

# **Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Inc**

## **Reinventing the Centre**

The screenshot shows the homepage of the SSEC website. On the left, a vertical sidebar contains links: About the Centre, Our Environment, Towns Point, Kurnell, Hacking River, Issues & Campaigns (with Nuclear, EMRAA, and more), What's New, Proceedings of Estuaries Forum, Trails Forum, Port Hacking and Botany Bay infosheets, People's LEP - Community Reps' view, Our policies, and Resources.

The main content area features the SSEC logo (a stylized green 'S' and 'E' with leaves) and the text "Sutherland Shire Environment Centre". Below this is a circular image of a wetland or estuary scene with green grass and water reflecting the sky. At the bottom of the page, contact information is provided: Suite 4 (1st Floor), 2-4 Merton Street, Sutherland NSW, PO Box 589 Sutherland NSW 1499, Ph. 02 9545 3077 Fax 02 9521 1477, email: [office@ssec.org.au](mailto:office@ssec.org.au).

## **2002 ANNUAL REPORT**

13 September 2002

## Introducing...The scope and work of the Environment Centre

N.B. Three surveys in 1997-8 showed that ENVIRONMENT tops the concerns of residents. Sutherland Shire, population now 215 000, is the second largest of 177 NSW council areas.

- **Character:** A self-funded community association; incorporated; tax-deductible.  
Founded 1991; comprehensive constitution; annual elections; non-party political.
- **Campaigns:** some successful campaigns in which the Centre was prominent –  

1992: Megatip proposal withdrawn	1996-97: Holsworthy airport defeated
1993: Nuclear reactor postponed	1996-98: Cogeneration plant modified
1994: No offshore sandmining	1997-99: Towra Bushcare under way
1995: Helensburgh expansion rejected	1999-2002: Tip Conservation Area saved
- **Committees:** indicating the breadth of the Centre's ongoing activities –  

Airports	Fundraising	Newsletter	Transport/Roads
Bushland	Hacking River	Nuclear	Urban Planning
Education	Management	Population/Immigration	Waste Minimisation
EM Radiation	Marine	Kurnell/Botany Bay	Water, sewerage

The Centre has over 20 representatives on Council, State and Federal committees

- **Concerns:** the Centre is actively interested in Worldwide, Australian, and Shire problems:

1. **Worldwide problems**
  - greenhouse warming
  - diminishing ozone layer
  - forest destruction
  - loss of arable soils
  - shortage of freshwater
  - toxic pollution (land/sea/air)
  - nuclear threat
  - population growth/technology
2. **Australia-wide problems**
  - soil depletion is No.1
  - rapid spread of 'salting'
  - continuing tree loss
  - rivers in crisis
  - growing water shortage
  - feral/pest/weed problems
  - loss of biodiversity
  - ocean pollution
  - worsening urban air
  - fisheries depletion
  - mining in national parks
  - population pressures
3. **Shire problems**

GENERAL

  - Population now 215,000 already far exceeds Council's past Strategic Plan estimates.
  - Charges of overdevelopment were common at 1995 State election and continue today.
  - Transport problems and air quality problems are increasing alarmingly.
  - In all areas of the Shire, demands for "sustainability" in development can be heard.
  - Urban bushland is precious; bushcare groups number over 100, but more are needed.

NORTH	SOUTH	WEST	EAST
- Botany Bay	- Port Hacking	- Tip/waste minimisation	- Cronulla dunes, wetlands
- Kurnell Peninsula	- Hacking River	- Nuclear reactor	- High-rise in Cronulla
- Towra Point	- Royal National Park	- Bridges/roads	- Beach pollution
- Taren Pt wetland	- Heathcote National Park	- Woronora Valley	- Rehabilitation of historic Kurnell
- Georges R. in crisis	- Bundeena/Maianbar	- Menai overdevelopment	Peninsula

Successful environmental campaigns in the 1990s (e.g. against a Megatip and a Holsworthy airport) demonstrate that the Shire becomes a powerful force when its community organisations and Council join resources in enthusiastic unanimity.

*We need your participation to effect change, please join SSEC...by sending \$27.50*

## A Word from the Chair

**Sutherland Shire Environment Centre** is perhaps the most extensive and active regional environment centre in Australia. It is really a broad coalition, and most environmentally concerned groups are either members or closely linked to it. Together with associated groups, the numbers exceed a thousand members.



Now over ten years old, it has grown every year without exception, and has moved this year into much larger premises. It is getting ready to launch a major membership drive, which it has not done before.

Though Annual General Meetings of community organisations are typically poorly attended, the Centre's AGM usually attracts 80-100 members, who elect its Management Committee.

The Centre has always been entirely self-funded, and a major accountancy firm audits its books.

The only Government grants it receives are for specific projects such as weed eradication, writing or recycling competitions. This year, to handle the rapidly growing demands on it, the Centre employs two full-time staff, two part-time staff who are engaged on transport and river catchment problems, and one-part time consultant. Over twenty of its nominees sit on Local and State government committees and two on Federal government committees.

Each year, the Centre handles hundreds of phone inquiries, and many students – primary, secondary and tertiary – use its extensive library and records.

It has constructed six websites and is busy on another.

The Centre has been associated with dozens of environmental projects and campaigns, often in a leading role. In its early years it was prominent in the campaigning against a Megatip at Menai, near-shore sandmining, expansion of urban Helensburgh, the Holsworthy Airport, and many more.

Recently it has received commissions to study the feasibility of continuous walking trails along both the Georges and Woronora Rivers.

Its sixteen committees are continually at work.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil deNett".

Neil deNett

## The Green Movement Driven by Individuals – a Talk by Bob Walshe



Yes, let's rejoice in the Centre's move to spacious premises close to Sutherland Council which we strive to *partner* in the enterprise of keeping this remarkable Shire free of overdevelopment that would spoil our greenspace, our waterways, and our urban quality-of-life.

But let's also watch to see complacency doesn't creep into our work. That could happen! When we were small and cramped in the Eton Arcade room (pictured), people probably took pity on us and lent a hand – or a dollar. Whereas, now, they may think we're strong and affluent and don't need to be helped.



One of the tests of a good environment centre is that it not only inspires people but draws them into activity. We're not bad at that, though there's room to improve.

If you ask me *how*, I'll feel obliged to stop talking about "people" and talk instead about "individuals". Every person presently active around the Centre is very much an individual – which suggests that we should be on the watch all the time for the creative, self-acting individual who can be attracted to take responsibility for either an area of the Centre's office work or of the Shire's environmental work.



Looking after office activities, for example, we see Shirley Renshall's (pictured) bookkeeping routines, Lorraine Foster's organising of volunteers, Ruth Turner's filing of cuttings, and several helpers operating computers.

As to areas of environmental work, to give only some examples, there is Annette Hogan active for North Cronulla and the sandhills, Norm Dixon for the Woronora Valley, Jean and George Baluk for Miranda, Tim Tapsell for the Hacking (top), Jim Towart for Kurnell waterways, Pat Murray for Taren Point wetlands, Miriam Verbeek for greenspace, Neil deNett for Bundeena and urban planning, Ruth Zeibots for general fundraising... the list goes on. And others overstep the Shire to give leadership in Sydney-wide and even national areas: Lyn McLean for electro-magnetic radiation, Michelle Zeibots for transport (pictured middle), Gordon Hocking for migration (pictured) and population, and Michael Priceman for anti-nuclear campaigning.



## SSEC Annual Report 2002

You see, an incredible list! Individuals all. I think that in looking for such activists, we should perhaps first designate an area of need and then go looking for the individual who would show the leadership to meet the need.

There's another side to this. I call it the Centre's style-of-work. All these individuals are tolerant and patient at the same time as they are determined. Determined? Well, in a special kind of way: combining *idealism* about the natural world and urban quality with a *realism* that knows the environment is in bad shape and needs great efforts to turn the tide.

The Centre strives to work amicably with everyone. After all, *everyone* needs to be persuaded to become environmentally aware. So we have to be on good terms, for example, with both major parties. If, as sometimes happens, we are attacked angrily, we don't take this personally, we don't return anger with anger; rather we keep in touch, we hold no grudges – tomorrow is another day and anger passes. There's an obligation on our active people to avoid confrontation and stay on speaking terms.

I'd like to end this salute to The Individual by remembering two truly great individuals who are seldom far from my thoughts.

In 1962 Rachel Carson died. The ABC's Robin Williams has described her as the leading saint of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She was the marine biologist who in 1962 wrote *Silent Spring* which alerted the world to the chemicals being released into the environment and thence into food-chains. The book is often seen as launching the modern green movement. Ten years later, in 1972, another great individual, Milo Dunphy, headed up the Total Environment Centre in Sydney, which has been widely influential, not least in influencing the early years of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.

Any individual can gather a group or network around himself or herself and by hard work and a cheerful attitude succeed in changing the world for the better. As many of our Centre people are doing. Let's look for more!



## Report to Annual General Meeting, 13 September 2002

### By Jim Sloan, Executive Officer

Welcome to our 11<sup>th</sup> AGM in this year of 2002.

This has been an exciting year for the Centre. As of January, the Centre is now in much larger premises at Suite 4, 2-4 Merton Street Sutherland. This locates us directly behind the Mitre 10 Hardware Store and across the street from the west end of Sutherland Shire Council Chambers.



Over the past two to three years, the increasing activities of the Centre have greatly stressed the Centre's ability to continue serving the community from Suite 16, Eton Arcade. The Management Committee explored a variety of other premises within the Shire, but decided we needed to stay in Sutherland because of its central location. After assessing the available rental properties in 2001, it soon became apparent that meeting the Centre's needs was going to be very expensive. Expansion at Eton Arcade was not an option as there is a high likelihood that the building will be demolished and rebuilt within the next 2-3 years.

