

Sydney comes to Sutherland in November...

Let's have a say in planning the Shire!

As Chairman of the Shire's Combined Precinct Residents Associations I believe residents of the Shire have a wonderful opportunity to attend a top-level conference on Sydney's urban problems – because it will be held in Sutherland.

Billed as a Forum on 'Localities and Community', the event will come to grips with the new *localities approach* to urban planning announced recently by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP).

This approach will divide the Shire into 'localities', each with its desired individual 'character', so that any further development must not conflict with that character – at least, that is the happy theory, but many problems will arise and these need to be prepared for. The Forum takes place in

Sutherland Entertainment Centre on: Saturday 3 November 9.00am – 5.00pm.

The program will make this a Sydney-wide attraction. After the opening address by National Trust President Barry O'Keefe, an international guest, Professor Dirk Bolt, consultant from the European Union, will present the keynote address, 'Livable communities and urban form'.

Speakers from Western Australia and South Australia will follow and then speakers from half a dozen Sydney municipalities and from our Shire Council.

It's a great line-up of experts and there will be scope for questions and discussion from the floor.

Some attention will be given to a new concept, *reurbanisation*, which is

challenging the rather discredited old 'urban consolidation', and is stressing the need for 'sustainable solutions' to Sydney's – and the Shire's – problems of traffic congestion, overcrowding and overdevelopment.

With 55 000 more people coming into Sydney every year, our city is under siege and needs well-informed leadership to address its burgeoning problems. That's what the Forum aims to provide.

An attendance of 300-400 is likely. This Forum follows on the success of the forum held in the Entertainment Centre in March on 'Sydney's Population Future'. I hope at least half the attendees will be from the Shire, taking advantage of the convenient location.

 Neil deNett

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by Jim Sloan, Executive Officer

Spring has arrived as the Centre approaches its busiest time of year — this year, our AGM in one week, our Annual Dinner in 5 weeks and the Localities Forum in 6 weeks. As this year is the 10th anniversary of the Centre, I hope you will join us in celebrating our efforts over the past ten years. The AGM is on 21 September, 7pm at the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts. If you are unable to attend, then join us at our Annual Dinner 26 October 7pm at the Gynea Trade Union Club, it'll be a hoot.

Staff Changes

In August we welcomed Anita Lenzo, a 4th year social work student doing a 13-week practicum with us. Also we welcomed Dmitriy Nikolaev, a qualified geochemist from Uzbekistan and new Australian, who has joined us to experience our environmentalism and, not least, to improve his technical English skills.

We are sorry to be saying goodbye to staff member Kathy Fook in October. She has accepted a full-time position with Friends of the Australia Ballet and we wish her every success in her new position. Many thanks, Kathy, for all your efforts on behalf of the Centre; your many skills and dependable competence have been crucial in the preparation of the upcoming Localities Forum.

Centre Activities

As I sit here and review our activities of the past three months, I can't help but reflect on today's shocking terrorist attack in New York. How fragile the veneer of civilised society! It makes me value my community all the more. In this International Year of the Volunteer, I realise how lucky we are to have so many people that care in our community. It is only by valuing ourselves and community that we can meet the many challenges that face us.

The Centre continues to confront perplexing community issues. I have to admire the tenacity and conviction of our Management Committee, staff



and volunteers in handling divisive issues such as a sports complex proposed to be built on rare bushland at Menai, or the sale of junior playing fields by Sharks Management in order to construct hundreds of residential dwellings as a money-raiser. It is only with good information and intelligent debate that we can overcome the incompetence, greed and ignorance that may influence decision makers into hasty actions that our community may come to regret.

I must admit to strong irritation when I open an anonymous hate letter from a Sharks supporter who is intolerant of anyone questioning the right of his sports club to do what it wants, no matter how it impacts on the community. We belong to one community, and ignorance is no excuse for anti-social behaviour. We have no right to hide behind ignorance to justify actions that benefit the few at the expense of many.

I have written in the past about community sustainability and our need to think carefully about today's decisions that may have harmful consequences for the longterm health and wellbeing of our community. It is very easy to discuss sustainability and the social, economic and environmental factors that need to be considered, but inequality, the greatest challenge facing the global community today, is still going forward unchecked.

It is only by participation and with good information, that we can become a strong and united community to face the many challenges that are putting the wellbeing of future generations in peril. Therefore in closing, I am asking each member of our organisation to go out and convince another individual to join the SSEC and support our efforts to overcome obstacles that face us in striving for a sustainable Shire.

