

Great Expectations for 2003

Expecting the best for the Shire's year ahead

Against the doom and gloom of a worried world, Sutherland Shire is bent on being constructive – it has a right to expect A GOOD YEAR! Here are the positive thoughts of Shire residents, sampled by **Bob Walshe**, Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.

Overdevelopment Restrained. "Putting the brakes on the overdevelopment that went crazy under the previous Council (1995-99) was the task the present Council set itself. It has worked hard and at last produced its *new planning development control*, the 'People's Local Environment Plan (LEP)', in December 2002. Features of its big changes include: severely limited medium density (villas, townhouses) in residential zones and only two sites recommended for rezoning to allow residential flats. Waterfront development too is subject to strict environmental conditions. The new LEP first needs the Minister's consent; then it will go to public exhibition, and every caring citizen should look at it. If there is general approval, Council will then vote it into operation." JS, Oyster Bay.



Better Shire Transport. "Our absurdly car-dependent Shire is demanding major improvements in public transport – a doubled Cronulla branch line and increased frequency on the Illawarra line to Waterfall and beyond. So we need to see soon the mooted Transport Forum which will bring together the five councils – Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville, Sutherland, Wollongong – to coordinate the efforts of State and Local governments and bus operators. That should bring real easing of current congestion." RZ, Bangor

Relieve Menai Traffic Mess. "We expect extremely energetic efforts by State Government to relieve Menai's dreadful traffic congestion. Construction of the Bangor Bypass, duplication of Alford's Point Bridge, and improvements to the Menai to Lucas Heights road are as urgently needed as relief for any other congestion point in Sydney. Yes, we expect real progress in 2003 so we can see the upgrades operating before the end of 2004." DP, Woronora

Safeguard Ewey Creek. "Council must announce a no-further-development policy for the catchment of Ewey Creek. Sadly, most Shire residents don't know the significance of this much-built-over creek, which has been reduced to a drainage easement. It runs from Gynea Station through Miranda to gush its pollution into Yowie Bay and Port Hacking. Council needs to zone the catchment to prohibit further spoiling and then

embark on restoration work, with assistance from local bushcare groups. Let's start seeing Ewey as the Shire's Thames River – and just as capable of salvation." GB, Miranda

User-friendly F6 Corridor. "Because cancellation of the F6 motorway has ended fears of a mighty highway that would have split the Shire in two, residents are coming up with creative ideas for uses of tracts of reserved land. Light rail (trams) is a favourite, and improved bus-to-rail services, also cycleways and walkways. Locality groups are especially full of suggestions. Government and Councils must listen *and act*." JC, Miranda

More Bushcare, please. "While the Shire has about 150 tracts of 'urban bushland' that are cared for by local bushcare groups, there's a need for still more groups. I hope that in 2003 the example will spread: keen individuals will start new groups, weeds will be eradicated, and native growth will be encouraged. A knowledgeable Council bushcare officer attends each monthly group (and, incidentally, offers informative bushwalks and workshops)." JC, Miranda

Spread the Greenweb. "I reckon the Greenweb is the best thing our Council has ever done. It creates 'corridors' to link up the struggling green areas that would otherwise be cut off as sterile islands by urban encroachment. Living things – insects, plants, birds, animals – are given room to move. The Shire's volunteer bushcare groups are keen carers. But every other householder can help by planting native shrubs, removing invasive weeds, and preferring mulch and natives to water-thirsty lawns." DH, Jannali

Great Walks Ahead. "You'll hear heaps in 2003 about the Great Kai'mia Way, the trail that will link existing bush tracks along the Georges and Woronora rivers. It's a world-class Nature Trail, proposed by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, and it's already taking shape. Bushwalkers and cyclists may expect to find – for example, in the 20 km from Como to Waterfall – good signposting together with information on Aboriginal culture and native flora and fauna." NB, Como

A chance to save Botany Bay?



