

The Wolli Creek Valley

Wolli Creek is one of the few remaining inner urban creeks with near-natural banks.

The Wolli Valley is a strikingly beautiful and varied stretch of bushland with many landforms and plant communities including mangroves, heaths, dry sclerophyll forests, extensive wetlands, impressive sandstone escarpments and lookouts.

It is a haven for birds, providing food, shelter, a passageway and resting place for migratory species and a niche for resident birds. Over 160 species have been recorded as inhabiting the Valley's bushland and waterways.

Wolli is said to mean 'camping place' in the local Aboriginal language and is the site of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation. The Valley is of great importance to the Eora people of Sydney.

Remnants of pioneer settlements and industry remain in the Valley as a legacy of the dairy farming, wool scouring, lime burning and stone quarries, farms and Chinese market gardens that existed in past years.

Fifty hectares of land on the northern side of Wolli Creek are being progressively acquired by NPWS as the Wolli Creek Regional Park.

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society Inc. (WCPS) is a not-for-profit, voluntary organisation that was established in 1984 to prevent the construction of a motorway through the Valley.

The WCPS now focuses its energies on broader issues, including community education, bush restoration and the promotion of the Valley as a valuable environmental and recreational resource.

The Society has an active membership involved in a wide range of activities including bush walks, bird watching, schools' programs, and ongoing bush regeneration.

The Neil Rankin Award

The Neil Rankin Award was established in 2004 with a \$5,000 donation by Danny Rankin to honour her late husband.

The purpose of the Award is:

- to promote positive and informed attitudes towards the environment and encourage children's enjoyment and understanding of the natural world.
- to encourage the use of the Wolli Creek Valley as an environmental resource and a place of exploration and discovery.
- to provide opportunities for creative expression about experiences related to the Valley and the natural world.

About Neil Rankin

Neil Rankin, known to many locals as the 'Birdman of Wolli Creek', was a teacher, school principal and inspector with the NSW Education Department. After his retirement in 1982 until his death in 2001, he devoted much of his time to documenting the birds in the Wolli Creek Valley. His book, 'Neil Rankin's Birds of Wolli Valley' (2006) is a valuable resource for beginners and experienced birdwatchers alike.

Neil was committed to environmental education and to sharing knowledge with young people. He regularly conducted bird watching walks through the Valley and visited schools. He was an active campaigner who helped save the Valley from motorway development.

CLOSING DATES

- Entry forms: 8 August 2009
- Finished projects: 25 Sept 2009



"A bird's eye view"

**The Neil Rankin
Award
for Primary Age
Children
2009**

Wolli Creek
Preservation Society
Po Box 270
Earlwood NSW 2206.
www.wollicreek.org.au



A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE WOLLI VALLEY

The aim of the 2009 Rankin Award is to develop an understanding of the world of birds and the importance the Wollli Valley to their survival.

The entry could be a school project within a HSIE topic such as Local Environment, Mini Worlds or Wet and Dry Environments or it could be incorporated into English (a narrative, report or description), Creative Arts, Technology or Information Communication.

Community organisations could base their entry on a visit during excursions.

Projects could include:

- a banner or mural
- a powerpoint presentation (max 12 frames)
- a film or filmed performance (max 5 minutes)
- a series of photos or posters (max 6 x A3 pages)
- a story (max 6 x A3 pages)
- a game

Topics could include;

- Why I live in the Wollli Valley (a bird's perspective)
- What I saw flying over the Valley (bird's journey map)
- A study of one Wollli bird species
- An imaginary bird (how it differs from Wollli birds)
- Nest making – how to build, what to use
- Indigenous style dot paintings like a bird's aerial view of the landscape
- What birds saw in Wollli before Europeans arrived
- Who are Wollli birds' friends and foes?
- A bird's tour guide to the Wollli Valley – where are the best spots to visit?
- How we made our playground bird-friendly
- What will the future be like for birds in the Valley?

Selection criteria

Entries should

- be based on a visit to the Valley.
- demonstrate group involvement and participation in planning and carrying out the project.
- show children's creativity and imagination in developing a presentation to share with their peers.

ONLY GROUP ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AND ONLY ONE ENTRY PER CLASS

Who is eligible to enter?

Primary age children from government and non-government primary schools or community organisations, such as after-school and vacation care centres or scout/guide groups located in the Wollli Creek Catchment and adjacent areas (ask if unsure).

There will be 3 categories for schools – Stages 1, 2 and 3 and a special category for community organisations.

Prizes

1 st place	\$250 in each category
2 nd place	\$150 in each category
3 rd place	\$100 in each category

Awards presentation will take place during November 2009 – details of date and venue will be sent to all entrants. All participating groups will be invited to the presentation and will receive a certificate of participation.

CLOSING DATES FOR SUBMITTING

- Entry forms: 8 August 2009
- Finished projects: 25 Sept 2009

HOW TO ENTER

For details and entry form:

- Visit WCPS website (www.wollicreek.org.au)
- Write to Neil Rankin Award WCPS
PO Box 270 Earlwood NSW 2206
- Email: info@wollicreek.org.au

NB: Any entries with photos of children must be accompanied by permission for reproduction in the media and online.

Judging

The judging panel will be persons experienced in environmental education and children's activities. The decision of the panel will be final. The Award is administered by Wollli Creek Preservation Society (WCPS).

Resources and information

WCPS has a range of publications and information available about the natural environment and heritage of the Valley. Visit:

- <http://www.wollicreek.org.au/resources.html>
- http://www.wollicreek.org.au/tvt_schools/
- <http://wollibirds.blogspot.com/2008/09/birds-nest.html>

Other assistance

Contact us regarding the possibility of guided walks for school groups and school visits and class presentations. Advanced notice is essential and events depend on availability of WCPS volunteers. A donation to the Society would be appreciated.

Become a group member of WCPS and receive the newsletter Wollli Creek Update and regular information about events.