Renting an office was likely to quadruple the Centre's existing rental budget. Therefore the Management Committee explored the option of purchasing a property in Sutherland. A grant application of \$250,000 was successfully made to Perpetual's LEAF (Local Environments of Australia Fund) trust. A number of properties were explored and finally negotiations on 2-4 Merton Street began in September 2001.

While the Management Committee was unable to get the developer to subdivide Suite 4 to a size we could purchase outright, a decision was made to offer \$500,000 pending the successful negotiation of a mortgage of \$250,000. This culminated in the successful purchase of 230sq metre of prime renovated office space which the Centre took possession of on the 9 February 2002. This space has since been divided into two sections, suites 4 & 4a, with the Centre occupying suite 4 and Livefit Personal Training leasing suite 4a from the Centre for one year, with an option for a second year.

This has allowed us to add five more workstations (now a total of 9), a large meeting area and sizeable library. The Centre's timing in the purchase worked to our advantage when it came time to outfit the new office. The Kent Street Olympics Office closed in December 2001 and auctioned its office equipment off just before Christmas. This allowed the Centre to completely outfit



## **SSEC Annual Report 2002**

the new office with workstations, meeting tables, chairs, shelving etc. for less than \$2500.

This will allow the Centre to expand its services to the community and to welcome many new friends into activities that enhance, support and conserve our environment.

The SSEC continues to target the following issues:

- Supporting sustainable development and population growth
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Preserving remanent bushland and regenerating degraded bushland.
- Improving the sustainability of our coast and estuaries
- Recognising and promoting the Shire's cultural heritage and its value to current and future generations
- Encouraging sustainable consumption, waste avoidance and minimisation
- Rejecting activities producing radioactive waste and opting for non-reactor high technology
- Linking global environmental issues to local actions.

## **SSEC Activities 2000/2002**

The Centre continued its fight to save the Menai B Shale Sandstone Transition Forest. Read more about this issue in the PUBS Report at the end of this document.

The Sustainable Communities Fact Sheets continue to grow:

1. "Population and the Environment" – *Living sustainably, environmental impacts, consumption and ecological footprints.*
2. "Local Planning & the Environment" – *Local Councils, local planning, and local community action.*
3. "Ecologically Sustainable Development" – *A history of ESD, why and how to achieve ESD and are we winning.*
4. "Globalisation Fact Sheet" – *The benefits, environmental impacts, the ugly side and how to deal with it.*
5. "Port Hacking - State of an Estuary" – *The upper and lower catchments, seagrasses, water quality, foreshore development, water craft and management.*
6. "The Botany Bay Program" – *Objectives, what has gone wrong in the bay, a global context, results to date and the bay trail.*
7. "Restoring Bay Biodiversity" – *Towra Point's biodiversity, the problem, the project stages 1 & 2, community involvement, public awareness and education and the future.*

The Centre hosted 3 more Community Forums this year:

- Localities and Community
- Estuaries
- Trails – Health, Heritage, Movement and Biodiversity

See Executive Officer Report under projects for more details.

The Centre's many committees have been very busy this year as is evidenced by the large number of reports attached. See Committee Reports for more detail.

## **Our Community**

Community, both local and global, can describe a quality of relationship based on certain values and principles. It is these values that led the Centre to apply to the United Nations to send two delegates to the Earth Summit in Johannesburg South Africa on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August to the 4<sup>th</sup> of September this year.



It appears our application met an untimely demise in the cellars of the UN office in New York as we were unable finalise details in time to go. Unfortunately, the news release from the US Earth Day *Grist Magazine* suggests our trip would have been in vain and brings our hopes crashing back to earth.

With over 12,625 delegates and over one hundred world leaders attending the Summit could have been a wonderful opportunity to move our planet into realising some real progress towards "sustainable development".

### **NOTHING DOING – *Quote from Grist Magazine***

"After 10 days of bargaining, debate, protests, speeches, presentations, negotiations, renegotiations, and etcetera, the World Summit on Sustainable Development is over. What remains behind is a 70-page non-binding plan and a burning question: Was anything achieved?

Well -- the plan does include a relatively strong stance on improving sanitation and protecting fish stocks, leading one observer to wryly note, "It's good news if you don't have a toilet or if you're a fish. Otherwise, it's nothing."

The plan also contains resolutions to curb species loss and phase out agricultural subsidies in wealthy countries, but leans more toward the "nothing" front on energy, where the U.S. successfully blocked efforts to establish timetables for increasing reliance on clean sources. In general, the post-conference mood was one of disappointment, despite dogmatic efforts by the organisers to view it as a success."

It is in facing major setbacks like this, that our principles help us to continue promoting a sustainable community that doesn't compromise the ability of our great grandchildren to meet their future needs.

We must double our efforts to promote our messages.

- Reduce greenhouse gases
- Use renewable resources and conserve non-renewable resources
- Avoiding pollution and wasteful practices
- Participation
- Design and construct "green" buildings and housing

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

- Support “green” businesses, especially those that utilise secondary resources
- Design sustainable communities
- Develop sustainable agriculture
- Preserve and value our biodiversity
- Conserve and value water

### SSEC Strategies

*The Sutherland Environment Centre exists to provide and support leadership towards a sustainable society and environment, focused on issues affecting our local area.*

*Our vision is a sustainable society for which we – as a large, local environment centre intent on "thinking globally and acting locally" – will strive to serve as a model in promoting the partnership of community-business-government in caring for urban areas, green areas and waterways, by observing the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD).*

### Direction and Vision

The Centre continues to raise the profile of our goals locally and beyond. Earlier this year, with the new Centre operating smoothly again, the Management Committee initiated a series of strategic planning sessions to debate the Centre's role and objectives within our community. The first two sessions of “Reinventing our Future” took place in May and June and future sessions are being planned.

What the first two sessions did was to highlight just how important and how immense a task this will be. The Management Committee discussed challenges and opportunities facing the Centre. Tools targeted were advocacy, education, activism, networking, community participation, partnering, revenue/funding and management.

The aim of these continuing workshops is to emerge with a shared understanding of the focus that the Environment Centre will take into the next few years, to maximise its chances to achieve worthwhile environmental and community outcomes.

Our LEAF campaign (Local Environments of Australia) to promote SSEC as a model in *local environmental action* ground to a halt in 2002 due to efforts required to establish the Centre in its new offices. The Management Committee has initiated changes to staff workloads that will allow the LEAF campaign to be prioritized in the coming year.

The Centre's web site continued to grow over the past year as more depth was added to it with new factsheets, forum proceedings etc; a good beginning to an important Australian information-clearing house on tools for local environmental action.

The Centre's library has a new name. It is called the "R.D. Walshe Environmental Research Library". The library has now grown to over 4000 volumes, offering a valuable source of specialised local and global information on the environment. The next step planned is to try and register the library with the Australian Libraries Association. It is our hope that this will be achieved with the support of Sutherland Library so that a much broader audience will have access to the library. The Centre Management Committee insisted on the name despite protest from Bob.

### **Community Profile**

*As an independent not-for-profit association, the Centre is committed to raising community awareness of the need for worldwide ecological sustainability while focusing on the active defence and improvement of the environment of our local bioregions. It is supportive of community, other associations and institutions, business, and government where they are perceived to be acting positively towards the environment.*

The Centre continues to achieve positive recognition for its many activities. We are a recognised source of regional expertise on environmental issues. This is evidenced in the committee reports attached, as more and more we are called upon to play a leadership role in community-partnering activities such as the Woronora and Georges River Trail Project with Georges River Environmental Alliance, the Botany Bay pre-feasibility study with SSROC, the regional transport strategy etc.



### **Financial Sustainability**

This past year the SSEC increased donations from the community by over 22% to \$161,110; Grants by over 4.5% to \$30,500; and income from subscriptions, sales and fundraising by 50% to \$43,770. The Centre continues to build a strong and stable fundraising team as an important goal within its strategic plan.

Once again the fundraising committee has successfully achieved their objective of raising funds to help cover the Centre's rent, electricity and telephone bills. They have planned another gala annual dinner with live music, games, prizes, good food and plenty of dancing. On behalf of the membership, I acknowledge the fundraising committees for its commitment and penchant for hard work.

The Centre continues to move towards longterm financial sustainability as it prepares the strategy to build LEAF (Local Environments of Australia Fund, a (sub) Trust Fund with Perpetual Trustees of Australia Ltd), to a significant managed fund. Due to the many changes over the last year, the Centre was

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

unable to launch its corporate fund-raising campaign, but will work hard to achieve this in the new financial year. Also a membership drive will be insistently pursued within our community.

Future fundraising objectives include

- *Business Pack* – prepare an information and service pack tailored to small and medium commercial business, attracting income and donations.
- *Continuation of Guest Speaker Seminars* – arrange seminars with well-known environmentalists, professional educators and specialist guest speakers that will attract a paying audience.
- *Publish a book* – on global environment issues with a local Australian perspective that will help raise community awareness.
- *Project Grants* – continue to apply for government and private grants that give the Centre ability to carry out local environmental projects.

## SSEC Projects Completed

**Localities Forum** – in November 2001 the Centre hosted a Sydney-wide Forum at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre which was made possible with the financial support of Sutherland Shire Council.

