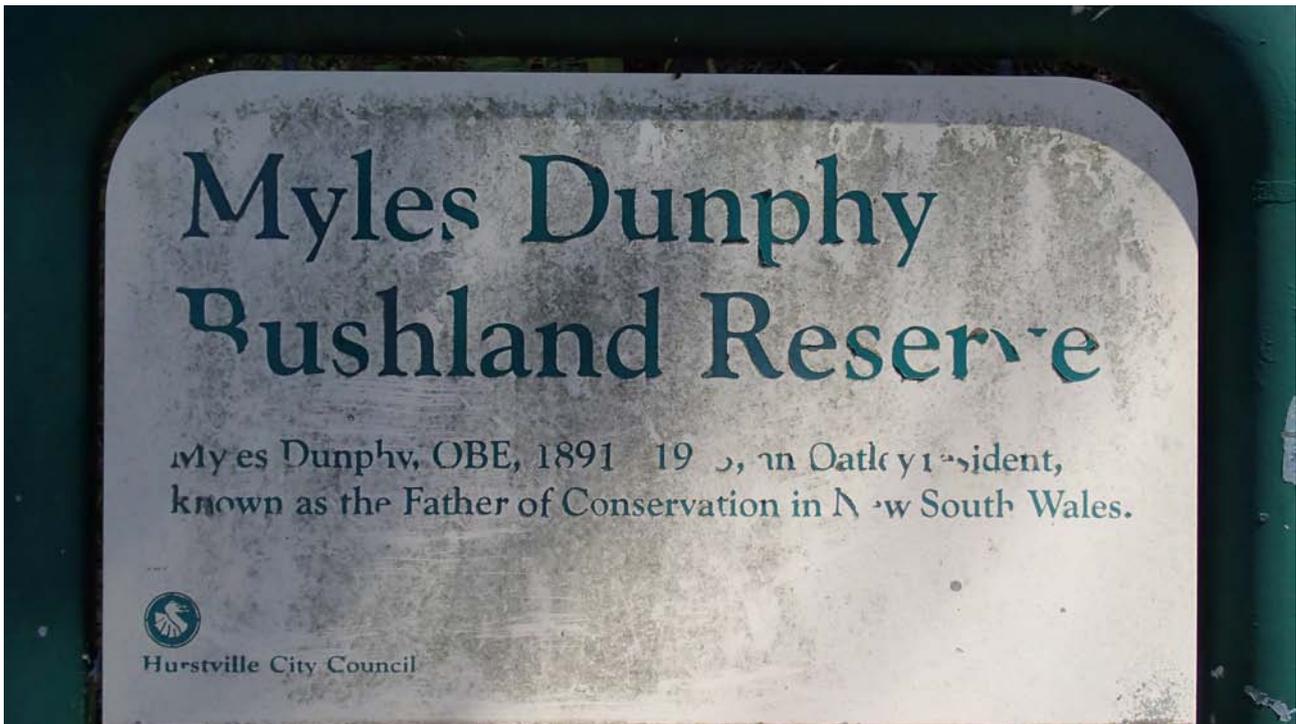


*Oatley Heritage and Historical Society*

<i>Month &amp; Year of Topic</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Written &amp; Spoken Presenters</i>
February 2018	Myles Dunphy	Graham Lalchere

# Myles DUNPHY



So, who was Myles Dunphy?

In nutshell Myles Dunphy is the reason why Sydney and NSW enjoys, to this day, many outstanding national parks and places of beauty.

## Brief Biography

Born 19 October 1891 in South Melbourne

Died 30 January 1985 at Peakhurst

Educated at various places in Victoria and NSW, including the Kiama Superior Primary School and Sydney Technical college.

During his life he was:

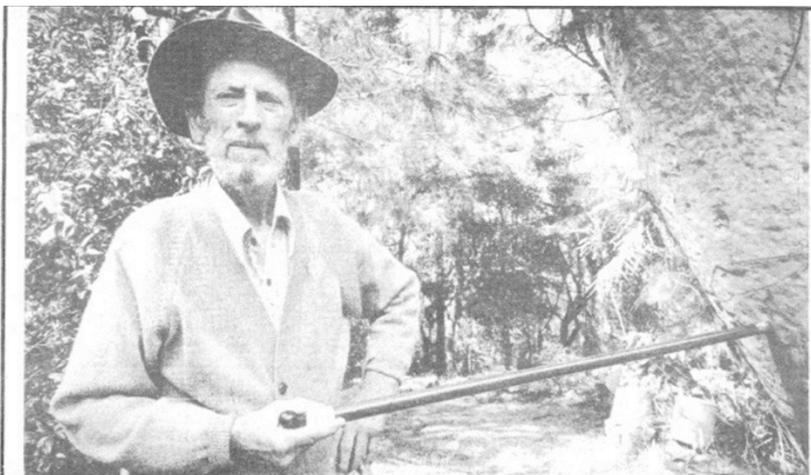
- Academic
- Architect
- Bush walker
- Conservationist
- TAFE/University teacher

## Awards

- Officer of the Order of the British Empire – Officer (Civil) in 1976 in recognition of service to conservation
- IUCN Fred Packard Award for outstanding lifelong service to protected areas (1982). There have been 128 awardees since 1982, incl Bob Brown and Bob Carr.

(Myles Dunphy is recognised for championing the cause of national parks in Australia for most of his life. From 1916 until a few years ago, Mr. Dunphy waged an active campaign for a state wide system of national parks containing wilderness areas, and completed wilderness parks. His voluntary efforts inspired others and gave impetus for the establishment of a comprehensive system of national parks in New South Wales, Australia.)

- Life Fellowship of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (1970).



MYLES DUNPHY in his backyard 'forest'.

Myles Joseph Dunphy is a member of the old school.

He remembers Sydney Harbor before the bridge; he does not talk of cars but automobiles and the gate on his Oatley home isn't broken it is "improperly attached".

At 93, Mr Dunphy proudly carries the title of

## NSW father of conservation

by  
**MIKE JOHNSON**

Margaret for a lot of the facts. I wouldn't be able to get by without her," he

sell clothes to the miners and their children around Australia," Mr Dunphy

Article in the St George and Sutherland Leader  
1984

## National Museum of Australia Display

His importance (and that of his son Milo) is illustrated by the display of the Dunphy collection at the National Museum of Australia.