It's Time to Inform. "Regarding the 750 hectares granted to the Gandangara Land Council, it's time this huge area that stretches along Heathcote Road from Lucas Heights Tip to Sandy Point becomes the subject of public discussion. When the grant was made a few years ago – surprising many observers – most people thought this precious bushland would be preserved by the Land Council, with an Aboriginal Cultural Centre on it. Now there are reports that a section of the Land Council wants to build thousands of houses on it along with an inevitably destructive 4WD trail. Can this be true? The issue is critical for the Shire's west and must be publicly aired in 2003."

Botany Bay Management at Last. "2003 could be the best year in the Bay's post-1788 history. The NSW Government has embarked on a major Study of the sorry state of the Bay, Georges River and Kurnell. From this must emerge a single Bay Management able to control all uses and abuses and to scrutinise all 'development' proposals. Early in the year, the Government should first set up a representative Task Force to oversee the Study – and this would be the forerunner of the overdue Management structure... Every lover of the Bay will cheer!" BW, Jannali

Call Off Botany Port Expansion. "Surely to heaven the proposal to double the size of the Botany container port will be quashed by Bob Carr. The sand-dredging it would entail would ruin what's left of the

Study of Kurnell and Botany Bay. We urge the Premier to announce the rapid winding down of present mining." AH, Cronulla

Save the Last Dune. "Only one major sand dune remains – at the North Cronulla end of Kurnell Peninsula – and its integrity is threatened by a developer's proposal to build 500 dwellings in the area. The Government, late last year, committed itself to ensuring that development would not be allowed to 'harm the environmental values' of Kurnell Peninsula. So this year it must announce the Heritage listing of our precious surviving dune." IR, Cronulla

Turn the Tide for Port Hacking. "We expect action at last to save our beautiful port. It has suffered decades of neglect: loss of over 50% of its seagrasses; invasion by damaging exotic (sea) weed; appalling shore degradation; and careless misuse by some boat-owners. We expect to see this reversed by a binding Integrated Management plan, formulated by the Catchment Management Board, Sutherland Council, and State Government's Department of Land and Water Conservation." PM, Bundeena

Look After the Woronora. "Council has shown some interest, and we expect much more interest in 2003. After all, the Government's Healthy Rivers Commissioner, Dr Peter Crawford, has made two key points which are Council responsibilities: all of Woronora Valley's surviving natural vegetation must be preserved; and all stormwater entering the River must be filtered through pollution traps and constructed wetlands. I would add a responsibility of residents : to join bushcare groups that keep local green areas weed-free and pollution-free." ND, Woronora



Watch the Whales. "Sydney is crazy about whales, and the single best point from which to observe their antics is Solander Drive on Kurnell's coastline because the migrating creatures turn in there, coming close to the shore. This year should see a major viewing platform built, attracting thousands of enthusiasts at the height of the season (29 May-31 July, when nearly a thousand whales appeared last year)." GR, Kurnell

View Kurnell's Attractions. "Always things to see and do here! And 2003 will add to our offering. As well as the April 25-27 events – Cook's Landing, Meeting of Two Cultures, Festival of the Sails – there's the Silver Beach Master Plan. Council and community have embarked on imaginative beach landscaping which will see an eventual boardwalk linking the 15 rock groynes. Two trial platforms (with seats) are already in place, splendid points for viewing Botany Bay. Oh, and 2003 should see a 'Code of Conduct for Truck Drivers' which will make Captain Cook Drive safer." NB, Kurnell

Stop the Sandmining. "Ask any Shire residents – the destruction of the Cronulla-Kurnell sandhills was an outrage! This year *should* see an order for the cessation of continuing sandmining. In September, the Government announced withdrawal of the huge Rocla proposal for new sandmining; but the proposal could be revived. The Government has raised expectations with its current

Ways to Tell the Shire Story. "2003 should see a great leap forward. First, towards establishing a major Shire Museum. Second, towards a Cronulla Surf Museum. Third, the appointment of a professional historian to write a real history – not a mere chronology of events – to mark 100 years of the Shire Council 1906-2006. Fourth, the re-creation of pioneer farmer Owen Jones' 1895 house at Menai. The Shire's Historical Society is brimming with expectations!" DE, Illawong *