The Forum attracted over 120 participants and was the second of the Centre's Local Agenda 21 Capacity Building projects. A complete transcription of this forum can be found on our website at <http://ssec.org.au/Resources>



The Centre achieved an esteemed group of expert presenters for the forum which included:

- *Internationally* Dr Dirk Bolt, Europe's NorthSeaNet – Livable Communities
- *Nationally* Prof. Peter Newman, Murdoch University WA – Redefining Growth
- *Locally*
  - Les Robinson of Social Change Media – Planning or Democracy
  - Richard Walker, Macquarie Research – Role of Local Business
  - David Ackroyd of Sutherland Shire Council – Shaping an LGA
  - Mayor Laura Bennett, Ku-ring-gai – Impacts of State Planning Policies
  - Case Studies – Neil deNett, Mary Armstrong, Allan Jeffrey

The program was developed to help our community define an ecologically sustainable and livable community that can thrive within metropolitan Sydney. The role and responsibilities of all stakeholders – individuals, community, business, learning institutions and governments – were discussed. Our intent

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

was to equip our community with the tools to choose an attractive future that effects social change which distributes benefits and burdens fairly.

**Estuaries Forum** – in June 2002 the Centre and the Port Hacking Protection Society hosted a Sydney-wide Forum at the Gunnamatta Pavilion in Cronulla.

The Forum attracted over 85 participants and was the third of the Centre's Local Agenda 21 Capacity Building projects. A complete transcription of this forum can be found on our website at <http://ssec.org.au/Resources>

The Centre achieved an esteemed group of expert presenters for the forum which included:

- John Aquilina, Minister for Land & Water Conservation – Opening address
- Denis Hicks of the Underwater Research Group – What lives below the waves
- Ron West of Wollongong University – A Scientist's Perspective
- Alex Meehan, Wollongong University – seagrass meadows, 50 years of change
- George Cotis of Port Hacking Planning Advisory Council – Foreshore use
- Lynne Turner of the Coastal CRC – Nation Estuaries Audit
- Dr David Alden of Australian Fisheries – Economic issues of estuaries
- Errol McLean, DLWC – Balancing social, economic and environmental outcomes
- Jim Colman, the Botany Bay Program – Managing Botany Bay
- Paul Martin, SCMB – Instruments and Strategies
- Kathy Ridge, NCC – the embedded bias against low impact use
- Professor Bruce Thom, NSW Coastal Councils – Lessons from SOE Report



The program was developed to debate effective action in helping our communities to define tools to achieve a sustainable future for our urban estuaries. The forum culminated in representatives of political parties giving the audience a preview of the estuary policies they intend to take to the next State election.

**Trails Forum** – in September 2002 the Centre, SSROC and Planning NSW hosted a Sydney-wide Forum at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre.

The Forum attracted over 80 participants and was the fourth of the Centre's Local Agenda 21 Capacity Building projects. Late this year, a complete transcription of this forum will be placed on our website at <http://ssec.org.au/Resources>

The Centre achieved an esteemed group of expert presenters for the forum:

- Alison Megarry MP – Opening address
- Janet McBride, ABAY San Francisco Bay Trail – Building Partnerships

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

- Gail Adrienne, NALT Vancouver Island – A civil society perspective
- Nick Benson, SSEC – A prefeasibility study on the Botany Bay Trail
- Kevin Rozzoli MP, Hawkesbury – The Great River Walk
- Michelle Zeibots, EcoTransit Sydney – Trails as a transport mode
- Paul Donnelly, Bicycle NSW – Riders and Wheels
- Ian Napier, Pedstrian Council of NSW – Walkers and Legs
- Geoff Ross, NPWS – Biodiversity
- Les Bursill, Aboriginal AOD/HPPU Coordinator – Aboriginal Heritage and Trails
- Reece MacDougal, Heritage Council – Post colonial Heritage and Trails
- Dr Peter Tralaggan, GRE – The Georges River Trail
- Kim McClymont, PlanningNSW – Georges River Foreshore Improvement Prog.
- Melissa Gibbs, SSROC – Development Issues in Botany Bay
- Gary Blasheke, BBaCA – Community and Environment Groups

This program was developed to discuss values and challenges of public access trails. How do we reconcile increased access and recreation opportunities with the need for ecological integrity, and the protection of sensitive wildlife habitats?

### **SSEC Projects underway or planned**

*SSEC Research Officer Project* – this Centre would like to employ a fulltime research officer to update, catalogue and add to the R.D. Walshe Environmental Research Library; to register the library with the Australia Library Association, to establish a loaning relationship with Sutherland Library; to provide relevant and current information for SSEC's websites; and to work with regional school teachers in developing a series of educator packs that would be relevant to current curriculum needs. To this end, the SSEC will apply for a stage-one grant of \$30,000 from an appropriate funding source.

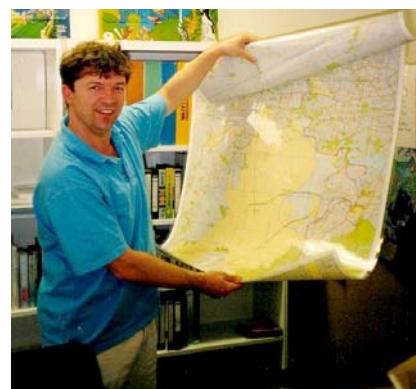
*Georges River and Woronora River Trails* – The Centre and the Georges River Environmental Alliance (GRE) initiated this project to advance a broad regional vision for improving environmental and recreational opportunities and building stronger communities throughout the Georges River Catchment.

A \$145,000 grant funding a trail feasibility study for a Georges River Trail and Woronora River Trail was successfully achieved under PlanningNSW's Georges River Foreshores Improvement Program (GRFIP). This project will be part of a larger trail strategy known as the 'Great Kai-Mai Way'.

The Centre has hired two project officers, Nick Benson (pictured) and Bob Symington to carry out the feasibility studies over the twelve months.

#### **Community Benefits of the Trails:**

- enhanced recreational opportunities and improved public foreshore access
- increased community awareness of river/catchment issues and educational opportunities
- improved natural environment of foreshore areas



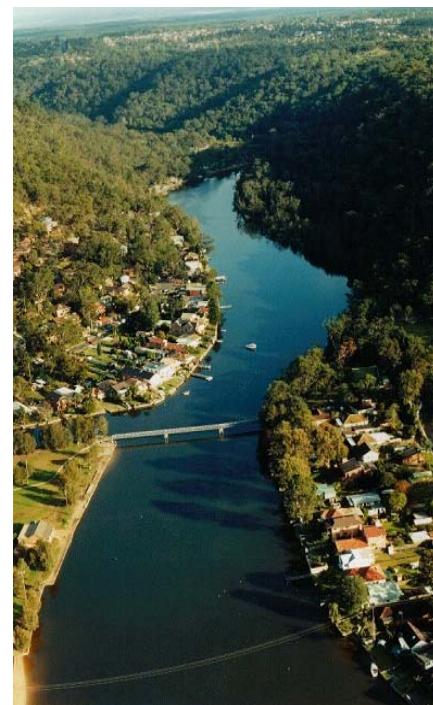
## SSEC Annual Report 2002

- increased community pressure to conserve environmental values of privatised Federal land, and
- promotes cooperation between the community, industry, environment groups and all levels of government.
- health benefits associated with linked walkway opportunities; and
- assistance in reducing dependency on private vehicle use.

The Trails could facilitate the emergence of a regional environmental awareness in the Georges River and Woronora River catchments (pictured), providing the broad vision for a better future for the rivers and their tributaries.

Several GRFIP projects are currently being constructed that include walkways providing for improved recreational access to the foreshores. However, there has been no coordinated planning to link these isolated walkways. This project will coordinate individual council efforts and will investigate funding mechanisms for future staged implementation.

The Georges River has historically suffered from a lack of vision. We have the opportunity to plan and build the walkway now. We will not have this opportunity in the future as continuing urban development will erode the urban foreshore and reduce the opportunities for access. If our forebears lacked vision, the same vision we need today, we would not have the Royal National Park. Our grandchildren are dependent on our decisions.



### Policies and Procedures

The Centre has continued its process of developing and writing more policies and procedures. We currently have the following in development or completed :

- Aboriginal Interests
- Air Pollution
- Resource Use and Population
- Community Participation in Decisions
- Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR)
- Energy Conservation
- Genetic Engineering
- Greenhouse Issues
- Loss of Regional Biodiversity
- Marine Pollution Issues
- Mining and Use of Uranium
- Nuclear Issues
- Coastal Issues
- River Issues
- Soils and Their Conservation
- Threatened Species
- Tourism Issues
- Toxic and Hazardous Waste
- Transportation Issues
- Urban Bushland
- Urban Development
- Waste Minimisation
- Water, Sewerage
- Wetland Conservation

All of SSEC's policies and procedures are documents that will change as deemed necessary after careful consideration by the Management Committee.

### Constitution

This year there are proposed changes to SSEC's constitution that provide a process for protecting the Centre's property investment in the context of the grant conditions in the spirit in which the money was donated to the Centre.

### Volunteers

This year the Centre's volunteers again continue to be active and committed. Our volunteers each deserve special thanks and I heartily do so on behalf of the SSEC.

This year I would like to pay a special tribute to Shirley Renshall. Shirley has been responsible for the Centre's weekly bookkeeping activities for a number of years now. This year has been no exception, but on top of her normal duties of cheque writing, bank deposits and balancing the petty cash, Shirley undertook training in MYOB (the Centre's accounting software). This has meant a heavy increase in the number of hours she has made herself available each week to meticulously work her way step by step through the Centre's accounting procedures.



