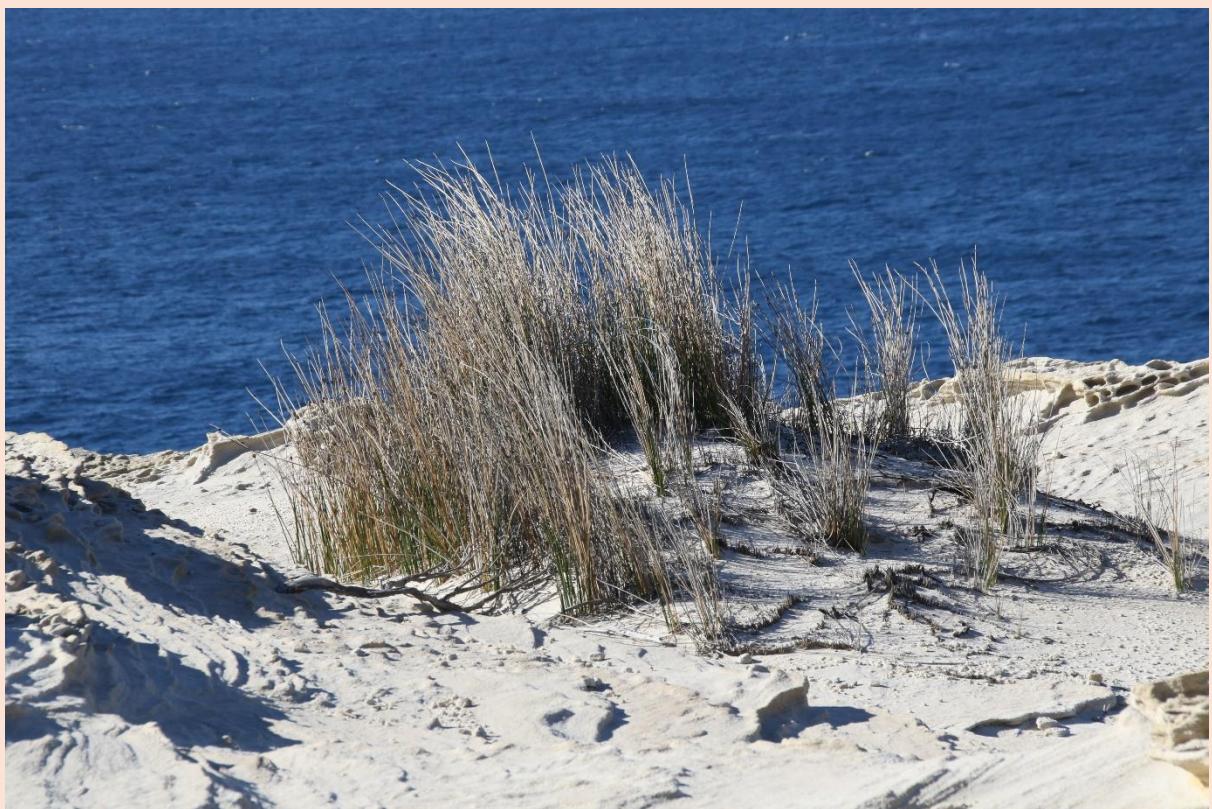
The magic of this coast

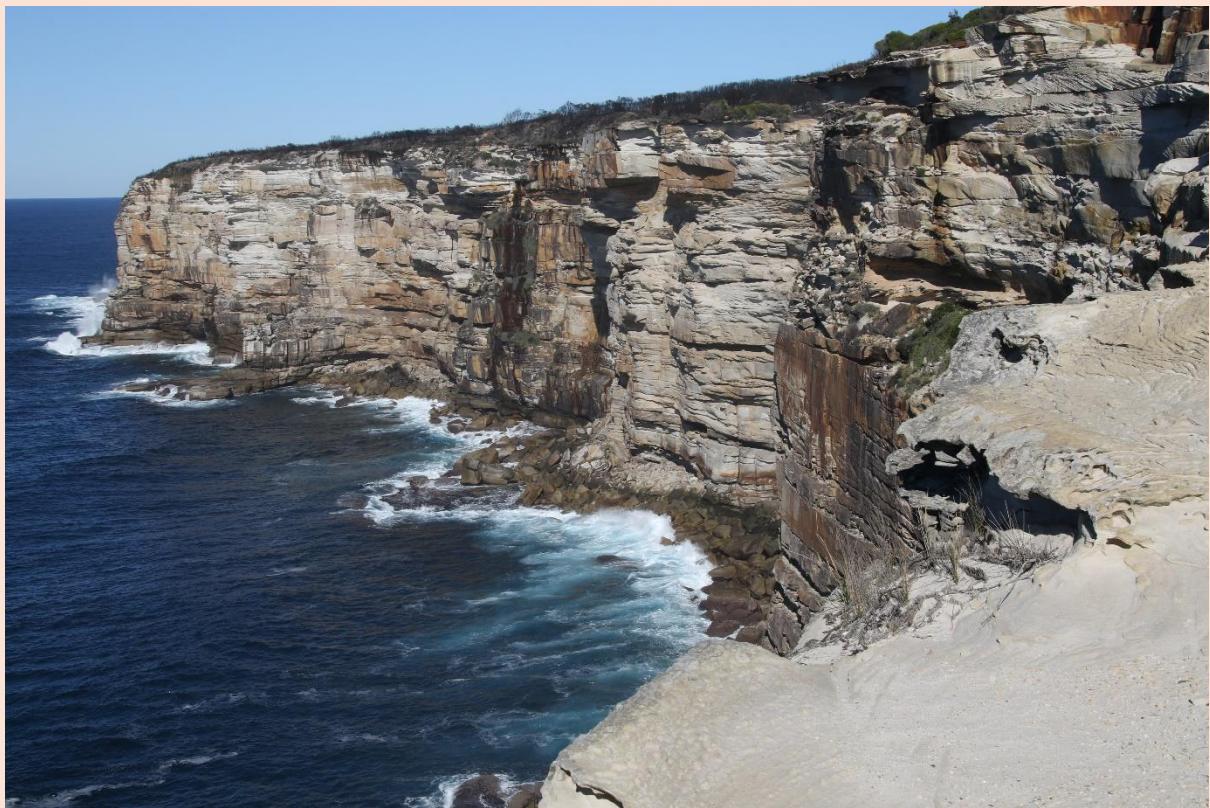
And today, as a bonus, we saw one whale breaching. It appeared to be heading south. We also spotted on Albatross species and a few Gannets.

But in terms of avian biomass by far the most numerous species was the New Holland Honeyeater. It was pleasing to see them give the same attention to a lone Noisy Miner that the latter usually does to other birds! I call it poetic justice.

And why not finish with a few coastal images before we return to Wattamolla!







OK, time to head back to Wattamolla Dam for a secluded morning tea!





Crowea buds



Leptospermum laevigatum



Thanks for coming along!

Brian Everingham