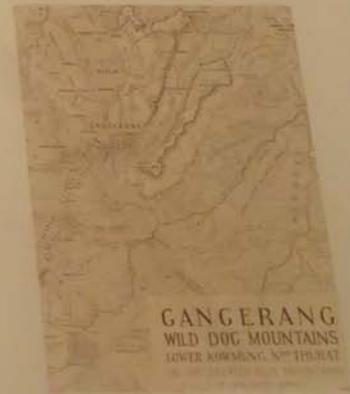
**Revolver, billy, frypan and hatchet, with leather cover, belonging to Myles Dunphy 1930s**

During the 1930s, walkers like Dunphy sometimes carried guns to shoot a rabbit for dinner. A hatchet would be used for chopping firewood. Today, guns are illegal in the Blue Mountains National Park, and food is much more portable and cooked on lightweight gas stoves — but boiling the billy is still an important part of a camper's day.

National Museum of Australia

**The map maker**

Myles Dunphy was a meticulous draughtsman and calligrapher. His detailed and artful maps of the Blue Mountains are treasured by collectors. Dunphy chose evocative names to honour places: Billycan Gap, Thunder Bend, Gasper Buttress, Whipcrack Spur, Blue Dog Range. He believed that maps and placenames would draw people to the Blue Mountains, and generate support for the region's conservation and protection.



## **Early Years**

Myles was born in Melbourne, but moved with his family to Outrim, a tiny coal mining settlement 120km south west of Melbourne in 1893, where his father, Myles Snr., ran a drapery and mercery business. It was here that Myles first came into contact with untamed nature. He ventured into the forest where he marvelled at the size of the ancient hardwood trees. But it wasn't long though before Myles Snr shut his shop and they returned to Melbourne. Shortly after that the family moved to Sydney.

Here they first moved to Bondi Junction, but moved again after his father's new business was unsuccessful. They then moved to Fairy Meadow, to Wollongong's north. Due to the distance to school, Myles had no formal education here, but he was able to appreciate nature's creatures up close while he wandered the areas, fossicking in the drains and waterholes, and identifying the different kinds of birds.

When Myles was 7 or 8 the family moved back to Sydney after his father's business apparently failed. They first lived in Surrey Hills, but quickly moved to a more salubrious area in Annandale, renting a cottage with sewerage and piped water. Here Myles explored the nearby bays, even though they were heavily polluted, trapping small fish. Unfortunately he contracted typhoid and was referred to the Edith Walker Hospital on the Parramatta River at Concord for convalescence. Here, as well as reading books from the hospital's library, he also fished in the river, including an incident when he grabbed what was probably a box jellyfish from the river to his painful regret.

After returning home, his father decided it was time to move home again. This time in 1903 it was to Kiama, where his father had an offer of a job supervising a large general store's drapery and mercery department. He also leased one of five weatherboard cottages just south of town. Here Myles was handed more domestic duties, including mending the families shoes and dispatching ducks for food. As an aside, his father, a widely read man, took an interest in local history, particularly that of Alexander Berry, after whom Berry is named. However his father did not encourage Myles Jnr's interest in the natural world.

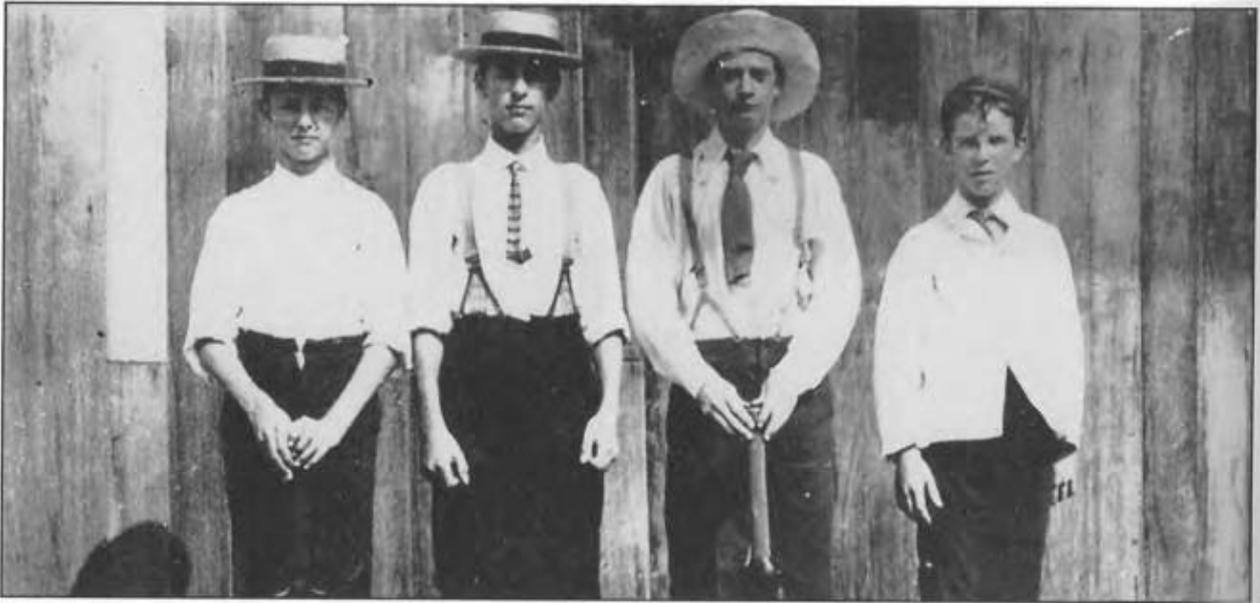
However, on a formal level, North Kiama Superior School exposed talents Myles Jnr had for composition, geography and art. He created remarkably skilled maps and sketches to accompany compositions on many countries, along with the beginnings of calligraphy in his essays. He was confident in his

abilities by age 12 to declare that he wanted to become an architect. He also continued his interest in the natural world, including birds, many of which were shot by his friends. Although he claimed to have no stomach for killing, he did develop a fascination with weapons. He had no qualms about killing fish though, being seen as a necessary component of a healthy diet.

Here in Kiama he began to make longer excursions, starting with a 7 km walk to the mouth of the Minnamurra River, uncovering some fossils there. When he was 15, he undertook one of his first walks to Saddleback Mountain, then to Barren Grounds, reaching a cliff from where he and his friends could see down into Jamberoo Valley. This was the most exciting day's exploration he had done, all without a map, which he then realised would have made the journey more interesting. That was the start of something new in his life. The Dunphy's years in Kiama were the best young Myles had known. However, his father had decided to move the family back to Sydney. This move was apparently to do with the children's education, although Myles Jnr was not very happy about it.

The family moved back to the same area as before, swapping the rolling sea for putrid bays. Due to family circumstances, including his father's ill health, Myles Jnr was asked by his mother to find a job. But he continued his education at the Technical college in Ultimo, enrolling in a course in building construction and architecture. He began a period of long hours of work and study interspersed with period of intense physical activity. He quickly left his first job due to occupational health problems and then joined W C Penfold and Co as a time-keeper clerk. His income became more critical to the family as his father was very ill and separated from the family.