In a very busy year, this extra effort by Shirley has significantly eased my workload regarding our finances. Shirley faces the challenge of advanced rheumatoid arthritis daily, but she still manages to continue her extra volunteer activities at the Centre and important volunteering activities at other community venues. Therefore on behalf of the Management Committee, I enthusiastically commend Shirley for her selfless role as a model community volunteer.

This year it is with great sorrow that we bid farewell to one of our staunch supporters and hard working volunteers, Pat Elphinston. 83 years old, Pat died on 26 May 2002 as a result of a fall earlier in the year. Bob Walshe expressed it best in a tribute to Pat:



*"Our Pat", as she was universally spoken of, was one of those rare people whose entire adult life is quietly dedicated to improving the wellbeing of persons – and environments – who are in need. She never stopped, but remained active to the limit of her energy, still determinedly leading the fund-raising work of the Environment Centre.*

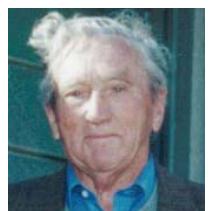
*She was so sensible...so commonsensical...her feet were on the ground yet she was obviously moved by high ideals... always so organised...knew that organising means attention to detail...ever warm and friendly...knew an astonishing number of people...could talk to anyone...always positive, constructive, person-concerned...able to take ideas forward...gritty in her special way, yet unfailingly courteous, cheerful, dignified...and much more.*

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

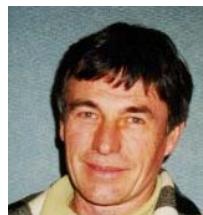
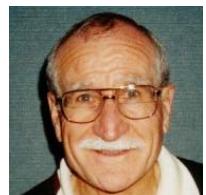
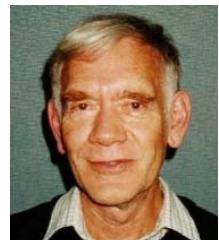
*The street stall anecdotes about “our Pat” could easily be multiplied; but Pat’s contribution was wider than her fund-raising. Of the volunteer shifts at the Environment Centre, two each day, ten a week, Pat took the busiest, the Monday morning, when phone calls and mail are heaviest and the weekly Executive Meeting takes place. Always, on the Monday following a street stall, first item on the Executive agenda would be a report from Pat – takings of \$450 or \$500 and, on a record occasion, \$700, a wonderful help in covering the monthly rent and overheads. Each month too she could be relied on to ring all Management Committee members with a reminder of the monthly meeting and the issues to be raised.*

*Thank you, Pat, for your generous years given to the Environment Centre, given to working for the Shire’s natural environment which you loved, and given unstintingly to that extended family which will always remember you with affection. Thank you!*

The Centre thrives because of volunteers, so I take my hat off to each of you, Jean Rodgers, Ruth Zeibots, Pat Elphinston, Bob Walshe, Joan Flowers, Shirley Renshall, Ruth Turner, Michael Priceman, Adrian Palmer, Neil deNett, Tim Tapsell, Michelle Zeibots, Lyn McLean, John Lincoln, Troy Coyle, Jacki, Jane Northway, Lorraine Foster, Ted Lawes, Philip Cremer, Olwyn Tavendale, Arron Skelsey, Anne Simmul, Renate Brenner, Katherine Leach, Katrina Carley Ian Jeffrey, Petronella Mauunga, Stephanie Michna, Kathleen Murchie, Pat Pomroy, Louise Robinson, Graham Waugh, Adam Wilkinson, Maree Kalatzis, Helen Evans, Martin Rehak, Caroline Brugger and Leanne Basford you do your community proud.



## SSEC Annual Report 2002



## STAFF

The Centre has grown to four full-time and two part-time staff as of September 2002. We have Jim Sloan (Executive Officer), Simon Kimberley (Science Officer and WebMaster), Lorraine Foster (Volunteer and Library Coordinator), Michelle Zeibots (Transport Coordinator), Nick Benson (Woronora Trail Manager) and Bob Symington (Georges River Trail Manager).

Over the past year the Centre has been fortunate in obtaining the expertise of a range of individual who were part of our staff for varying periods of time. Our thanks to Kathy Fook (Events Coordinator), Julie Illes (Outreach Officer), Sapna Kamath (Office and Web support), Lyn McLean (Events Coordinator), Jane Northway (Events Coordinator), and Aaron Skelsey (Electronics and Computer Genius).

**Treasurers Report – John Nelson**

**Accounts of SSEC - June 30 2002**

The financial year 2001/2002 reported both an increase in income and associated expenditure of the Centre when compared to the previous year. This increase has largely been brought about by the increase in grants and donations to the Centre (a large part of which has been associated with the purchase of new premises). The results and the basis of comparison to the previous year are explained below.

**OPERATING DEFICIT**

At 30 June, 2002 the accounts of the Centre showed an operating surplus of \$266,151 compared to an operating surplus in the previous year of \$16,242.

**INCOME**

Total Income for the year \$235,431 is again up on the previous years amount of \$188,986.

Items of note within Income of the Centre included:

- the modest increase in Subscription Income;
- a large increase in Donations (a major component being associated with the premises purchase);
- an increase of Grant moneys (relating to grants from Local Council and State and Federal Governments); and,
- a substantial increase in income generated from sales as a result of consulting services provided by the Centre.

Again, as in past years, we continue to operate financially with the generous donations of individuals and organisations and the time devoted by a solid core of devoted volunteers.

It goes without saying that without such support the Centre could not afford to continue to operate as effectively as it does. This year we again saw substantial receipts from the Street Stalls and it should be noted that revenue earned through this and the other core fund raising activities (such as the Annual Dinner and Raffle) help to keep the doors of the Centre open over the year.

**EXPENDITURE**

Total Expenditure for the year of \$219,280 represents an increase over the previous year of \$172,744.

Major areas of variation in expenditure over last year are seen in:

- Environmental Projects with a number of key campaigns and forums being co-ordinated by the Centre;
- Fund Raising Activities where costs increased over last year's level;
- Postage, Printing & Stationery - which shows a modest increase over the previous year as a result of more activity generally within the Centre;
- Superannuation and Wages representing the full costs of staffing the Centre (and not recovering these against projects); and

## **SSEC Annual Report 2002**

- Accommodation Costs. With the move to the new premises the Centre now has a mortgage to service and increased auxiliary expenses associated with a larger office.

### **BALANCE SHEET**

Turning to the Balance Sheet, the effect of the purchase of the new premises is reflected in both Fixed Assets (to represent the capital cost of the office) and the Loan/Mortgage (reflecting the moneys borrowed to procure the office).

Other Creditors & Accrual relates to the accrual of the outstanding Tax liability as at balance date (30 June) and Employer Superannuation contributions. Offsetting this, we have funds available in various other bank and deposit accounts as shown under Current assets. Of the amounts held in bank accounts approx. \$24,000 relates to grants and is earmarked for expenditure during the next financial year.

The addition of new equipment in the Centre's Offices is also reflected in the increases as shown under Property Plant and Equipment. These purchases were seen as necessary to provide an infrastructure under which the Centre can continue to expand.

The new premises and new equipment purchased throughout the past year are expected to yield significant benefits to the operation of the Centre. These expenditures have major impact on the Balance Sheet for the Centre and its cash flows. In the coming year, new sources of revenue will be sought to ensure the successful on-going operations of the Centre.

### **SPECIAL MENTION**

Special mention and thanks are extended to Shirley Renshall for her commitment and effort in completing and tracking financial details on a weekly basis. Also, thanks are again extended to Jim Sloan for his work in this area and to Bruce Spaul from the accounting firm of Munro Spaul for his and his staff's time in auditing the accounts of the Centre. All play a significant part on a voluntary basis.

**Finance Report**

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED**

**CONTENTS**

Income & Expenditure Statement

Balance Sheet

Notes to the Accounts

Auditors' Report

# SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INCORPORATED

## **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th June 2002**

2001

## **NOTE**

<u>INCOME</u>		
5,813	Subscriptions	6,411
131,151	Donations	161,112
5,839	Sales	5,223
29,140	Grants	30,500
190	Interest Received	43
	Fund Raising Events &	
16,853	Sundry Income	32,142
188,986	TOTAL INCOME	235,431
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
6,455	Advertising	5,540
202	Bank Charges	314
	Computer Software &	
1,197	Maintenance	1,427
15,000	Consultants Fees	15,135
3,835	Depreciation	5,112
452	Electricity	573
9,298	Environmental Projects	8,806
10,749	Fund Raising Activities	15,152
62	General Expenses	190
4,844	Insurance	2,824
-	Interest	7,994
660	Leasing Equipment	1,320
195	Legal Costs	-
416	Meeting Expenses	264
1,773	Postage	2,025
4,323	Printing & Stationery	4,522
-	Rates & Strata Fees	5,618
4,384	Rent	2,727
378	Repairs & Maintenance	1,303
40	Staff Amenities	88
-	Staff Training	1,055
142	Subscriptions & Licences	190
9,196	Superannuation	9,746
1,946	Telephone & Internet	3,081
205	Travelling Expenses	108
96,992	Wages,	<u>124,166</u>
<u>172,144</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>219,280</u>
16,242	OPERATING SURPLUS	16,151
<u>NON-OPERATING INCOME AND EXPENSES</u>		
<u>Non Operating Income</u>		
Donation re Property		
-	Acquisition	<u>250,000</u>
16,242	OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	266,151

**MUNRO SPAUL  
AUDITED**

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th June 2002**

2001 NOTE

16,242	Operating Surplus (Deficit)	266,151
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
16,242	OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT) AND EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	266,151
	Retained Surplus (Deficit)	
<u>23,251</u>	Brought Forward	39,493
<u>39,493</u>		<u>305,644</u>
<u>39,493</u>	ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	<u>305,644</u>