**Combined
Residents/Precincts
of Sutherland Shire,
EcoTransit Sydney,
Total Environment
Centre,
Sutherland Shire
Environment Centre
present**

Localities and Community A Forum

- ✓ To define the nature of livable communities within the projected localities of a 4 million city which will advance to 5 million by 2020.
- ✓ To discuss the responsibilities of individuals, community groups, businesses, learning institutions, local, state and federal governments, and
- ✓ To equip citizens to choose an attractive future and then effect social change which distributes benefits and burdens fairly

**Hear speakers from
overseas, interstate
and Sydney, and
have your say...**

For more information or to
receive a brochure call the
Sutherland Shire
Environment Centre on
9545 3077

**Saturday
3 November 2001
9am—5pm**

\$33 registration*
\$22 earlybird—by
28 September 2001

**Sutherland
Entertainment
Centre**

30 Eton Street Sutherland
(2 minutes walk from station)

*Concession \$22 for students,
seniors and the unwaged or
\$16.50 earlybird concession

'PlanFirst'

 *Miriam Verbeek*

The Department of Urban Planning's (DUAP) proposal to remove obstacles to sustainable urban planning

Complexity, prescriptive nature of planning instruments, lack of reviews, difficulty in accessing information and plans are just a few of the problems highlighted by DUAP with the current system of urban planning.

After a two year review with much community consultation, DUAP proposes another planning system based on a neat hierarchy of:

- State Planning Policies – these will set the context for regional and local planning and decision making, bringing together all relevant state planning policies (SEPPs) into one document.
- Regional Strategies – these will be a region's principal environmental planning document (like current Regional Environment Plans (REPs), giving strong direction, identifying priorities for action and promoting opportunities for investment. Regional Forums will be key players in establishing these strategies. At present DUAP is look-

ing at several different ways of dividing the State into regions.

- Local Plans – these will replace the Local Environment Plans (LEPs) currently used by Councils. Each council will have only one local plan. The present division between LEPs and development control plans (DCPs) will be removed. The proposal is to replace zoning with locality planning, which identifies a "place" and sets down the environmental planning rules that apply in that place. Each locality will have objectives, which guide actions and development assessment to meet the area's goals in the local plan. Objectives will relate to issues such as sustainability, accessibility, liveability, built form and design, resource management and economic development. Some councils will identify only a few localities in their council area (e.g. shopping centre, residential area, rural), others may have many localities which articulate

the special features of the area.

DUAP proposes that the hierarchy should be properly developed with State, then Regional and finally Local Plans being developed in that order. Although this is a neat ideal, the reality is likely to be different, with several Councils (including Sutherland Shire Council) already moving towards developing a Shire-wide environmental plan without the benefit of ideally constituted, and integrated, higher-order plans.

The *PlanFirst* proposal has attracted a number of submissions – major ones being from:

- **The Property Council of Australia.** It is broadly supportive of *PlanFirst*, being especially keen to embed the greater certainty that the system would provide. It notes that, currently, many environmental and community issues are contested at the development stage rather than before zoning is carried out – the developer, therefore, often having to bear the cost of conflict. Although lauding certainty, the Council considers there should be a right built into the planning system for "privately initiated amendments" to local plans, with appeal rights where a local council resolves not to proceed with initiated amendment.
- **Local Government and Shires Associations.** They fully support the key features of the proposed reforms. However, the Association is nervous about the proposed changes to LEPs and DCPs, noting that relaxing zoning provisions would reduce certainty. The Associations also did not want other parties to have appeal rights re Council zoning decisions or to increase the capacity of other parties to amend LEPs. In all, they considered that in the strategy making process, Councils should lead the planning process because they are ultimately responsible for the implementation of plans. The Association also noted that *PlanFirst* proposes "double standards" in respect to community consultation at the local and



You are invited

to the 10th
Annual General
Meeting
of

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Special guest speaker:
Jeff Angel

Director, Total Environment Centre

at 7.00pm, Friday 21 September, 2001

(please try to arrive on time)

supper too

Sutherland School of Arts Hall,

beside station, on west side

ph 9545 3077 fax 9521 1477



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Simon Kimberley

The community has spoken. Captain Cook is an untouchable part of Sutherland Shire identity.

Leaving aside the politics and the media frenzy, the genuine community outcry that followed the proposal to phase-out Cook's image from the Council logo was a clear indication that Shire residents value highly the Shire's prominent place in Australia's modern history.

But what about Kurnell – site of Cook's first landing in Australia?