In 1907 (when he was 15) he formed the Orizaba Tourist Club 'in the interests of physical exercise, a desire to see more country, and to acquire a band of friends'. Named after Pico de Orizaba, Mexico's highest peak at 5610m.



*4 Members of the Orizaba Tourist Club in 1907. They are, from left, Maurice Bollard, Myles Dunphy, Bert Larter and Bryan Dunphy. Myles was 15 at the time, younger than both Maurice and Bert. Despite the 'Tourist' in the club's name, cricket was one of its main pursuits.*

### **Members of the Orizaba Tourist club in 1907 (Myles 2<sup>nd</sup> from left)**

Despite its name many a Saturday afternoon was spent playing cricket on reclaimed land between North Annandale and Glebe Point. But as the years went by the OTC did a lot of walking. They began walks from Annandale to Parramatta, La Perouse, etc, sometimes covering more than 30 km a day. At Easter 1908 they made the first of 5 trips to Kiama. It was then that Myles began keeping written records of his walks. On a walk to Saddleback with friends, Myles shot a snake and Kingfisher with a .22 rifle. His attitude to killing had changed from when he persuaded friends to use targets to spare wildlife. In fact in a 1909 trip the group took 3 12 gauge shotguns and a .22 and shot 30 birds between them.

### **Young Man**

After the OTC was disbanded in 1910, he made his first journey to the Blue Mountains with friends. This journey would have far-reaching consequences. Standing on the cliff at Echo Point, Myles was astounded and this was an awakening for him. He had never seen such a scene before. The group then walked into the Megalong Valley and on to the Cox's River and return. After this experience Myles returned reluctantly to his job at Penfolds. For less money he then moved to a couple of builders jobs before he finally landed a job with Arthur J Hart, Civil Engineer. Although paying less than he was

earning 2 years previously, it was a solid start to his architectural career. About this time the family moved to a more salubrious home at the top end of Johnson St. Annandale.



Needing a break from both work and study, in 1912, Myles planned a 320 km walk from Katoomba to Kiama with a few mates. He planned to walk via Jenolan Caves, Cox's River, Wollondilly River to Mittagong then via Berrima, Fitzroy and Belmore Falls and Saddleback Mountain. He eventually began this arduous trek with one friend only, Bert Gallop, both staggering under 27 kg apiece, including 2 .22 rifles and 500 rounds of ammunition! Following many adventures and impassable country, after 230 km in 21 days they finally reached Picton, from where they caught a train home. However, Myles was

rapturous over the scenery they had seen, stating that “The Burragorang Valley is a paradise”.

Another 4 day trip to the Burragorang Valley followed at Easter 1913. The impression of the scenery was reinforced. However Myles believed that the Nattai River, which flows into the Burragorang, was doomed in the long term as farms, houses, etc, were sure to encroach.

Late in 1913, Myles and Bert undertook another walk from Picton Lakes (Thirlmere) to Mittagong via Burragorang, Yerranderie, Colong Caves, Mt Werong and Wombeyan Caves. They explored the Colong Caves while they were there with some local miners and Myles predicted that many of the formations in the caves would soon be destroyed by visitors and he was right. After 257 km they staggered worn out into Mittagong.

In October 1914 the two explorers did another rougher 3 week trek into the area to explore the Kowmung which they had briefly looked at earlier. Their epic trips revealed to Myles how little was known of the country hidden beyond the fringing gorges and escarpments of the southern Blue Mountains. Note-taking, mapping and sketching as he went, he meticulously documented the features of this “terra incognita”, so close to Sydney. He had by now developed his techniques for long-distant trailing as bush-walking was then known. He and two friends, Bert Gallup and Roy Rudder formalised their craft by forming the Mountain Trails club in 1914. Wildlife conservation was not among the club’s objectives at this stage, probably because Myles still remained enthusiastic about killing animals.

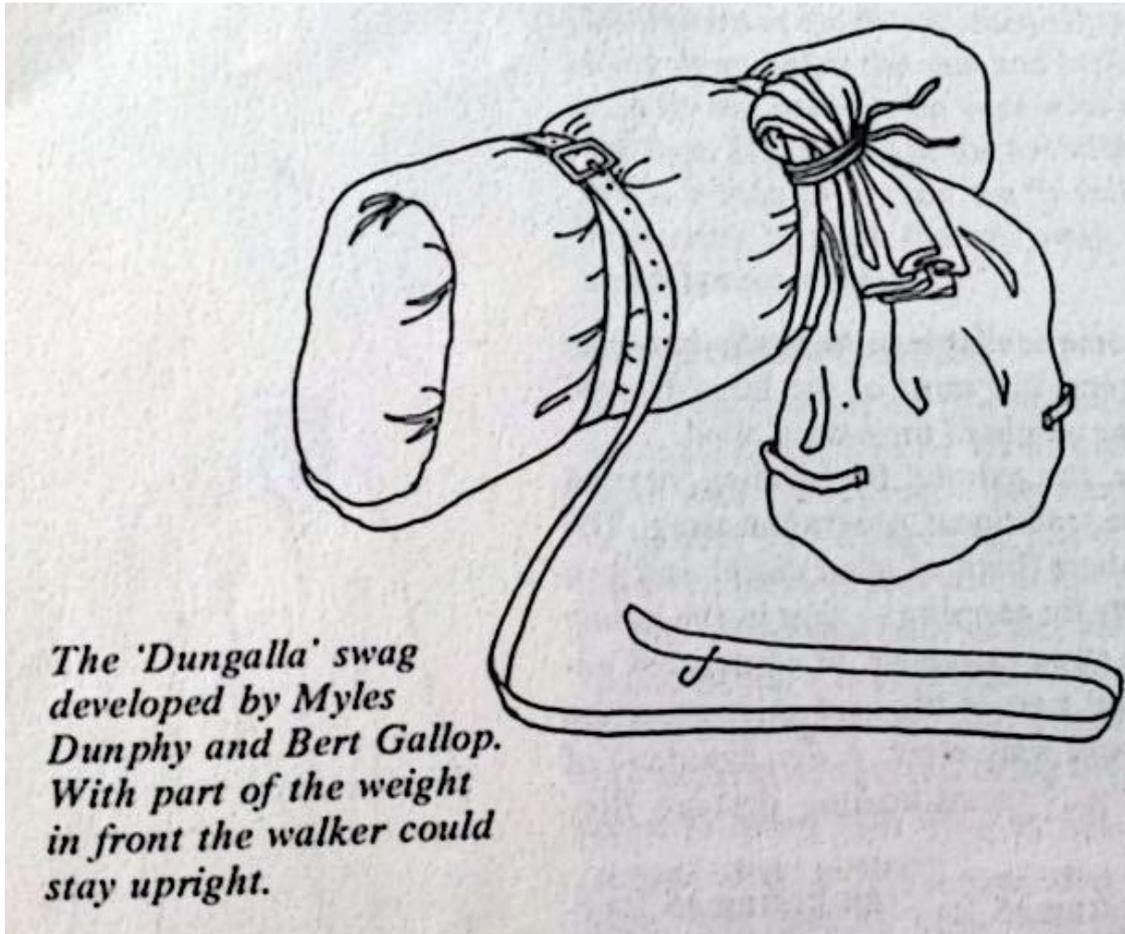
During this period Myles was also very busy with work and study. He assumed more responsibilities at work, enjoying the challenges of working for a man he much admired and who introduced the new structural medium of reinforced concrete. He was also appointed temporary assistant teacher of trades drawing following a sheaf of certificates and awards. He did have two set-backs though. His fiancée died and he contracted diphtheria in 1916.