**MUNRO SPAUL  
AUDITED**

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED**

**BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 30th June 2002**

2001 NOTE

SHARE CAPITAL AND RESERVES

Reserves

39,493	Accumulated Surplus	305,645
--------	---------------------	---------

REPRESENTED BY

PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

-	Building - at Cost	506,353
28,526	Furniture & Fittings - at Cost	46,990
<u>14,891</u>	Less Prov'n for Depreciation	<u>18,740</u>
<u>13,635</u>		<u>28,250</u>
13,635		534,603

CURRENT ASSETS

68	Cash on Hand	91
5,972	Cash at Bank	23,119
7,815	Public Gift Fund	3,541
2,960	No. 2 Account	830
12,403	Community Sustainability Account	10,002
1	Cash Management Account-EMRAA	4,680
700	Security Deposit	700
2,000	Trade Debtors	-
1,291	Prepayments	386
<u>2,438</u>	GST on acquisitions	<u>55,534</u>
<u>35,648</u>		<u>98,883</u>
<u>49,283</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>633,486</u>

CURRENT LIABILITIES

8,920	Other Creditors & Accruals	12,882
-	Loan Literary Productions Pty Ltd	49,000
870	GST on Supplies	6,266
-	Grants Received in Advance	<u>9,694</u>
9,790		77,842

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

Loan – Colonial First State	
- Investments Limited	<u>250,000</u>

---

<u>39,493</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>305,644</u>
---------------	------------	----------------

**MUNRO SPAUL  
AUDITED**

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED**

**NOTES TO AND FORMING THE ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th June 2002**

**NOTE 1 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

These financial statements are a special purpose financial report prepared for use by directors and members of the company. The Directors have determined that the company is not a reporting entity as defined in Statement of Accounting Concepts 1: Definition of the Reporting Entity, and therefore application of approved accounting standards is not mandatory in the preparation and presentation of these statements. The accounts have been prepared specifically for distribution to members in accordance with the company's constitution.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Corporations Law, Income Tax Assessment Act, together with the requirements of the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AAS 5: Materiality  
AAS 8: Events Occurring After Reporting Date

The following applicable approved Accounting Standards have not been adhered to:

AASB 1017: Related Party Disclosure  
AASB 1020: Accounting for Income Tax  
AASB 1026: Statement of Cash Flows  
AASB 1028: Accounting for Employee Entitlements  
AASB 1034: Information to be disclosed in Financial Statements  
AASB 1036: Borrowing Costs

No other Australian Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The statements are prepared on an accruals basis from the records of the company. They are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following specific policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of these statements:

**PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT**

Property, plant and equipment are included at cost or at independent or Members valuation. The depreciable amount of all fixed assets including capitalised leased assets, but excluding freehold land and buildings, are depreciated over their useful lives or at depreciation rates set by the Commissioner of Taxation commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Properties held for investment purposes are not subject to a depreciation charge.

**INVESTMENTS**

Investments are valued either at cost less amounts written off for permanent diminution in the value of the investments, or at Members' valuation. Dividends and interest are brought to account when received.

**INCOME TAX**

Exemption from Income Tax has been obtained by virtue of Section 50-45 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

MUNRO SPAUL



CORPORATE BUSINESS SERVICES

1st Floor, 34 MacMahon Street, Hurstville NSW 2220  
Tel (02) 9570 8999 Fax (02) 9570 8011  
PO Box 617 Hurstville NSW 1481  
email spaully@munrosaul.com.au  
ABN 26 785 995 835

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT  
CENTRE INCORPORATED**

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2002**

**SCOPE**

We have audited the Financial Statements of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated for the year ended 30th June, 2002 comprising Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditure Statement and Statement of Retained Funds. The Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the Financial Statements and the information they contain. We have conducted an independent audit of these Financial Statements in order to express an opinion on them to the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the Financial Statements are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the Financial Statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects the Financial Statements are presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards so as to present a view of the Organisation which is consistent with our understanding of its financial position and the results of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

**QUALIFICATION**

Receipts from donations and other fundraising activities are a significant source of revenue for the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated. The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated has determined that it is impracticable to establish control over the collection of donations and other fundraising activity revenue prior to entry in its financial records. Accordingly, as the evidence available to us regarding revenue from these sources was limited, our audit procedures with respect to donations and other fundraising activity revenue had to be restricted to the amounts recorded in the financial records. We therefore are unable to express an opinion on whether donations and other fundraising activity revenue obtained by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated are complete.

**QUALIFIED AUDIT OPINION**

In our opinion, except for the effects of the above qualification, the Financial Statements of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated present fairly the assets and liabilities as at 30th June, 2002 and the income and expenditure of the Organisation for the year then ended in accordance with the basis of accounting described in Note 1 to the Financial Statements.

Dated this 12th day of September, 2002

MUNRO SPAUL - Accountants

B.W.SPAUL (Partner)

## COMMITTEES & CAMPAIGNS

Once again the Centre's committees have been campaigning hard and leading the way through innovation and negotiation to improve our community's environment.

### Committee Reports

#### PUBS Report - Miriam Verbeek



##### Sutherland Shire Bushland

The Centre continues to advocate for the maintenance of healthy native bushland throughout the Shire. This is not always easy, given continuing urbanising pressures. Significant activities since the last AGM have been:

1. ***The outcome of the long-running Menai B/indoor sporting complex issue.*** This case made its way into the Land and Environment Court in February. The Environment Defenders Office represented the Centre in Court. Our argument was that the building and operation of the sporting complex would adversely affect the biodiversity of the bushland. To the consternation of Centre representatives who listened to the Court's proceedings, the argument in the first two days was either about whether the bushland was growing on the "right type" of shale/sandstone or whether the evidence presented by the Centre was admissible. In the two days of tortuous debate, whether the bushland was in danger barely got mentioned. It was a fascinating look-in to the justice system! But it became clear that the Centre (which had obtained Legal Aid money to run the case) was about to spend a lot more money on an argument that was not about the important point of *bushland*. Rather than tracking on this uncertain course, we offered to settle out of Court. Council agreed to set aside a significant amount of money to clean up the Menai bushland, appropriately fence the area, and place strict controls on the development of the indoor sporting complex. Only time will tell whether the bushland will survive having almost a quarter of its area reduced to building, hard surface and fire eradication zone.
2. **Tree preservation order.** Through its representation on the Integrated Environment Committee, the Centre brought Council's attention to the inadequacy of its Tree Preservation Order policy. As a result, Council has had several internal inquiries and is reviewing its policy. The Centre will continue to provide input.
3. **Promotion of urban bushland and input to development controls.** Through its representation on State Catchment Boards and Biodiversity Committees, the Centre continues to promote the necessity to fund efforts



to increase understanding of the value of urban bushland and the ways in which it is best protected.

4. **Centre initiatives:** The Centre is championing efforts to make urban bushland more relevant to the considerations of residents and developers alike. The trails project (the subject of a separate report) is one of the ways the Centre is working towards this goal.

### **Community Report - Miriam Verbeek**

How do Sutherland Shire Council and State Government Agencies measure up?

Are they providing the type of support on development and environmental issues that you expect? Have you reported problems and achieved the outcomes you expected?

#### **We'd like to hear from you.**

The Environment Centre's aim is to compile a "report card" to present to Council and to State Government at the end of a twelve month. The report card will assess their management of Sutherland Shire, and will analyse issues and provide recommendations for action. We want to know about both good stories and bad stories.

To put this report card together, we need you to tell us of issues you've been involved in. To get consistent information about issues, we're using a standard format. We hope that you will find it easy to follow. If you'd rather tell us about your issue in another way, please write to us, email us at [office@ssec.org.au](mailto:office@ssec.org.au) or phone us on (02) 9545 3077.

#### **No incident is too small – or too large.**

Please use a separate report form for each issue you report.

#### **1. The issue you reported to Council or State Government Agency: Tick the appropriate box or write about the issue using the blank lines provided**

- Breach of tree preservation order
- removal of trees or bush without Council Consent*
- Development without consent
- Development outside conditions of consent
- Pollution incident

Other (*Please provide details*): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **2. How did you report the issue?**

- Wrote a letter (*Pls attach a copy if possible*):
- Telephoned:   
*(pls note complaints or CRMS number if provided)* \_\_\_\_\_

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Who did you report the issue to?

- Sutherland Shire Council:
  - General \_\_\_\_\_
  - A section of Council (*which one?*): \_\_\_\_\_
- State Government Agency (*which one?*): \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. What was the response to your report? \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Did you offer or agree to provide more evidence?

- Photographs
- Written and signed statement
- Evidence should matter go to court
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Did you ask to be kept informed about the issue? Yes No

### 7. Were you kept informed? Yes No

### 8. What action was taken? (*pls tell us here whether the issue is resolved satisfactorily, and if not, what happened – attach paperwork if you wish*): \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

### 9. Your contact details. If you want these kept confidential, pls tick the box. We would appreciate your contact details to clarify points if we need to. If you do not tick the confidential box, we may provide details to the relevant agency to enable them to follow up on complaints.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph No: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

KEEP CONFIDENTIAL Yes  No

### **Urban Committee Report – Neil deNett**



#### **September 2002**

In 1996, when the Shire population was 203,000, residents were vocal about traffic congestion, parking difficulties, overcrowding, lack of open space and loss of social amenity.

The 1996-2011 Housing Strategy anticipated that the Shire's potential maximum population would be 209,000 by 2011. Now, in 2002, only halfway through the Strategy period, the population has exceeded 215,000.

