

NPA reaches out to bushland

Helen Latham*

NPA has recently completed a community outreach project with a grant from the Conservation Alliance (CA). The CA is a non-profit environmental organisation with a membership of outdoor industry companies which cater for self-reliant adventure activities; they commit 0.1% of their turnover to a fund to support environmental projects.

The CA's objectives are to:

- support campaigns, projects and organisations working for the protection or proper management of natural resources and environment within Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region;
- ensure the protection of wilderness, natural areas

and biodiversity from threatening processes; and • ensure the good management of natural areas to maintain their environmental values and opportunities for low impact self-reliant activities.

Visit the CA website at www.hydra.org.au/ca for lists of its members and recent projects, and procedures for applying for grants or supporting and joining the CA.

With its 1999 grant, the NPA has prepared three "community information and action leaflets" which outline the ecological importance of three unprotected bushland areas in or near western Sydney. They also detail a series of actions that individuals and community groups can take to help lobby government for their protection in the NSW national parks system.

The three areas, drawn from the the NPA's 1999 report, *Proposed National Parks Additions in the Sydney Region*, include the controversial Australian Defence Industries land at St Marys; the Airservices Australia land at Shanes Park International Radio Transmitter Station; and the Bargo River Gorge south-west of Sydney.

The 1,500 ha ADI St Marys land supports one of the largest remnants of the endangered Cumberland Plain Woodlands, other rare bushland and a highly diverse native fauna. The Federal Government wants to capitalise the land; the NSW Government intends to build 8,000 homes on it; and environment groups want a regional park over the whole site. The draft *Sydney Regional Environmental Plan - St Marys* was on exhibition for public comment until March 2000, but the State Government has not yet released a decision and environment groups are still appealing to the Government for a reserve.

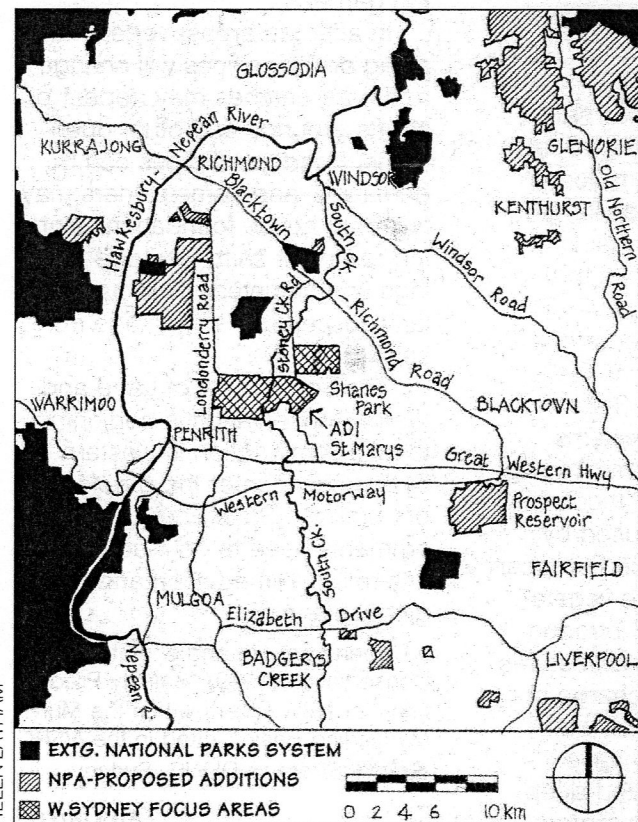
The 500 ha proposed Shanes Park Nature Reserve also supports rare Cumberland Plain bushland and adjoins the ADI St Marys site. It is an important link in a chain of habitat corridors in western Sydney. As it is owned by a Federal Government business enterprise, it could be subject to the same pressures as ADI St Marys and other Defence lands the Federal Government has recently sold or intends to sell.

The 5,000 ha proposed Bargo River National Park would protect spectacular gorge and river scenery; a diverse flora and fauna; an important habitat corridor between the Nattai group of parks and Sydney's southern water catchment areas; sites of Aboriginal cultural significance; and a vital and varied passive recreation venue in one of Australia's fastest growing regions.

The action leaflets give addresses and phone numbers of relevant politicians and government departments, council planners and councillors; contact details for peak environment groups; and membership details for NPA and/or community action groups local to the three sites.

The leaflets are available from the NPA Office and website.

* **Helen Latham** is an NPA member and author of NPA's *Proposed National Parks Additions in the Sydney Region*.



Location of the ADI site and Shanes Park in western Sydney