Since his second trip to the Kowmung he had made a number of short walks as well as a 16 day 200 km walk during which he became interested in the exploits of Francis Barrallier. During these trips he now started to see the effects of tree felling, observing the resulting erosion. During one trip he experienced bad heart palpitations and thought he was going to die. He was by himself and only just managed to return to Blackheath. This problem may have been caused by the anti-diphtheria serums, but whatever caused it, he

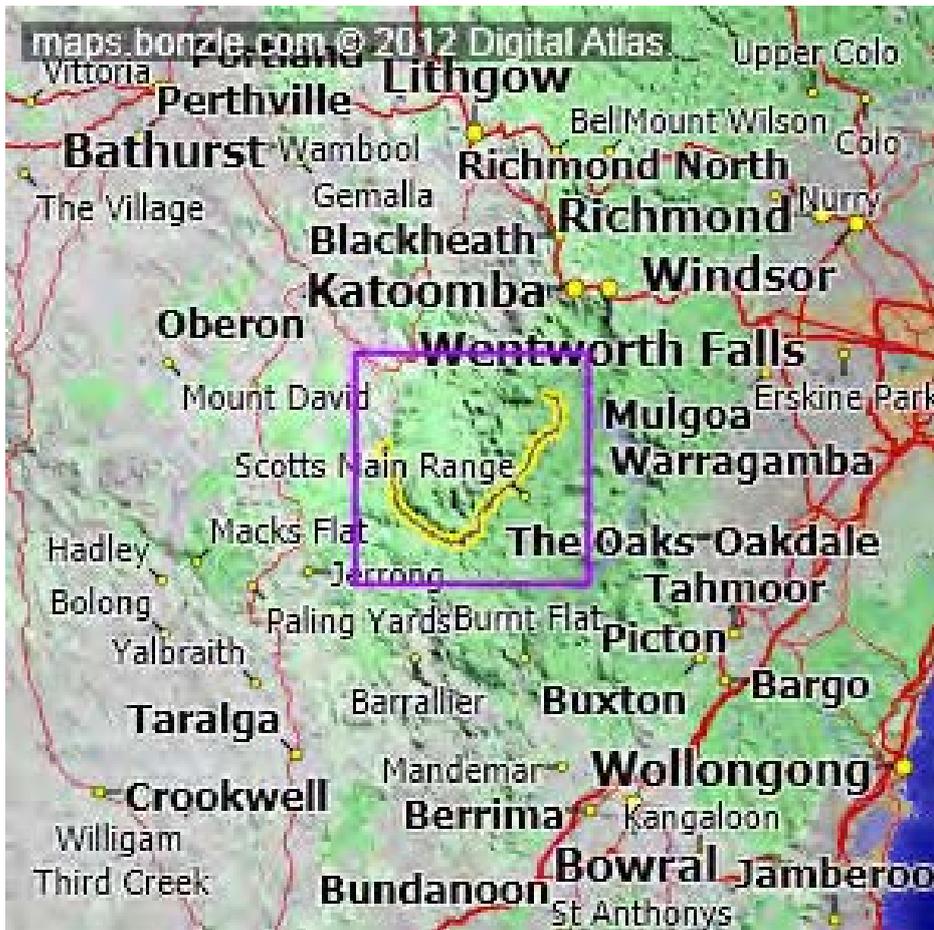
suffered what he called irritable heart for the rest of his life. For the next 3 years he restricted himself to shorter walks in the Blue Mountains and the National Park. He also began to become more concerned about the effects of tourism on the Blue Mountains.



**Myles in bushwalking gear in 1915**



**Kowmung River**



**Kowmung River location**



## **Canoeing and Marriage**

In 1918 Myles developed an interest in canoeing, hatching a plan to canoe the length of the Murray River with his fellow club member Roy Davies, following a walk down the coast of NSW. He subsequently commissioned a 17 foot timber canoe, the Aya Minya. He took a year off work for this marathon journey.

On 9 December 1919 Myles set off by train and bus with two mates to Nowra to start the long walk to Victoria. Unfortunately the trip was cut short when his mother notified him that she was very sick (by mail, no phones then!) This necessitated an arduous trip back to Sydney from Omeo by walking via the Alpine tops to Harrierville, then catching a coach to Bright and thence by train to Sydney. The walk over the tops Myles would later call “our marathon across the High Tops”. Winter was coming on and the weather was deteriorating rapidly. On reaching Sydney he found he was too late – his mother had already died and had been buried the day before he arrived home.

Despite his responsibilities as the oldest in his family, he decided that life must go on and he set out in April 1920 on a trip to the lakes and rivers north of Newcastle instead of the Murray. He shipped the Aya Minya to Tuncurry and with two of his brothers and his friend Roy explored the Myall Lakes area. Here the sight of logging and land clearing convinced Myles that this unique area should be protected, preferably in a national park. The trip finished in June in Newcastle after paddling 400km. When Myles returned to Sydney he found that his boss had died. He continued to work for the company but his heart was not in it and in 1922 he took up a full-time teaching job at the Technical college. In 1923 he was certified as an Architect, although he never practised privately.

In 1920 Myles met his future wife, Margaret Peet, then 16, while he was 29. It was too early for them to marry, but until they did they enjoyed many outdoor adventures together; Margaret was made of stern stuff. On one trek to the Elands area near Wingham in early 1925, they came across large cleared areas and Myles was again convinced that Australia’s natural heritage needed to be protected. This vague expression of the need for preservation was now firming up into explicit propositions insisting that “nothing short of 200 sq miles absolute reserve” “can preserve this gem” in the Barrington Tops area. Nature he wrote had created masterpieces but mankind had plundered and outraged them for personal profit.