By 2011 the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that the Shire's population will be 231,000 people.

Clearly, urgent and positive action is needed to prevent a drastic blow out in dwelling construction and population.

Control of medium density developments was targeted first by the new (1999) Council. There were often two pages of development applications in the *Leader*. Residents were alarmed at the rate of construction. The Shire was particularly vulnerable to this type of development as medium density was permitted in all of the residential zones. Other Councils had various means of limiting such development.



Sutherland Council opted for a plan based on *density and separation*. Briefly, medium density developments in a given precinct are now limited to 10% of the total number of dwellings and they must be separated by a number of lots equal to the number of units in the development. The Plan was titled “Trees not Traffic”.

Since Council adopted the *Trees not Traffic Development Control Plan* in October 2001, medium density development has been effectively curbed in the residential ‘a’ and ‘e’ zones. No medium density has been approved by Council since that date. (SEPP 5 is not included.)

Members of the SSEC and CRoSS lobbied strongly and successfully for the introduction of this control as they were aware of the alarm in the community at the rate of development occurring across the Shire.

A new Housing Strategy and Local Environmental Plan are needed to effectively control excessive development, ensure that the development that is built is of the best quality and that it is in the most suitable place for its intended use, e.g. housing for elderly residents should be near services. This Plan also needs to provide the necessary detail and background information to validate the chosen Housing Strategy and to present a sound argument for acceptance.

## **SSEC Annual Report 2002**

to the Minister for Planning. A working party called the Blueprint for Action Advisory Group was formed by Council expressly to guide the preparation of the new Plan.

I am pleased to say that three of the community representatives on the Advisory Group are members of the SSEC, Jean Baluk, Gordon Hocking and I.

The Plan has to satisfy the demands of residents to control overdevelopment. It has to provide for the housing needs of an ageing population. And it has to satisfy the Minister for Planning that Sutherland Shire would be satisfactorily contributing to the housing needs of Sydney. (The Plan covers an impressive range of Shire issues, fifteen strategies in total. This report relates only to housing and urban issues.)

During the course of the planning process, the community reps have been quite vocal and ensured that their views were considered by the meeting. We are totally opposed to any expansion of the "c" zones (high rise) and increases in density around the Centres. We don't want school land or residents' homes gobbled up for higher density development. This debate was recently fuelled by Barry Collier MP in his column in the Leader. He accurately identified residents' fears about proposed development in Miranda. It added weight to our argument against more high density development.

Sutherland and Engadine are other centres that deserve our attention. Both of these are experiencing severe traffic problems, yet much more development is proposed for them, particularly Sutherland. At what stage should we say, "Enough, let's sort out the problems we have before adding to them"?

Sadly, you will have to wait until next year for the final episode of 'The Blueprint', as it is still in progress.

## **Transport Report 2002 – Michelle Zeibots**



The work of the last year has been hard and the news is all good! The Centre, in association with local resident groups and Sydney public transport advocacy groups, has been successful in spearheading the development of a public transport forum which will act as a meeting and communications point between local and state government agencies. At present the two don't meet. It is now acknowledged that this is the primary obstacle to development of improved public transport services in our region.

We have also held meetings with Minister Carl Scully and Director General of Transport Michael Deegan to advance this process. It is foreshadowed that we will have the 'sign off' on this initiative by the end of the year.

### **CARTS growing stronger**

Since the M6 became an issue in late 2000, local Shire residents have been active in both the advocacy of public transport alternatives and the fight to save

## **SSEC Annual Report 2002**

the Shire from the environmental damage an M6 tollway would create. CARTS—Citizens Advocating Responsible Transport for the Shire—has continued to meet monthly. New members are welcome. In the lead up to the next state election, CARTS will be working hard to articulate the benefits of development of a comprehensive public transport network instead of construction of a tollway through the Shire and Sydney's south.

### **Meetings with 5 Councils, the Director General and the Minister**

Since August of last year representatives from CARTS and SSEC, with the assistance of EcoTransit Sydney, have been meeting with technical officers from the 5 Councils south of the Cooks River to initiate development of a comprehensive public transport network for our sector of the metropolitan region. These councils include Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville, Sutherland Shire and Wollongong.

Representatives from the community and the 5 councils met with Michael Deegan, the Director General of Transport NSW, to discuss the transport problems of our region. The key problem is overcrowding on the Illawarra Rail Line. Services have now reached their upper capacity. Or, in other words, demand for rail is so high that very few additional people can get on peak hour trains any more. Patronage levels in the middle of the day are also often high.

CARTS, SSEC and Eco Transit Sydney representatives also met with the Minister for Transport Carl Scully. Local community opposition to construction of the M6 was explained, as was support for improved public transport services.

The Minister and Member for Miranda Barry Collier announced the Government's intention to investigate duplication of the Cronulla Line not long after our meeting with him. Their decision to act on, as well as listen to, community concerns is to be congratulated! We hope to continue this very positive and constructive dialogue throughout the next year.

### **Advisory Council votes to remove motorway zoning from the Royal**

The Advisory Council to the National Parks and Wildlife Sydney Central Region voted that recommendations should be made to the Minister for the Environment, asking him to begin negotiating removal of the motorway zoning from those lands within the boundaries of the Royal National Park.

Earlier in the year at the Annual Conference of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, unanimous support was given for removal of the zoning. Support from a wide array of nature conservation and public transport advocacy groups is increasing, with a substantial letter writing campaign foreshadowed in the months leading up to the state election.

### **Plans for the year ahead**

The next big task on the transport front is to create a 'vision statement' for public transport development for the southern region of Sydney. This will include the thoughts and opinions of communities from across the 5 local council areas.

This is an important task because it will act as the reference point for many proposals. If wide community involvement is achieved it will also carry a great deal of authority, signalling that the focus for transport development is now well and truly on public transport rather than road and car park construction.

In discussions with officers from local and state government agencies the proposition has been raised that a detailed regional strategy for public transport should be developed. The vision statement would serve as a guiding hand in the development of this strategy. At present the region does not have a clear vision or strategy – which is the reason why our transport problems are growing.

**Environmental Education – Phil Smith & Jim Sloan**

The focus of the *SSEC Environmental Education Strategy* continues to be the development of trainer packs for professional environmental educators that will be suitable for a variety of venues. These include seminars and workshops (1hr to all-day), courses at local TAFEs or community colleges, local primary and high schools, and talks delivered to neighbourhood networks or clubs and business groups.

The Centre delivered a number of formal and informal workshops throughout the year and continues to promote environmental issues through other vehicles such as fact sheets, websites, the resource library etc.

In January this year, we were successful in extending to a second year the Heritage Trust grant that funds our Agenda 21 capacity building program.

**Late breaking News**

**THE HON CARL SCULLY MP**

Minister for Transport  
Minister for Roads

---

**MEDIA RELEASE**

---

*Friday 6 September 2002*

**20 KILOMETRE FREEWAY CORRIDOR  
ABANDONED AND DEDICATED TO PUBLIC  
TRANSPORT**

A freeway planned since 1951 to run through Sydney's southern suburbs is to be abandoned in favour of public transport corridor and recreational uses.

The Minister for Roads, Mr Carl Scully, said today the 20 kilometre corridor, known as the F6 Freeway corridor, runs from the Princes Highway near the Royal National Park through to Sydney Park at St Peters.

"I have carefully reviewed this corridor and decided that a massive freeway development on this land is not in the best interests of Sydney-siders," Mr Scully said.

"A massive freeway would take up a swathe of area currently used by the community for public space, but a public transport use would only require a much narrower corridor, and I want as much open space as possible handed back to the community.

"Instead of a freeway a major study will determine suitable public transport options and where appropriate some local road connections in the corridor.

"The study will examine options for public transport, including heavy and light rail, bus only transitways and an Adelaide like O-Bahn system.

"I have also asked the RTA and TransportNSW to determine which parts of the corridor can be given back to the community for permanent open space.

"The RTA and TransportNSW will jointly fund the study which is expected to cost about \$350,000.

"This decision means the zoning reservation over the section of the corridor in the National Park can be removed guaranteeing that no freeway will ever be built here.

"The Member for Miranda, Barry Collier, and the Member for Heathcote, Ian McManus, have asked that the corridor from the Royal National Park through Kirrawee and Gymea to the railway line just east of Gymea station will be dedicated open space. I will personally examine their request to see if this can be done.

"This is an investment of many millions of dollars by the State Government in dedicated open space for the people of Sutherland Shire and southern Sydney," Mr Scully said.

"At the request of Barry Collier, particular attention will be paid to protecting the area behind the Port Hacking High School for open space, and I will be examining how this area can be best protected.

"I have assured Barry Collier that the large areas of the existing open space in RTA ownership in the corridor south of the Cronulla railway line will not be sold off to developers.

