

## AGNES BANKS NATURE RESERVE WALK 26 SEPTEMBER 2020

Agnes Banks Nature Reserve is on the East bank of the Hawkesbury River near Richmond on a small area of windblown sands which overlays alluvial deposits from ancient river systems (65 million years ago). The reserve is a remnant of the original area as most of the deposit has been mined for the sand. It is a unique vegetation community to Western Sydney as it includes species of plants which are more commonly found growing on sandstone on the coast.

15 ParraHills members and friends met to explore the Reserve on 26 September. There was so much to see that we actually didn't get very far in the two hours of the walk! There are five Endangered or Vulnerable vegetation communities in the reserve. Castlereagh Swamp Woodland, Castlereagh Ironbark Forest, Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland, Agnes Banks Woodland and Shale Gravel Transition Forest. We explored some of the Agnes Banks Woodland and some of the Castlereagh Swamp Woodland. We joked after our two hour walk that, if our group is to explore other areas in the future, we will need to put blindfolds on everyone, and lead them through the first few hundred metres to the next section.

We saw quite a few species with which we were reasonably familiar as well as those which we do not see at all in our area. One of these was *Ricinocarpus pinifolius* which was flowering prolifically. The species of Smokebush found in the reserve is *Conospermum taxifolium* which is fairly common on the coast but not seen in our area.

Our visit coincided with some lovely orchids in flower. We were enchanted to find many Flying Duck Orchids (*Caleana major*) either singly or in large groups. We also saw quite a few *Calochilus paludosus* (Red Beard Orchid). For many of our group it was the first time they had seen a living Calgaroo, the Parramatta Red Gum (*Eucalyptus parramattensis*), after which our newsletter is named.



*Eucalyptus parramattensis*



*Ricinocarpus pinifolius*

Here is the list of the plants we saw in one small section of the reserve:

*Acacia brownii*, *Acacia elongata*, *Ampera xiphoclada*, *Banksia aemula*, *Banksia oblongifolia*, *Banksia serrata*, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Bossiaea rhombifolia*, *Caleana major*, *Calochilus paludosus*, *Conospermum taxifolium*, *Dillwynia floribunda*, *Dillwynia glaberrima*, *Dillwynia sericea*, *Dillwynia tenuifolia*, *Eucalyptus parramattensis*, *Eucalyptus signata*, *Haemodorum planifolium*, *Hibbertia fasciculata*, *Isopogon anemonifolius*, *Kunzea capitata*, *Leptospermum parvifolium*, *Leucopogon ericoides*, *Mitrasacme polymorpha*, *Monotoca scopana*, *Persoonia laurina*, *Persoonia nutans*, *Philotheca salsolifolia*, *Pomax umbellata*, *Ricinocarpus pinifolius*, *Trachymene incisa*.



*Duck orchid Caleana major*



*Eucalyptus signata*



Typical habitat at Agnes Banks Reserve