Myles and Margaret were married on 19 December 1925 and they moved to a rented house at 53 Railway Parade, Mortdale. This home was set in a sea of vacant blocks and as Myles was not happy with her spending her days alone at home in a district notorious for burglaries, he bought a dog, Dex. Dex accompanied them on their honeymoon, with another couple, canoeing on the Hastings River. Again, he was concerned at the destruction of forests that they observed. He blamed the Forestry Commission which had been formed in 1916 and demanded policies to prevent them from stripping crown lands. He was beginning to sound more like an activist than a concerned observer.



**53 Railway Parade Mortdale**



**Dex and his boots**

In 1927, to cater for women walkers, an off-shoot of the Mountain Trails club was formed, the Sydney Bush Walkers, giving birth to a new term bush walker. One of the early members was Marie Byles, one of Australia's first female solicitors. Although this appeared to be a softening of Myles' patronising attitude to women, it did not extend to staying home with his wife at Christmas in 1929, even though it was only 7 months after the birth of their first son, Milo. However, he was surprised at women's stamina when he took 7 of them on a two trip to the Kowmung in January 1930. But this trek also brought home to him the extent of the damage taking place in this area. It was spoilt by the changes taking place, causing erosion and weed infestation.

### **Three in the Bush**

By 1931 Myles' vague ideas about the need to protect some of the landscape from the worst impacts of human progress had crystallised into a coherent philosophy of conservation. Now Myles was setting out on his trips not only for pleasure but to scout land with a view to proposing it be officially protected. Mapping, sketching and photographing, he had built up a detailed picture of wild areas that had never before been available to Europeans. He had already done some lobbying but plans for a vast national park in the Blue Mountains were still in the planning stage.

In February 1931 Myles planned a walk on a dray track from Oberon to Mt Kanangra and Kanangra Walls, 93 km. To make it easier to carry Milo, Myles bought a sort of folding pram which he then modified to carry gear as well as Milo. The Dunphys christened this the Kanangra Express. Myles and Margaret pushed and pulled this heavily laden contraption up and down steep hills and along the bone shaking track. Together with their packs they were carrying 90kg! They finally reached Kanangra and spent 3 days sightseeing. The Kanangra Express saw service again a year later when the family covered 170 km over 20 days, but on graded roads this time, in the Myall Lakes region.

Myles also made a number of journeys without his wife and son, including a 16 day walk in the Snowy Mountains with 2 women and 3 other men. He later wrote that he thought the scenery was magnificent and was fast becoming an area to match the Blue Mountains in needing protection from the malign hand of mankind. The interesting thing is that he became interested in the plight of the region's brumbies, although they were alien to Australia and had damaged the fragile landscape.



*15 Milo inspects the 'Kanangra Express', the pram in which Margaret and Myles pushed and pulled him from Oberon to Kanangra Walls and back in January and February 1931. Between them, the parents shifted a total of 90 kg over a rough track in midsummer heat.*

### **Kanangra Express**



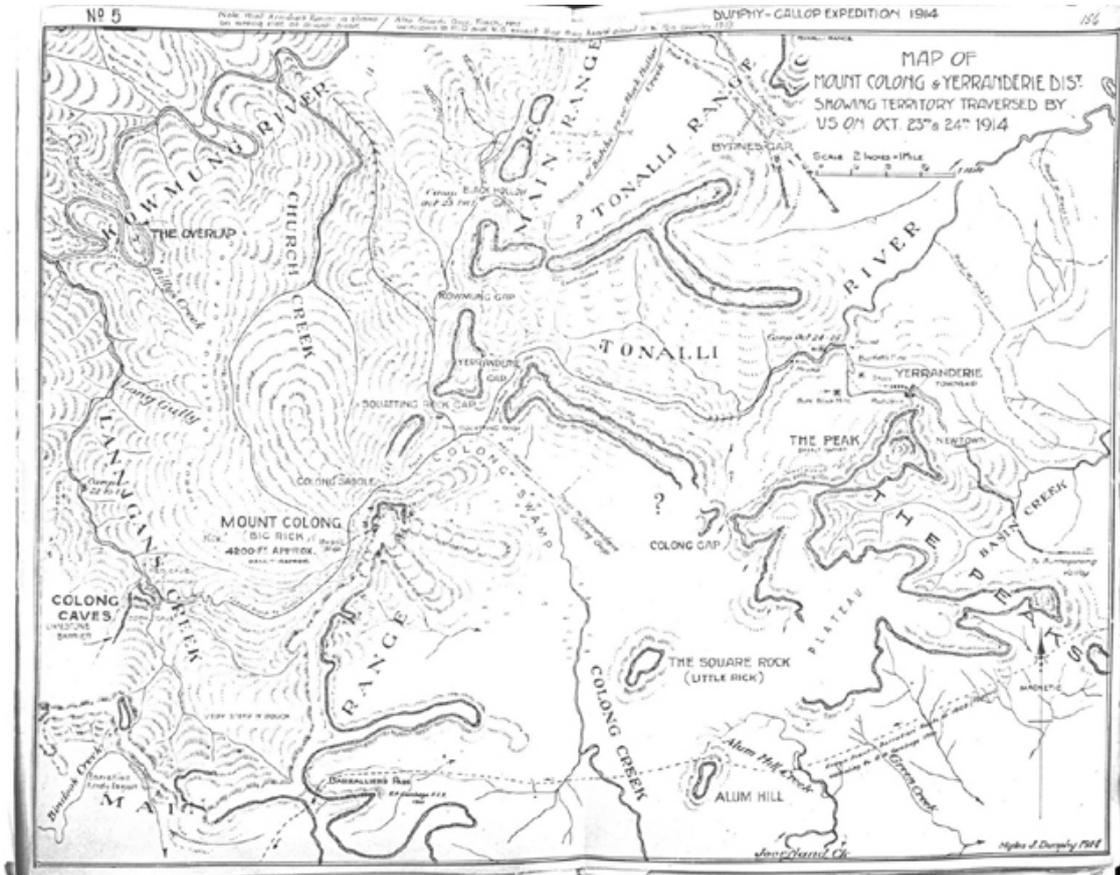
*16 Myles, Margaret and Milo prepare to depart from Yerranderie, a silver mining village in the southern Blue Mountains, for a three-week walk in 1933. When Milo became tired on long walks, Myles carried him on his shoulders, sometimes steadying him with a leather strap that circled the boy's chest.*

