

Guntawang Environmental Bush Retreat - Wooglemai

We recognise the traditional owners, the Burratorang of the Gundungurra Nation.

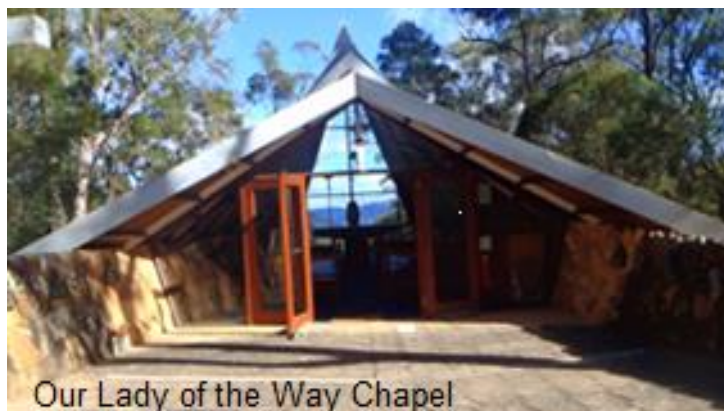
Around 1960 the filling of Warragamba Dam cut off road access to a bush camp in the Burratorang Valley that a group of priests had set up. Some time before that, one of the priests, Fr Richard Coughlan, P.P. at Gladesville, had been appointed chaplain to the Catholic Bushwalking Club.

He saw a need for young people to experience God's creation by spending time away from the city. An old friend from the valley told him about a property he might like.

From his own resources he bought this 40 acres that bordered the catchment area. In his initial explorations he found remains of old campsite. This turned out to be the 1802 site from which Ensign Barrallier launched his expeditions into the Blue Mountains.

https://www.isfar.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/35_VALERIE-LHUEDE-Francis-Barrallier.pdf

Fr Coughlan had a chapel built near this site with a view facing the mountains.



Named for one of Barrallier's guides, 'Wooglemai' borders Nattai National Park on the lower slopes of the Southern Highlands. There are bitumen sealed roads to the gate for 45-55 Sheeheys Creek Rd, then a kilometre of unsealed bush road.

The water supply is captured rainwater, with ultra-violet sterilisation. Lighting is by solar panels with battery storage with very little power for other uses.

Bottled gas is used for hot water in the kitchen, showers and refrigeration. The kitchen has gas stovetops and there is a hotplate for cooking but no oven or microwave. The lounge room with a wood burning fireplace is comfortable for meetings. There are marked bushwalks on the property, a large grassed field and bunkrooms for overnights, although some groups like to use tents.

Groups may book for weekend use or during school holidays, but weekdays are reserved for school use. The 4th weekend each month, however, is reserved by Guntawang for members, and visitors may join us and see the possibilities for retreats. During these weekends maintenance and upkeep is done by some of the members. March 25-26, April 22-23 and May 27- 28 are the next ones.

Getting there:

Through Camden or Camden By-pass, follow Burratorang Rd to Oakdale, turn left into Barkers Lodge Rd, after 6km Sheeheys Creek Rd is on the right.

Through Picton, follow Barkers Lodge Rd, and after 15k Sheeheys Creek Rd is on the left.

From Penrith, drive south and cross the Nepean River at Wallacia. Follow Silverdale Rd to The Oaks, turn right to Oakdale then take Barkers Lodge Rd.

Frank Richardson

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