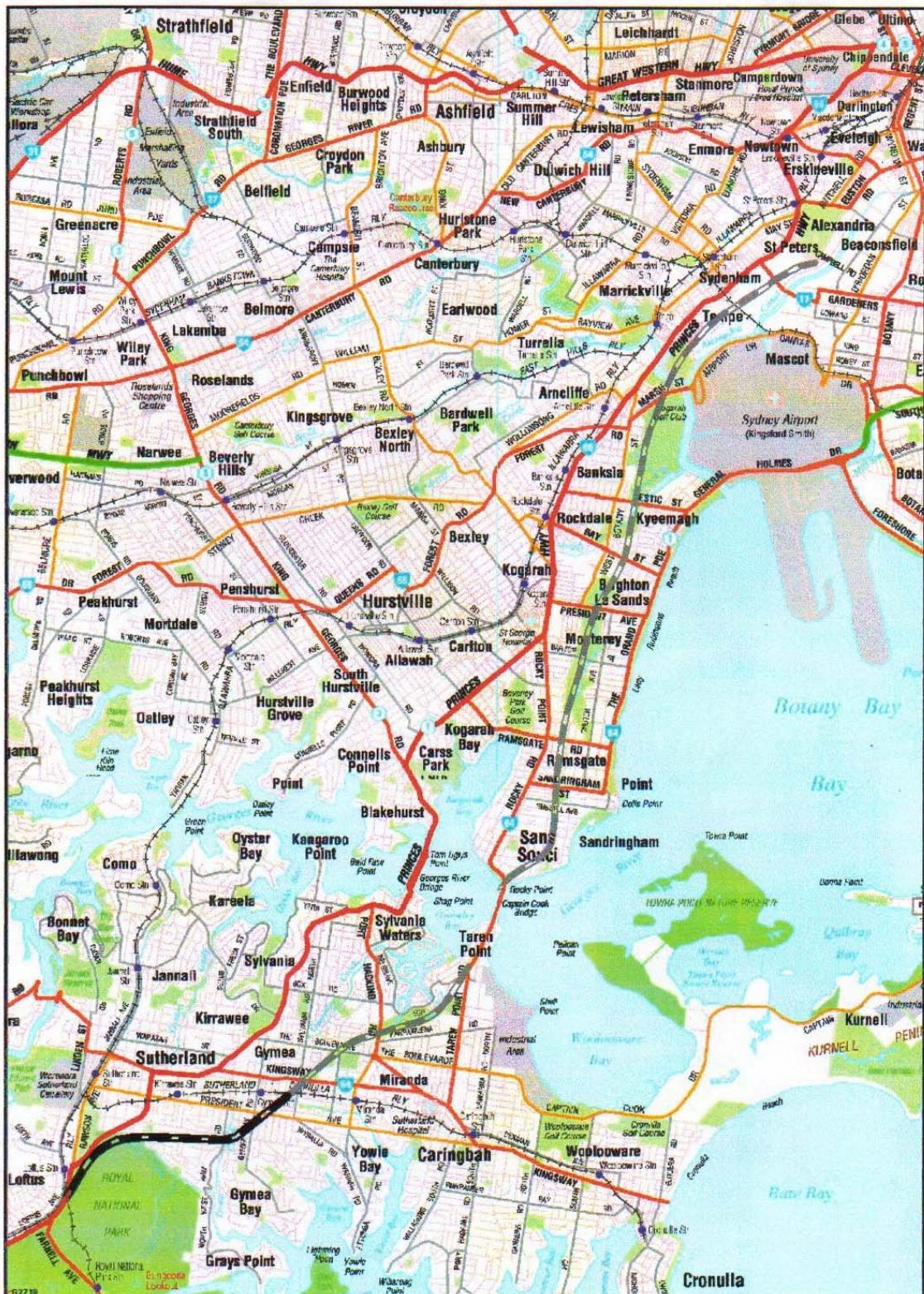
In addition, the Member for Rockdale George Thompson has asked that particular attention is shown to protecting the open space at Scarborough Park, Ramsgate.

"This is a huge win for public transport and a great day for protecting open space in southern Sydney," Mr Scully said.

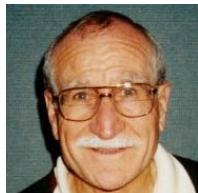
**Media contact: Phillip Kelly (02) 9228 4455 or 0419 411 218**

To Michelle  
Thanks for prodolong  
me info Pavlors regards  
Warm regards  
Carl Scully  
Minster for Transport 6/6/02

SSEC Annual Report 2002



## **Population Report 2002 – Gordon Hocking**



### **Australia's 2050 Population increases 3 million in one year!**

At Sutherland Entertainment Centre, on 3 March 2001, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock informed a packed hall that he welcomed the invitation to speak on the subject of *Population stabilisation: Australia 24 million, Sydney 6 million*. He began:

*I would first like to discuss the issue of Australia's total population. The figure of 24 million is approximately what the Australian Bureau of Statistics projects for the year 2050, assuming that net overseas migration continues at around current levels (after allowing for fluctuations in the economic cycle) and the fertility rate does not fall too much further. I have often said that most Australians would not find the prospect of a population of this size in fifty years time too alarming.*

*The most important feature of such a population is that it would be stable – not increasing and not decreasing – and no longer ageing. This would have a number of benefits:*

- ◆ *a stable age structure would mean that although the population would be older, it would be sustainable in terms of expenditure on retirement income and health;*
- ◆ *although the population would have ceased growing, there would still be scope for economic growth through improvements to productivity;*
- ◆ *the labour force would remain large enough to support the increased number of older people; and*
- ◆ *population stabilisation would provide the economic basis for improvements to the environment without further increasing the impact of population.*

But on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2002, Mr Ruddock announced the largest immigration intake in a decade, and declared that it would be maintained for each of the next four years. The population projection for 2050 will now be 27 million – 3 million higher than previously announced in the Minister's Sutherland speech.

### **So what changed?**

Australia is still virtually a desert where much of its fertile land is being covered by housing and infrastructure for settlement.

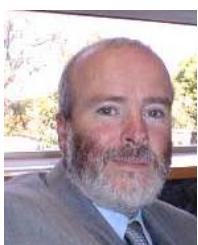
A series of recent reports on soil salinisation and acidification, and on greenhouse gas emissions and water scarcity would lead to the conclusion that Australia is already nudging the limits of its population carrying capacity.

But there was one significant change: environment issues were no longer included in the consultation process for the 2002-2003 Migration and Humanitarian Programs and associated settlement issues. The Minister specifically called for views on "ways of achieving the economic and social objectives of immigration". Previous consultations had included discussion on the economic, social and environmental objectives.

### **A Pop a major influence**

With the environmental impacts of population growth removed from the agenda, the well-funded, Melbourne based, business lobbying organisation *Apop* cranked up its campaign for increased immigration. And the carefully stage-managed Melbourne *Population Summit*, held in February this year, added to the pressure on the Government. The Government capitulated. Sydney's population in 2050 will certainly exceed six and a half million...

### **Port Hacking Report – Paul Martin**



#### **1 step forward, 2 steps back?**

The state of Port Hacking continues to be a concern. At the SEC/Port Hacking Protection Society forum on Port Hacking, scientific speakers highlighted that even before the *Caulerpa taxifolia* invasion we had lost over half of the seagrasses. A photographic survey of recent developments showed that despite the Foreshore Development Code large buildings are being created over the development line, in some cases even down below the tidal zone. A study of the Basin showed that biodiversity in one of the richest parts of Port Hacking has declined markedly.

Management commentary showed that the most environmentally harmful activities are being heavily subsidised, whilst the low impact uses are being prejudiced. There is no barrier to spending sums like \$1million to dredge for deep keeled boats, but little apparent willingness to put in resources to protect low impact areas or threatened marine vegetation.



The most recent example of this is the NPWS proposal for a boat ramp at Bonnie Vale, to serve power boats whilst taking away a swimming and picnic area. Over 1000 letters of objection have been lodged but still the proposal continues to be advanced, even though it would seem to be directly contrary to the Plan of Management for the Royal National Park. This type of resource use continues to be the pattern in the Hacking (like most near urban estuaries), even as the evidence of its harmfulness becomes more pronounced.

There are some signs of progress. DLWC have begun to refuse approvals for some of the more damaging abuses. The Sutherland Shire Council Port Hacking Planning Advisory Panel has become lately a little more active in responding to some of the issues. The Southern Catchment Management Board has put forward a program that includes a more accountable approach to all estuaries, and a proposed new integrated estuary management plan for Port Hacking. Waterways Authority have yet to show any real organisational

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

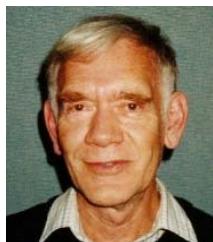
commitment to sustainability and equity, though the local Riverkeeper provides additional supervision on the Port.

The next year or so will be critical. The development of an updated Estuary Management Plan will probably coincide with a call for large scale dredging to move sand to Cronulla. The Bonnie Vale boat ramp issue will either be resolved, or become an even more contentious problem. Waterways will have to come out with some sort of (hopefully credible) approach to better balancing competing uses and the needs of the environment.

There is no reason why Port Hacking has to continue to deteriorate, or why low impact users have to be consistently disadvantaged in how the Port is managed. All that is lacking is management commitment to implement existing policy. That will continue to be our aim.



### Nuclear Campaign Report 2002 - *Michael Priceman*



Looking back on my report for the 2000 AGM I said that "The last twelve months has felt like being strapped to a railway line and hearing the train thundering in the distance". Two years later we are still strapped down but the train is no longer an express. It has slowed somewhat due to the uncertainty of the insolvent Argentinean manufacturer INVAP being able to supply a safe working reactor. The driver of the train is now looking backwards to the good old days when nuclear science was sexy and no one worried if a reactor was built on a seismic fault line, because there were few standards to conform to.

**The Reaction Coalition**, comprising The Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and People against a Nuclear Reactor (PANR) was formed and the pool of expertise and ideas has proved a great success during 2002. This, and the continuing support from Sutherland Shire Council, has been our lifeline during the year.

**The Construction Licence** for the new reactor was duly granted by the Australian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA), although it was several months later than hoped for by ANSTO. During the process, community pressure forced ARPANSA to hold a public forum in Sydney in December 2001. The panel consisted of two former members of North American nuclear regulatory agencies and a medical doctor from Medical Association for the Prevention of War. Dr John Loy the CEO of ARPANSA chaired the forum.