**Family walking from Yerranderie in 1931**

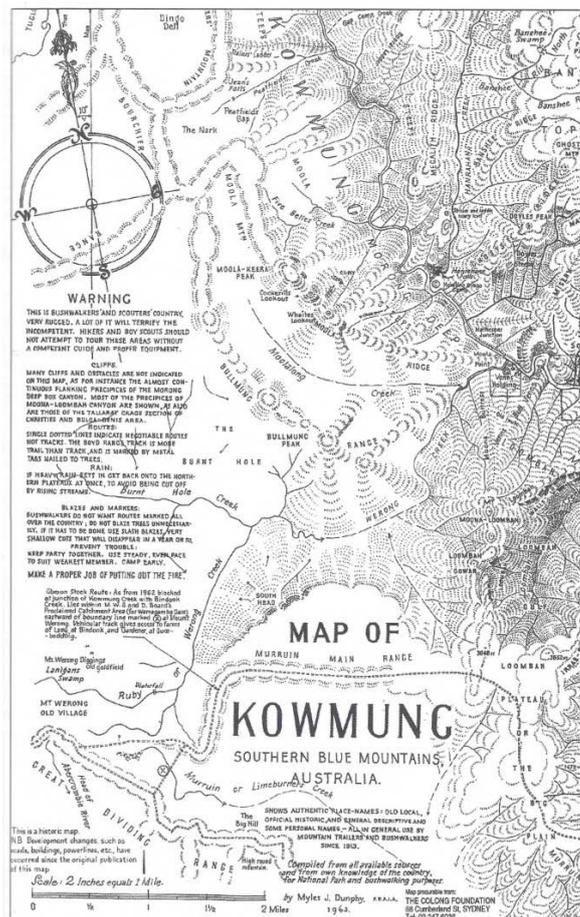
## **The Activist**

Parish maps Myles used in his early walks were next to useless for anyone walking off-track. For example, on his first big walk in 1912 he found himself surrounded by mountains in a spot shown on the map with none. This was like a magnet to an adventurous bushwalker and represented unfinished business to fill in. He sketched and photographed and made maps. Over time he inserted detail into the blank spaces, producing maps for the Blue Mountains areas, as well as other areas such as the Beecroft Peninsula (SE of Nowra), the Warrumbungles and the alpine region. Not being a cartographer, but a draughtsman, calligrapher and meticulous recorder of detail his maps had a rather arty eccentric look, with the information collected in a manner that cartographers would consider unconventional. However they were very useful for bushwalkers, carrying information on walking routes, camp-sites, water sources, warnings and other useful notes.

Myles maps were soon being sought after by walkers and others intending to visit the areas covered. After about 1923 the Government Tourist Bureau directed inquiries from travellers to him and the MTC, giving them credibility. This allowed him to bring the wilderness to the people. He eventually had 23 maps printed and published. On these maps he also named many features using local, aboriginal, historic and colourful descriptive names. This work was a synthesis of his many talents and gave him personal satisfaction turning his hobby into his life's work. He saw this as a way of attracting people to wild places and creating a pool of supporters for the preservation of these places. By 1930 he was not only attempting to sway public opinion but to lobby people in power.



Examples of Myles Dunphy Maps



18 A map created by Myles. Myles was a draughtsman and calligrapher, not a cartographer, and his maps have an artistic quality about them as a result. The density of detail on them reflects his meticulous nature. Many were still on sale and in use in bushwalking shops in the 1990s.

At the beginning of the 1930s the Surveyor-general agreed to a suggestion from Myles that a comprehensive map of the Greater Blue Mountains be published by the Dept of Lands. Due to his knowledge and his position at the Technical college he was asked to help with the map's compilation. Working with a departmental surveyor the map took a year and 6 weeks of painstaking work. In fact there were two editions, one for the general public and a set of full-sized more detailed maps under the title "Tourist Map. Special Walking clubs Issue". This would prove to be a most useful tool in the campaign for the Blue Mountains National Park.

Myles Dunphy saw himself first and foremost as a conservator of wild places. He realised that action was needed and he was the one to take it, although, of course, supported by the MTC and later the SBW. The first action he and the MTC took was in 1924 when they protested about illegal cattle grazing in the National Park (later the Royal NP). Unfortunately they appear to have been unsuccessful despite the Minister for Lands promising to give the matter his full attention. Sounds familiar! They were also unsuccessful in asking for a strip of scenic cliffs at Garawarra to be added to the NP. Another set-back occurred in a blue-gum and iron-bark forest in the Couridjah Corridor in the S-E Blue Mountains which Myles naively suggested to a Forestry Commission officer should be preserved for public reservation as "it was the finest forest anywhere within reasonable distance of Sydney". Within 10 years the Forestry Commission had cleared the best trees! The lesson was that half-measures might be worse than useless; persuading the authorities to conserve land would require more than gentlemanly conduct.

Sometime between 1922 and 1924 Myles put up a tentative national park scheme for the Blue Mountains. He had been keeping up with developments overseas, particularly in the USA and the idea of big parks meshed well with his ideas, as did the American idea of wilderness areas. In 1931 he put up another proposal, this time for a Snowy-Indie Primitive Area on both sides of the NSW-Victoria border. However the relatively conservative members of the MTC were galvanised into action by an event that occurred in the Blue Gum Forest at the confluence of the Grose River and Govetts Creek.

The future of this beautiful serene area had been considered safe after it had survived various threats. But during Easter 1931 walkers had come across two local men who mentioned in passing that they intended to fell all the trees. At a meeting of the MTC it was decided that the only way to save the area was to

buy it. Despite Myles caution a group of bushwalkers agreed to pay 130 pounds for the lease. They subsequently had difficulties raising the money but it was paid on time, the lease was transferred and the state Government declared Blue Gum forest a recreation reserve on 2 September 1932. There was some doubt that the area would have been cleared, but this event showed conservationists that individuals and small groups could do something practical to save primitive areas. Myles now returned to other issues with renewed determination.



1932 Blue Gum Forest saved



Alan Rigby (standing) with camera, Blue Gum Forest 1931

Alan Rigby convinced the MTC to buy the Blue Gum Forest lease.

The most significant of these other issues was Myles proposal for a Blue Mountains national park. In early 1932 Surveyor-General H B Mathews became interested in this proposal and asked to see the plan. Before giving Mathews a copy Myles also submitted the proposal to the Blue Mountains Shire Council. They welcomed the plan as it would attract tourists to the area and promised to lobby the government. He then handed the plan to Mathews and the plan was now officially recognised.

To help with the proposal the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council (NPPAC) was set up with representatives from 4 bush walking clubs and with Myles as its secretary. The council's motto was "Progress with conservation", appealing to both the faithful and the infidel. Myles now had a mechanism capable of turning wishful thinking into reality. He and the NPPAC then embarked on a massive campaign to publicise the Blue Mountains National Park proposal, culminating in a four-page broadsheet supplement to the Katoomba Daily on Friday, 24 August, 1934. A map 3 columns wide showed a park covering 4662 sq km stretching 100 kms north to south, by far the largest scheme of its kind ever proposed in Australia. As Dr Geoff Mosley put it, the supplement was "a veritable manifesto for the bush walking conservation movement".



