



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

1 May 2017

### **WHERE IS ANNIE'S SIGN?**

FOKE (Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment) started off its celebrations for the 2017 National Trust Heritage Festival with a series of 'Blue Gum High Forest' walks around Ku-ring-gai. The first of these ecologically based heritage walks focused on Gordon's historic buildings, significant trees and heritage views.

"These 'Blue Gum High Forest Walks' celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, when the community came together in 2007 and called upon Ku-ring-gai Council, the NSW Government and Commonwealth to contribute to purchasing two privately owned blocks of land within the Blue Gum High Forest at St Ives," said Mrs Kathy Cowley, President of FOKE.

"Acquiring the two privately-owned blocks of land within the St Ives Blue Gum Forest was a great conservation achievement. The Dalrymple-Hay and Browns Forest is one of Sydney's most significant forests with less than 3% left in the world," said Mrs Cowley.

However the Gordon walk on Sunday 30 April regrettably highlighted the fact that the sign for the 'Annie Forsyth Wyatt Park', along Henry Street has gone 'missing'. The sign has not been seen since the NSW Government's built its bus terminus and commuter carpark.

Located in the Annie Wyatt Park, next to Gordon's State Heritage Listed Railway station, are two of Ku-ring-gai's most significant trees. The magnificent lemon-scented gum, that frames Gordon Railway Station, was planted in 1930 as 'a tribute of remembrance to Mr and Mrs Charles Tucker Musson who were both members of the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League. Charles Musson (1856–1928) was an inspirational teacher-lecturer at Hawkesbury Agriculture College from 1891-1919 and was responsible for the introduction of Nature Study into NSW schools in the 1900s.

Also in the Annie Wyatt Park is a healthy twelve year old Sydney Blue Gum. This tree was planted in 2005 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the National Trust and honour Annie Forsyth Wyatt OBE – tree lover, humanitarian and founder of the National Trust of Australia.

“It is extremely unsatisfactory that the authorities have not yet returned the ‘Annie Forsyth Wyatt’ park sign to its proper place. The sign acknowledged Gordon resident Mrs Annie Wyatt (1885-1961) who founded the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League in the 1920s and the National Trust in 1945 and is one of Australia’s most significant conservationists.”

“It is also disappointing that the NSW Government’s landscaping, next to a State Heritage listed railway station, fails to do justice to Annie Wyatt – an ‘ardent tree lover’ – and her love for the Australian bush. Ku-ring-gai Council’s Gardens, on the east side of Gordon Station are renowned for their beauty.”

“The irony is that Annie Wyatt once said she wanted to get away from ‘the concrete’ – but now anyone sitting in her park looks directly into a concrete wall”, said Mrs Cowley.

“The walks also celebrate FOKE’s ongoing work since 1994 when it was formed to defend and promote Ku-ring-gai’s built, natural and cultural heritage. In 2007 FOKE nominated “*Ku-ring-gai’s Conservation Areas within the Context of the Blue Gum High Forest*” for inclusion into the National Trust’s “*Top Ten Heritage at Risk Places in Australia*”.

Further walks are planned for Sunday 7 May when Nancy Pallin leads a walk through the Blue Gum High Forest Walk @ St Ives. The walk starts at 9.45am for 10am start meeting at the Rosedale Road entrance to Forest.

On Sunday 14 May there will be a Blue Gum High Forest Walk from Turramurra to Pymble at 9.45am for 10am start meeting in front of Turramurra Railway Station Ticket Office.

On Sunday 21 May FOKE is holding a fundraising luncheon for EDO NSW at Pecorino Café, 77 Werona Ave, Gordon costing \$35.

Finally FOKE’s month of celebrations finish with an Annual Public Meeting. This year’s guest speaker is renowned businessman Dick Smith who will talk about *Sydney’s Population Growth—is it sustainable?* This will be held on Wednesday 24 May, 8 pm, Killara Uniting Church, cnr Arnold and Karranga Avenue.

For more information and bookings about FOKE’s program of Walks and Talks contact Janine Kitson (02) 9498 2402 or M: 0428 860 623 Email [info@foke.org.au](mailto:info@foke.org.au) [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au) [www.facebook.com/friendsofkuringgai](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofkuringgai)

**For media comment, please call Kathy Cowley on 0431 158 880 or 9416 9007**