In general terms it could be argued that any move to replace Cook could be seen as a slap-in-the-face for the Kurnell Peninsula, a mixed message to the community about Kurnell at a time when Council is working in many positive ways to enhance the Peninsula. Council's Kurnell Working Party is investigating the legalities of sandmining, its Kurnell Tourism Strategy Working Party is looking at tourism potential, and its Kurnell Campaign Committee is pushing for the acquisition of private land for parkland. The Marton Park Heritage Walk, and the John Weir Memorial are two other initiatives that Council has contributed towards. The logo proposal seemed contrary to this work and, as you would expect, the community condemned it as an affront to their valued Shire heritage. But could you argue that the commu-

nity's appreciation of this aspect of Shire heritage is only 'skin deep'? Do we value the Kurnell Peninsula as highly as we ought? We fervently defend a highly symbolic Council logo but when it comes to practical preservation of Kurnell Peninsula – the very basis of that heritage – there appears not to be the same level of passion.

Why is this? After all, Kurnell, apart from its heritage value, is also a fragile environment with internationally significant wetlands, and endangered species. It continues to cry out for attention and is in dire need of protection and rehabilitation. **How can the recent community 'outrage' be translated into greater community participation in activities to preserve the many values of Kurnell Peninsula?**

In fairness, 7000 Shire residents have signed Council postcards to save the Kurnell sandhills from development, and 200 had attended a recent "Save the Sandhills" rally. Thousands also visit the well organised Kurnell Festival every April. But there are numerous other community activities taking place on the Peninsula which would benefit greatly from more community support.

Some of the practical things that the community can do are to:

- Join the conservation activities of the Friends of Towra
- Join the campaign to tidy up Captain Cook Drive
- Find out more about Kurnell history by purchasing a copy of Daphne Salt's book, Kurnell, a Pictorial History.
- Join one of the many groups interested in the Peninsula's environment, including Cronulla Dunes and Wetlands Protection Alliance, the Precinct Residents Associations of Kurnell or North Cronulla, or the National Parks Association.
- Join in Council's Dunecare work on Kurnell's Silver Beach.
- Write letters to State and Federal Ministers reminding them of the need to protect the Peninsula's remaining ecosystems from development

The Shire community has shown that it values its heritage very highly. Great! But there are numerous opportunities to translate that regard for Shire heritage into active participation in activities which will help ensure that the basis of that heritage is preserved for present and future generations.

SSEC Annual Dinner

GyMEA Tradies

Friday 26 October, commencing 7pm

This year we have an excellent **Bush Band "The Bush Rangers"** to get us on our feet. It will be a great night!

As well, we have a Buffet meal of hot and cold cuisine. Due to ever spirally costs we find it necessary to raise the admission price to \$35 each. Drinks are available at reasonable Club costs.

For reservations – get in early and book by phoning the Centre on 9545 3077.

**Prizes for best costume –
Jillaroo and Jackaroo –
Country and Western theme**



Australia 'good' at eco demolition

By SIMON BENSON - 2001

AUSTRALIANS - in particular those who live in Sydney - are among the world's top mass consumers and waste creators.

So say statistics released yesterday showing the carrying capacity of this nation of 19 million people rapidly reaching breaking point. A landmark report by the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals that Australia now ranks fourth in the world in its ability to wreak ecological destruction to maintain a high standard of living.

Only Iceland, New Zealand and the US have worse records. The report shows that our "ecological footprint" - the environmental impact of exploiting resources and disposing of waste - is now 8.1 ha per person per year.

As an example, to keep Sydney in the style to which it has become accustomed in terms of consumption and waste, requires the equivalent in land and sea mass of 37 Sydneys.

We rank second only to the US in terms of solid waste per person. We invest in outdated technology, our reliance on energy consumption is still rising and, as a result, the quality of the country's environment continues to decline.

The report also has implications for the current round of climate change talks in Bonn, Germany, which will be advised that Australia's energy consumption has risen by 61 per cent in the past 20 years.

"Australian settlements consume relatively large amounts of energy, water, land and building materials and produce relatively large volumes of waste when considered on a per capita basis and compared to other nations," said the report, entitled Australia's Environment: Issue and Trends 2001.

"Declines in the quality of Australia's environment suggest that technology to date has not countered all of the effects of resource intensive economy."

Jeff Angel, of the Total Environment Centre, said: "For a nation that espouses environmental ethics, Australia has an appalling record.

"Sydney's mass consumption and disposal mentality means the city's ecological footprint is 37 times more than its actual size.

"The failing is with the major economic and political institutions. They are locked into old technology and old concepts when they should be investing in 21st century clean, green technology. The individual can only do so much."