Although this proposal hogged the limelight, the NPPAC was pursuing as many as 20 less ambitious conservation issues at the time. These included the Garawarra/Burning Palms area where shack building and pressure for road access was threatening the area. This was a haunt for bushwalkers and these developments were an affront to Myles who campaigned with the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs for a Garawarra Primitive Area Park. Following the presentation of a 400 page petition the Garawarra Park was declared in 1934 although road access was not excluded.

In 1934 the family moved to 74 Woronora Parade Oatley.



Myles used 2 of the bedrooms for his study and storage of his large collection of papers and artefacts. Here he worked on his proposals and college tasks. He also welcomed his two sons, Milo and Dexter, into this room patiently answering their questions or explaining things to them. His wife Margaret was great support to Myles in his endeavours, but did complain about his resistance to change. But as Dexter said, he was a conservationist in every sense of the word and this became the foundation of his conservation ethos.

In 1942 the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs lobbied the Dept of Lands to reserve the Heathcote catchment and the result was the Heathcote Primitive Area declared in 1943; Myles acted as trustee until 1961. (The Heathcote area includes Miara Pool). This action followed increased use of the area by bushwalkers after the Burning Palms area was opened up to tourists

Myles took the family on holidays to the country in summer, taking the boys on day walks. Often these had other motives as well, while he investigated park proposals such as creating a national park centred on the Murramarang Range to the north of Durras.

Myles considered these summer holidays sacrosanct due to his heavy workload and any intrusion into it was a stressful inconvenience. But it didn't help that he undertook so many extra-curricular activities. One of these was spending 6 months of his spare time on an army mapping project with the Australian Museum, a plaster cast of a relief map of Sydney. They requested he assist them to supply missing contours in areas of the Blue Mountains.

Myles environmental work confined him to his study during the war years. In 1943 he lodged his Snowy-Indie park proposal. The premier, William McKell, wrote to him in September that he would establish the Kosciusko National Park. However, this still did not include a primitive area, an issue that was not resolved until the 1960s.

In 1948 Myles was promoted to deputy lecturer-in-charge at the tech, where he also taught his son Milo. He was remembered by one of his students as a man with two passions in life, wilderness and the history of architecture (which he taught). Others remembered him as a man too pre-occupied with his affairs to concern himself with the feelings of others. An ex-neighbour remembers him as a lovely man. Ironically by the early 1950s Myles was undertaking many of his trips by car, partly because he no longer felt physically able to take on hard walking.

### **Later Years.**

In 1959, 25 years after the Blue Mountains NP proposal, the Heffron Government gazetted 62,000 Ha of the park, thanks, according to Myles, to a handful of bureaucrats and the surveyor general, who wanted to clear the matter up. However Myles was still unhappy as the southern part of the proposal, although gazetted as a reserve in 1938, did not exclude logging or cattle grazing. He therefore re-submitted his proposal for the southern division. This time he was supported by the newly formed National Parks

Association (NPA). Also, unlike 25 years previously there was now a plethora of bodies with similar aims to let governments know that the careless march of development and progress would not go unchallenged.

The NPA was formed in 1957, with the help and support of Myles, who became vice-president of its Central Region Committee. It took over from the NPPAC after 1962, from which time the NPPAC became redundant and its work tailed off between 1962 and 1965. Since 1932 the NPPAC had overseen the dedication of 14 national parks and at its demise ten more were in the pipeline and would be promoted successfully by the NPA and other groups. Since most of the NPPAC's work was, to a greater or lesser extent, the result of Myles's efforts, these parks are the extraordinary legacy of one man's energy in just one of his fields of interest. But he did not rest on his laurels, as retiring at age 71 left him with more time to pursue his environmental interests.

The NPA's prime object was to have the state government set up a national parks administration. Despite the lobbying having to begin anew when the Askin government was elected in 1965, conservationists had an ally in Tom Lewis, the new minister for lands. The National Parks and Wildlife Act became law in 1967.

The Colong Foundation noted that "From 1932 Myles promoted a system of national parks from the Snowy Mountains in southern NSW to the Hastings River in the north, including the 465,000 hectare Greater Blue Mountains National Park. These reserve proposals laid the foundations of the current national park system in NSW. Myles Dunphy also pioneered the first wilderness reserve in Australia, the Tallowa Primitive Reserve in 1934."

He also petitioned, among others, Hurstville Municipal Council to purchase the land which is now Myles Dunphy Reserve, including the bowling club site. This reserve was named after him at the request of Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Inc in 1991 (coincidentally the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth). (His son Milo also designed the bowling club building.)

Myles felt duty-bound to record as much as possible of his life and doings. This work took him 11 years from 1963 to 1974, a monumental task. However, the impression of many of these writings is that of a record that is 'ecologically correct' according to 1960s ideology. Throughout the 1960s he was also busy with his mapping and nomenclature, working hard to persuade the Geographical Names board to keep most of the names he had chosen in

the Blue Mountains NP. This was in addition to work he did on his Kanangra-Boyd NP proposal. His papers were donated to the state library and staff there considered them the most complete record of any man's life in that period.

Meanwhile on the domestic front, Margaret had been complaining about the primitive conditions at Woronora St, so Milo offered to design a house for them on one of 3 blocks Myles owned in Mi Mi Street. Myles pride would not accept this, so he designed his own idiosyncratic split-level building. Myles and Margaret moved to 109 Mi Mi Street in July 1964. Margaret had a modern kitchen at last but Myles did not have enough room for his memorabilia, remarking that he had no idea he had so much stuff. He stayed here till his death on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1985. His ashes are interred at Woronora Crematorium.