The first day gave the opportunity to conservation groups, including the SSEC, to say why a licence should not be given. I was able to confront Dr Loy on the contentious questions hanging over the Egyptian reactor built four years earlier by INVAP. He had recently visited Egypt to investigate but had to admit that the reactor was still not working at full power and that the reported 'bubbles in the pool' could have safety implications. Prior to this his public utterances had been minimal.

The second day of the forum was preceded by the raid by Greenpeace activists who gained access to the top of the reactor containment building, the waste storage building and the communications tower – all in nine minutes. The objective was to show that the 'upgraded security' at the site following September 11<sup>th</sup> was mere words. A few hours later it was ANSTO's embarrassed and angry turn at the forum.

The outcome of the forum was that the CEO 'took all the comments into consideration' and then granted the licence on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Such is public consultation.

**Legal Challenges** are taking place in France and Argentina regarding the reprocessing of Australian spent nuclear fuel and in Australia on the grounds that the decision maker (ARPANSA) did not take into account the international standard of best practice relating to the management, handling, transport,

processing and storage of spent fuel. The hearing has taken place and the decision held over.

**The unknown effects of a worst-case accident.** At the Senate Estimates Committee Dr Loy, CEO of ARPANSA, was asked about the effects of a terrorist attack. Part of his reply was that "*There would certainly be no instant fatalities; a number of persons would receive a dose which would increase the risk of a fatal cancer in due course. The total expected deaths from that are a little larger than the reference accident we used in the siting, but not much, and the existing kind of emergency plans, the basis for them, including the national antiterrorist plan, would continue to be appropriate as responses to this, should it occur*".

More recently at a meeting of the Local Liaison Working Party, the ARPANSA representative refused to release the assessment of the effects of a worst-case accident to members of the State Emergency Services.

The availability of potassium iodide tablets and which NSW government agency was responsible for their distribution remains an issue. 'The Leader' reported that there is a disagreement between NSW Health and the NSW Ambulance on this subject. The reporter attempted to get some official comment. The ambulance service refused to comment, referring the matter to NSW Health, which, in turn referred it to the Premier's Office. The whole business remains unsatisfactory.

**Earthquake faults found.** Recently, during excavations for the new reactor building, two earthquake fault lines were found. Whilst this is still under investigation, ANSTO is playing down the risks and Minister McGauran has boldly stated that the project "will proceed post haste". ANSTO has commissioned a New Zealand organisation to investigate the faults and ARPANSA is arranging its own study (using a government organisation for the task).

One of the more bizarre options, should the reports decide that the faults could be a safety hazard, is to choose an 'alternative site'. What they mean by this is to shuffle perhaps 50 metres to the left or right and start digging another hole! One way or another it is likely that both ANSTO and ARPANSA will be willing to take the risk on the behalf of the local community - without reference to it.

**In summary,** there are enough problems and uncertainties to put a halt to this troubled and unnecessary project. Oh that we had a genuine regulator that had true independence and was set totally apart from the Federal Government, then the story could be different. In the present situation we soldier on, expect little from the government and their auxiliaries and continue to oppose the project as we have for the past five years. We will need all the help we can get, so, if you are at a loose end, oppose the new reactor project and can offer any support, please contact me.

## The Year on Kurnell Peninsula 2002 – Simon Kimberley



The announcement on September 1st by Planning Minister Refshauge of “a major environmental study into the entire Botany Bay catchment including the sensitive Kurnell Peninsula – effectively suspending all development and rezoning proposals in the area” was the most significant news for the Peninsula in 2001-02.

The Minister also announced plans to create a comprehensive regional blueprint to guide all future land use. Strict criteria devised by the environmental Study will be applied to development proposals. The implications of the announcement will no doubt be significant, particularly for the Australand proposal, which will be reassessed as a result.

In its own moves to protect the Peninsula from development, Sutherland Shire Council, backed by the community, had previously submitted a proposal to the Federal Government under the Centenary of Federation grants scheme for funding to purchase land back from private owners (including the Australand site). Whilst the Federal Government declined to support the 2001 proposal, a push for the buyback has been revived this year following the Federal Government’s \$5.6 billion windfall as a result of the sale of the airport. To this end, a Council/community delegation will travel to Canberra next week to discuss the buyback with Finance Minister, Nick Minchin.



Amongst some of the other concerns this year (prior to the Minister’s announcement) was the **new sandmining proposal** lodged by **Rocla**. The Rocla company have been conducting sandmining activities on the Kurnell Peninsula on behalf of other landholders for many years but they had recently purchased property of their own, and had lodged an application to mine up to 4.5 million tonnes of sand from this property. Their intention was to fill the void left as a result of the mining and to develop an industrial park at a later stage. The proposal was met with virtually unanimous opposition. However, following the Minister’s announcement only a matter of days after the closing date for EIS submissions, Rocla withdrew their proposal.

After a concerted push by the Centre and other groups, the **Cronulla Sharks** withdrew their original proposal to develop 650 residential/commercial/hotel units on their site (including on the junior playing fields). However, in May this year, the Sharks submitted a revised proposal to develop residential and aged care accommodation (240 units), a hotel (100 rooms), conference centre, expanded club and basement parking (2 levels) on the eastern side of their property. The revised proposal presented similar concerns to the original, not least because of the proximity to Woolooware Bay and Towra, the likelihood of traffic problems (given the relative remoteness from public transport and other facilities), the potential for problems associated with the site’s checkered history as a waste dump, together with the potential for disturbance of acid sulfate soil.

Despite these concerns, Council have agreed to proceed to the zoning assessment process based on the Sharks preferred development option, with an assessment of environmental impacts. The implications of the Minister's announcements on the Sharks development are as yet uncertain.

The Final Report of the **Botany Bay Program** was launched in March this year by the NSW Environment Minister Bob Debus. This was the culmination of 18 months work from Program Manager, Jim Colman. Minister Debus has also foreshadowed the establishment of a framework for overall management of the Bay, but as yet, very few details have been provided about these moves, beyond the recent announcement by Andrew Refshauge. As a result of the Botany Bay Program, a new coalition of environment groups (of which the Centre is one) known as Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance (BBACA) has been formed to bring together environmental groups who are dedicated to the restoration, protection and sustainable use and enjoyment of Botany Bay and its catchment.

### **EMRAA Report - Lyn McLean**



Change is a hallmark of growth and so it has been our constant companion for the last twelve months. In that time EMRAA has changed its name, its structure and its nature. It has become an incorporated Association with the all advantages and responsibilities that implies. In casting off its former name of *EMR Alliance of Australia*, it has shed its image as an activist group. In its place, it has adopted the name *EMR Association of Australia* and, with it, the mantle of a national consumer organisation.

The Association holds to a vision of a society in which people enjoy the benefits of technology safely. Its aims are:

- (1) to provide information about the health effects of EMR independent of industry and government;
- (2) to provide advice on how to reduce exposure to EMR from power and radiofrequency sources;
- (3) to work with government and industry to develop regimes to protect public health;
- (4) to serve as a central organisation for disseminating information about EMR to the community;
- (5) to provide feedback to government and industry about community opinion on EMR-related issues;
- (6) to represent the interests of the general community on issues concerned with EMR.

How has this change of identity been expressed in the Association this last year?

- As well as a new name, the organisation has a new administrative structure. It has an Executive Officer (Lyn McLean), a Technical Advisor (John Lincoln) and a Board. Presently our interim Board members are Bob Walshe (Chairman), Lex Bewley, Sarah Wallace, Lyn McLean and John Lincoln.

## SSEC Annual Report 2002

- It has a new-look newsletter whose format was developed by Jenni Gormley.
- It has a new website, the result of months of dedicated work by volunteer Aaron Skelsey.
- The website, which was previously an attachment to the SSEC's site, now has its own domain address and we have a new email address thanks to Jim and Simon.

The activities of the last twelve months are many, but some of the highlights are the following:

- publication of my book *Watt's the Buzz?* (Scribe Publications) and attendant publicity;
- registration of the ACIF *Code for the Deployment of Radiocommunications Infrastructure*. I participated, for two and a half years, as Deputy Chair in the committee that developed this Code, which will impact on the way in which carriers erect telecommunications antennas.
- establishment of a working group of councils to develop a generic Development Control Plan (DCP) that is hoped to establish standard requirements on carriers when erecting telecommunications infrastructure. Lyn and Lex have been involved with this project for over a year.
- participation in the ARPANSA working group that developed the latest standard for radiofrequency radiation exposure. John represented the Association on this Committee.
- development of a sophisticated database by Jim and a team of co-workers. This database will accommodate information collected by EMR surveyors about exposure levels and health effects. It is due to be completed next month and will:
  - provide various ways of presenting health and exposure data
  - provide identification of geographical "hotspots"
  - have the capacity to generate standard letters, forms and to invoice clients;
  - have the capacity for surveyors to input data from their own computers to a central computer.

This is the first Australian project to provide information about what symptoms correlate with what exposures and will be an important research tool.

The Association continues to provide information and advice to members of the community, to produce a quarterly newsletter, to write submissions to relevant authorities and to monitor the scientific literature. It represents the public on a number of committees and is frequently invited to provide comment or to address meetings. Next month I am privileged to be addressing an international conference of councils organised by the Australian Institute of Environmental Health.

As the rollout of telecommunications infrastructure grows, as people become more aware of the EMR issue and as individuals develop health problems from exposure, the demands on our knowledge and resources grow. I predict that this demand will continue into the future and look forward to helping develop a strong, efficient and respected organisation with which to meet these challenges.