A spokesperson for federal Environment Minister Robert Hill said the report showed there was still much work to be done on the environmental front.

Invitation to Regional Environment Group workshops

Are you interested in strengthening your local networks of support for environmental sustainability?

Do you live in Sydney's Drinking Water Catchments?

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW invites you to

'Netweaving: Sustaining Community Action for the Environment'

Free workshops on October 13 (Goulburn) and November 3 (Mittagong).

The workshops will be facilitated by Sue Lennox, Co-Founder and Director of Oz GREEN (Global Rivers Environmental Education Network - Australia Inc).

For more information contact Madeleine Boyd
02 9279 2466 or
02 4757 3135;
mboyd@nccnsw.org.au
by September 28.

Footballer or Developer?

Eight Shire community organisations have combined to present the case against the selling-off the juniors' fields by the Sharks Leagues Club in the form of a major new website (right).

Not only will two splendid playing fields be lost forever under housing, lanes and car-parking, but traffic-congestion will result for North Cronulla, along with degradation of the shoreline of lovely Woollooware Bay.

The website address is www.ssec.org.au/sharks

Five major objections are detailed on the site, with photos.

A highlight of the website is a statement from the Mayor [then termed *President*], Arthur Gietzelt, who helped the young Sharks Club of 1968 to purchase the fields at a bargain-basement price.



As we probably would have written in our primary school days, Saturday 11 August dawned bright, clear and sunny, with none of the strong winds which had caused the postponement of our street-stall (in Cronulla Plaza) 2 weeks earlier. And the good citizens of Cronulla were out and about early, very friendly, eager and interested in what we had to offer them. Once again, second hand books proved a winner, which together with the usual cakes and jams resulted in the wonderful sum of \$527.70 being raised for the Centre's funds, more than enough to pay the rent for one month. Many thanks to all these wonderful workers on and before the day – it's much appreciated.

Our next street stall will be on Saturday,

15 September in Gymea, with a mixed array of goods and especially plants for sale. Spring will have sprung by then, we pray, and hopefully we will sell lots of plants – restricted space in Cronulla Plaza prevented us from selling many plants.

And now a plea for your help in finding a new home or homes for our great collection of plants. The house where Dave Shirley cares for our plants so lovingly may well be sold in the next few months and we will have to move them. If you can help, please ring either the Centre (9545 3077), Dave (9524 9160) or Pat (9523 9842). We are sure we can work out arrangements with you for caring for the plants in their new home-base.



Pat Elphinston

urban

cont'd

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regional level of plan making compared to the state level – with only one opportunity for public consultation at the state level but four at a minimum at local plan making level.

- **Environmental Defender's Office (EDO).** It had two primary concerns with *PlanFirst*: the planning system needs to deliver better environmental outcomes, being focused on process and responding to developer initiatives; DUAP is proposing radical changes when objectives can be achieved with minimal change to legislation, better use of existing legislation, and better coordination of existing administrative structures. The EDO believes that better environmental outcomes can be achieved by amending the EP&A Act to require that SEPPs, REPs and LEPs be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development; ensure that environmental prohibitions are retained; require each environmental planning instrument to identify environmental objectives; require environmental studies to be performed in relation to any proposal to amend an environmental planning instrument where amendment is likely to have significant envi-

ronmental impacts; link state of the environment reporting with the environmental objective identifies in each environmental planning instrument; ensure that it is clear that the cumulative impact of a decision is a relevant consideration.

Comment. Submissions show overall support for reforms to plan making in NSW, but there is disagreement about what exactly these reforms should include. The Environment Centre has a deal of sympathy with the EDO's stance that DUAP has embarked on recommendations of radical reform of a system that it has never properly implemented in the first place. There are, for example, very few REPs. As also pointed out above, the ideal proposed in *PlanFirst* of a planning hierarchy is unlikely to occur because of planning processes already in place. It is also clear to all stakeholders, including staff within DUAP, that implementation of *PlanFirst* in a reasonable timeframe is almost unachievable unless resourcing of DUAP is significantly increased and unless fundamental disagreements among major stakeholders can be resolved.

This article is based on a briefing paper (*Proposed Changes to Environmental Planning in NSW*, 10/2001, NSW Parliament House Papers) prepared by Stewart Smith.

Next Street Stall

Sat. 15 Sept. 2001
in
Gymea



HELP!!



**We need to find...
a new home base for
our great collection of
street stall plants.**

If you have a nice large, shady yard close to transport for Dave Shirley, then we'd love to hear from you.