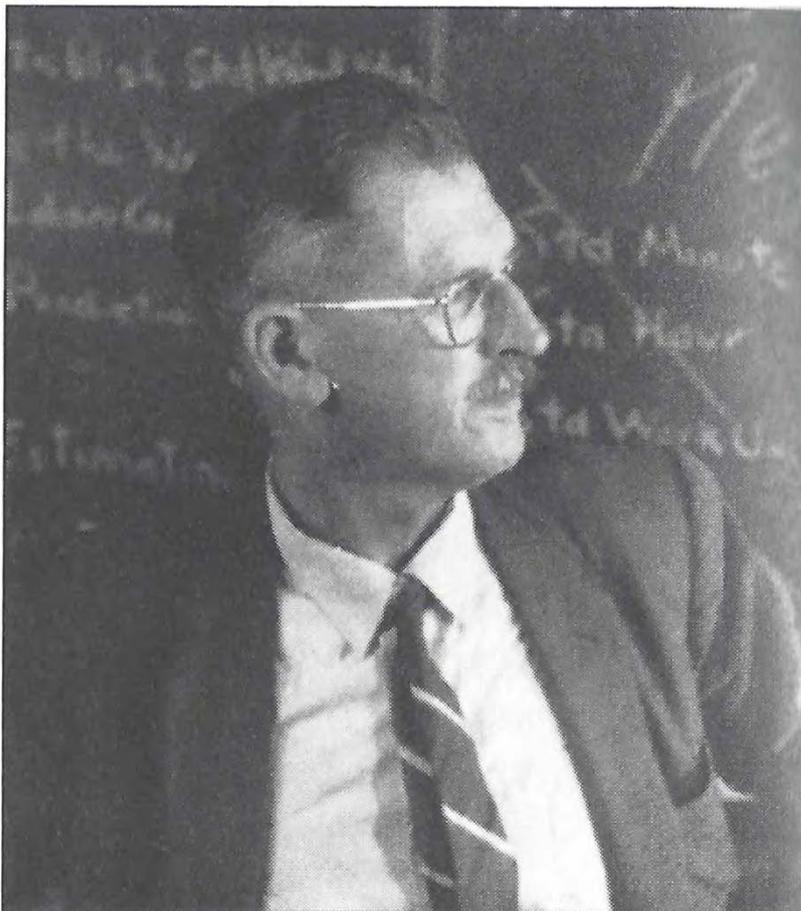


**109 Mi Mi Street today**

(probably not the original house)



28 Myles lighting a fire at Miara Pool, on Heathcote Creek, in 1960. Miara had been a favourite destination of the Dunphy family and a small coterie of bushwalkers ever since Myles had first visited it in 1912.



**Myles at Miara Pool (above, 1960) and lecturing at Univ of NSW (1962).**

## **Summary of Myles Dunphy's achievements**

**Patrick Thompson**, in his book **Myles Dunphy: Selected Writings**, summed up thus:

“Perhaps the most significant and fascinating fact is that ultimately practically all his schemes succeeded. His ideas, once advanced, gradually became the dreams of others and in the process of time filtered through to a wider public and gradually gained respectability and support in the political arena. Myles was almost apolitical and remained very much part of what he termed ‘the people of the little tents’. His genius was to take great pains to articulate his ideas and then to assist with the structuring of an organised and well disciplined voluntary conservation movement.”

### **ArchitectureAU** (magazine)

“Myles was the visionary behind proposals for national parks in NSW, and (son) Milo became a passionate inspiration for many branches of the state’s burgeoning environmental movement, which has repeatedly demonstrated the power of community groups to prevent the destruction of public reserves.”

## **Acknowledgements**

Peter Meredith, Myles and Milo.  
Colong Foundation for Wilderness  
National Museum of Australian  
Bonzle digital map of Australia

## Other Tributes

### **Colong foundation:**

Myles Dunphy (1891-1985) was a tireless publicist for the wilderness cause, producing maps and even publishing a wilderness broadsheet as a supplement to the Katoomba Daily in 1934.

A week's holiday with friends in a Katoomba boarding house in 1910 began his life-long love affair with the bush. He systematically mapped the Blue Mountains wilderness where only blank spaces on parish maps previously existed. Today these maps are treasured for the detailed information and practical advice to Blue Mountains visitors.

From 1916 until the 1970s Myles Dunphy waged an active campaign for a state-wide system of national parks containing wilderness areas. His voluntary efforts extended over fifty years and inspired others, not the least of whom was his son, Milo.

Myles formed the Mountains Trails Club in 1914, the first bushwalking club to explore trackless wild places in Australia. The promotion of bushwalking through this club led to the formation of the Sydney Bushwalkers, and with growing interest the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs was formed in 1932. By the late 1920s Dunphy's bushwalking experiences gradually turned to protection. As he said at the time: 'The best scenery should be protected for public use and benefit'. The operative word being scenery - ecology had not yet been 'invented', although the need for forest and catchment conservation was well understood.

In 1932 Myles Dunphy formed the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, which for the next 25 years advanced the case for national park reservation in NSW. From 1932 Myles promoted a system of national parks from the Snowy Mountains in southern NSW to the Hastings River in the north, including the 465,000 hectare Greater Blue Mountains National Park. These reserve proposals laid the foundations of the current national park system in NSW.

Myles Dunphy also pioneered the first wilderness reserve in Australia, the Tallowa Primitive Reserve in 1934, and from the 1930s continued to advocate the need for a professional parks service. He received an OBE for his services to conservation and the IUCN's Fred M Packer award for 'Long Service with Merit in Advocacy of National Parks'. **ikipedia:**

Myles Dunphy lived in Oatley, a southern suburb of Sydney, and started his wilderness publicity work in 1910. He compiled detailed maps of a number of areas of conservation interest in New South Wales. His original maps of the Blue Mountains, in particular the Coxs River and [Kowmung River](#) catchments, featured imaginative and original naming systems. Throughout his life he campaigned for wilderness areas throughout New South Wales.

His interest in bushwalking led to the foundation of the Mountain Trails Club of New South Wales, and was influential in the formation of the Sydney Bushwalkers and the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs in 1932. He also formed the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, and took steps to establish a professional parks service.

He was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1976 in recognition of service to conservation,<sup>[1]</sup> and was awarded an IUCN Packer Award for Long Merit in National Parks.

### **Australian Dictionary of Biography**

In 1933 Dunphy had helped to form another group, the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, which sought the reservation of scenic areas for recreation. He looked enviously on the development of national parks in the United States of America and hoped to encourage similarly protected environments in New South Wales for bushwalkers. As secretary of the NP&PAC, in 1934 Dunphy publicised a proposal for a Blue Mountains national park that had been submitted in 1932, but it was not until 1959 that lobbying resulted in a government gazettal of 155,676 acres (63,000 ha). This park was only a quarter of the size envisioned by Dunphy but with subsequent additions, such as the Wollemi National Park in 1979, the eventual Greater Blue Mountains Park fulfilled his original proposal. Other parklands, for example the Warrumbungle National Park in 1953, were created as a result of NP&PAC lobbying and his maps. In 1967, with the establishment of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the lobbying role of the NP&PAC diminished but Dunphy served on the Blue Mountains National Parks Trust and in his retirement successfully fought the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales, of which he was an honorary counsellor, to retain the names he had chosen in the Blue Mountains region.

Displaying a lifelong commitment to connecting urban residents with the natural world, Dunphy made a profound contribution to the conservation cause. 'Whether we like it or not', he had commented in 1934, 'we hold our

land in trust for our successors'. His skill as a cartographer and his role as a lobbyist ensured that land was preserved for his successors to enjoy. His trail (literally) can still be followed. He was appointed OBE in 1977 and was given the Fred M. Packard International Parks merit award by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in 1982. Survived by his wife and their two sons, he died on 30 January 1985 at Peakhurst and was cremated. Some of his writings have been published in P. Thompson (ed), *Myles Dunphy* (1986).