

Tallong Twitterings



Recovery is the message behind the sculptures recently placed in the Nature Reserve Walkway in Tallong's Memorial Park. They depict representations of local wildlife; Kangaroo, Wombat, Echidna, Platypus, Lyrebird, Koala, Flying and Hanging Bat species as well as endangered species like the Glossy Black Cockatoo and the Midge Orchid and have been created by local custom sculptor Hoonart. Plantings of *Allocasuarina littoralis*, the main diet of the Glossy Black Cockatoo and the large scale sculpture of the Midge Orchid draw attention to the recovery of local habitats of endangered and other species after the drought and subsequent bushfires that destroyed bushland earlier this year. The local community draws significance from the tiny orchid (botanical name *Corunastylis plumosum* or formally *Genoplesium plumosum*) which only flowers in the Tallong district for several days in March and only after heavy rain, giving it the common name Tallong Midge Orchid. Tallong's shop /café called the Midge is a central meeting place for locals and tourists and like its namesake draws on this icon as a point of village identity.

An additional sculpture of a lifesize fireman is dedicated to all the RFS members who defended Tallong from the encroaching fires that threatened Tallong on two fronts branching off from the Morton National Park's Currowan fire when it crossed over the Shoalhaven Gorge. The Sculptures were funded by a NSW bushfire recovery grant given to Goulburn Mulwaree Council. By allocating these funds to Tallong it was intended to create a safe, peaceful place for community recovery as well as the development of an event in the park that gave local businesses like the Midge a chance to cater for it and thus stimulate local business recovery.

Tallong Public School principal, Ms Emily Morrow is delighted with the installation of the sculptures in the Nature Reserve. She said that as well as being nearby it is an interesting place for students to explore. The Nature Reserve is a great teaching tool for the students to learn about local species and their own environment. Awareness of environmental issues is a key part of the school curriculum and the significance of the Midge Orchid locally is a worthy research project. The community has participated in various environmental programs like the Glossies in the Mist campaign which saw community members anticipating future food sources for the Glossy Blacks by planting large numbers of casuarina trees. Ms Morrow is waiting for current Covid restrictions to be lifted for the whole school to be able to visit the Nature Reserve.

Throughout the history of Tallong Public School there has been an awareness of the local environment, preserving bushland and planting of trees at the annual Arbor Day ceremonies. At present this tree planting day is held in July but in 1896 Arbor Day was held in August. At that time the school sited on Hope Street and called Barbers Creek Public School is recorded in the Goulburn Evening Penny Post on the 13th August of that year ceremoniously planted fifty trees obtained from the Sydney Botanical Gardens and a local resident. Today some of the trees can be seen on the site, most notable the Camphor Laurel which students recalled in poems and compositions on display at the schools centenary exhibition. The ceremony started with each student, principal Miss Gwynne, parents, friends and visitors planting the trees then a picnic meal was served "a splendid repast provided by parents and friends" followed by a student concert. At the conclusion of the Day Miss Gwynne was cheered and reciprocated by thanking "those friends who assisted in making Arbor Day such a glorious success". The article's author claimed that "if all the trees grow Barbers Creek Public School grounds will be one of the beauty spots on the southern railway line".

