

## SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK NARAWANG WETLAND WALK

23 March 2024



Nine members and one visitor met at the Pierre de Coubertin dog park at Newington to walk along part of the Louise Sauvage Pathway at Sydney Olympic Park. Nearby apartments in Newington were built as the Olympic Village. The gardens have grown up around them to create a very pleasant residential environment. For the first part of the walk, we walked beside some of these apartments on our left and The Narawang wetlands on our right. Walking conditions were ideal, with plenty of shade and seats at intervals for those who needed a rest.

The Narawang Wetlands are a recreation of previous wetlands which were destroyed when the site along Haslam's Creek was used as a tip for commercial, domestic and industrial waste. The earlier wetland had supported a regionally important population of the Green and Golden Bell Frog and Latham's Snipe, a migratory shorebird.

As far as I know, our Group has not considered exploring a wetland before. Wetlands are now considered environmental icons for their ecosystem services such as maintenance of water quality, habitat for diverse biota such as juvenile fish, regulation of water flow and protection of shorelines from erosion. Wetlands have their own international treaty, The Ramsar Convention, which promotes their protection. As most of us were not familiar with wetland species we had a challenging afternoon identifying some of the plants which we encountered. Many thanks to Daniel who knew more than the rest of us and enabled us to identify quite a few.



Once the path passed under Holker Drive, we walked along the edge of Newington Nature Reserve which is a high quality remnant of the critically endangered Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest (STIF). The Forest surrounds the various armaments laboratories where weapons were tested. The buildings are separated from each other to reduce the amount of damage which would occur if there was an accidental explosion. The reserve is protected by a high cyclone fence but it is possible to view quite a lot from the other side of the fence. Some of the vegetation has also spread outside the fence. In this part of the walk we were much more confident in identifying the plants which we saw as they are also to be seen in remnant STIF in The Hills. However, there were some new plants such as the Port Jackson Pine, *Callitris rhomboidei* and many plants of the Native Holly, *Podolobium ilicifolium*.

At this time of the year there were no flowers to be seen. However, the lush growth of the sedges, ferns and grasses of the wetlands was a very pleasant scene.