Phone the Centre: 9545 3077

Dave Shirley: 9524 9160,

Pat Elphinston: 9523 9842

Catchment Boards at work in the local region

In December 1999, the Minister for Land and Water Conservation announced the formation of 18 Catchment management Boards (CMBs) to replace the existing Catchment Management Committees. The aim of these boards is to coordinate natural resource management in their catchments. As a first step, each board is to present to the Minister a draft strategy of how it proposes to carry out its coordination role.

The Strategy is to include the broad outcome desired (vision) and more specific goals (called first order objectives). Based on these objectives, the boards need to consult with public agencies and the community and agree upon a series of actions, resourcing, and implementation timelines.

The Sutherland Shire straddles two board areas, the Southern Catchment Management Board (SCMB) and the Southern Sydney Catchment Management Board (SSCMB).

The SCMB covers the area from Hacking River Catchment south to the Shoalhaven River Catchment – with eight local governments present. The SSCMB comprises the Georges River, Cooks River and the Sydney Eastern Beaches/Botany Bay Catchments and has 16 local Government areas.

Sutherland Shire is a small, but significant, part of both catchment board areas.

Southern CMB

The SCMB has adopted a vision:

“The Board’s vision is of a healthy and productive catchment within the southern Board area, achieved through cooperative management of natural resources reflecting a focus on ecological sustainability.”

The objectives it has set are:

- **River/Waterway Management:** A river/fresh waterway system with a healthy riparian corridor, vegetated and with banks and riverbeds that support good water quality, provision of habitat and sustainable production.
- **Land Management:** Sustainable primary production and use of lands within their capability (soil characteristics, erodibility, natural values, weed invasion, topography).
- **Coastal/estuary Management:** Healthy coastal and estuary areas with non-polluted waters, diverse aquatic ecosystems and foreshore vegetation, and ample opportunities across the region for enjoyment of coast and estuaries as natural systems.
- **Habitat Management:** Protection of the native biological diversity, and

maintenance of ecological processes and systems.

- **Developed Environment Management:** Healthy urban and industrial environments which provide a sustainable balance between natural systems and social/cultural and economic interests.

The SCMB has already undertaken a great deal of community consultation and hopes to finalise its draft strategy in September 2001. A comprehensive briefing paper is available on the Board’s website on <http://www.cmb.org.au/southernsydney/index.html> or contact 9895 7617

Southern Sydney CMB

The SSCMB has adopted five first order objectives:

- To value, conserve and remediate terrestrial and aquatic environment, their biodiversity and natural processes.
- To conserve and sustainably manage the urban, natural, rural, economic, recreational and scenic qualities and values of the Southern Sydney Catchment Management Board area.
- To respect indigenous and non indigenous cultural heritage values and issues as they relate to the environment.
- To support and promote ecologically sustainable principles and practices within the urban communities.
- To advance integrated natural resource and environmental management in the southern Sydney Catchment Management Board area.

The SSCMB is just beginning its community consultation processes and has meeting times set for Bondi Junction (7-9pm), 10 Sept; Rockdale (7-9pm), 11 Sept; Bankstown (2-4pm) 12 Sept; Liverpool (7-9pm) 13 Sept. If you want to attend any of these sessions or get more information, call Heather Boyd on 98957501. Or, if you want a Board member to attend one of your group meetings and provide a briefing, phone 9895 6223.

Miriam Verbeek from the Environment Centre is a member of the SSCMB and willing to answer questions or address issues you may have.



Woronora River



Miriam Verbeek

Want to Help or Simply Find Out More?

The Centre has a range of committees dealing with issues in and beyond the Shire. These are listed with the names of their convenors below. If you would like more information about their activities, or would like to help, contact the Centre

Eco-Tourism	John Cox
EMF Radiation	Lyn McLean and John Lincoln
Environmental education	Phil Smith
Fundraising.....	Pat Elphinston, Ruth Zeibots
Hacking River.....	Tim Tapsell
Kurnell.....	Simon Kimberley
Nuclear Issues.....	Michael Priceman
Population.....	Gordon Hocking
Toxic Chemicals.....	John Earl
Transport.....	Michelle Zeibots and Malcolm Cluett
Urban Bushland.....	Miriam Verbeek
Urban Issues.....	Neil deNett
Waste minimisation.....	Jim Sloan

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I'd like to join Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....

I enclose fee of: \$27.50 (1 yr) \$49.50 (2 yr)

\$66 (3 yr) \$16.50 concession or student

Signed.....Date.....

N.B. Fee includes four issues of "The Centre" per year



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