

PORTERS ROAD FIRE TRAIL WALK

23 April 2022

Our April walk was planned to be at Vineyard Creek, Telopea but the recent heavy rains had made the track conditions very muddy so it was decided that a walk along a ridge might be a drier option.

There are not too many ridge walks in The Hills as the ridges were originally cleared for farms and orchards in the 19th century and then gradually subdivided for suburbs in the 20th century. However, there remains an excellent uncleared sandstone ridge at the end of Porters Road Kenthurst. This area was also slated for subdivision but community pressure ensured that it remains to be enjoyed by many of us today.

Twelve of us set forth on an afternoon which remained delightfully sunny even though the forecast had been for showers. There have been several fires in this area including 1975, 1992 and 2002. After the 1992 fire, members of the Parramatta Hills Group pegged out several sections which were periodically monitored for regrowth. These records are still held by our group. Unfortunately, the pegs were burnt in the 2002 fire so it is not possible to identify the exact sites.

Apart from one section of the walk where the dominant vegetation is casuarina woodland with little or no under storey the flora diversity seems to have survived the fires.

Tony Maxwell had prepared lists of species likely to be found in the area and the keen eyes of members enabled us to identify 106 species in two and a half hours. Credit needs to be given to Chris Cheetham whose wonderful knowledge and keen eyes identified some of the smaller species amongst grasses on the road margin which everyone else had walked past. This included a largish patch of *Pimelea curviflora* and an early flowering *Tetralochea ericifolia* which for a short while was thought to be the much rarer *Tetralochea glandulosa*. We did see one rare plant though. There were two plants of *Persoonia hirsuta*.



Pultenaea tuberculata



Persoonia hirsuta



Melichrus procumbens

Jennifer Farrer