



The media have been running hot with snippets from the ground-breaking population study from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, launched in November.

Future Dilemmas explores the future effect of three population and immigration scenarios on infrastructure, resources and the environment to the year 2050.

The scenarios are:

1. Low growth, a net immigration rate of zero persons a year, which would result in a population of about 20 million by 2050.
2. Medium growth, with a net immigration rate of 70,000 a year. This is below the current rate, which has averaged about 80,000 yearly over the past decade. It would bring a population of 25 million by 2050.
3. High growth, with immigration set at 0.67 percent of current population per year, yielding a population in 2050 of 32 million, and ultimately 50 million by 2100.

Irrespective of which scenario we choose, the report tells us that we face serious challenges if we are to live in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Metropolitan Sydney will have to be prepared for a lot more growth under scenarios 2 and 3, or be better prepared for a majority of

A new perspective on population draws fiery reaction

By GORDON HOCKING

over-65s under scenario 1.

Phillip Ruddock, Federal Minister for Immigration, who commissioned the population study, said at its launch that on current projections our population growth would start to moderate and level out by 2050.

"We cannot fix the environment through any feasible adjustment to net overseas migration," he said. "The issues are far more complex and this report should be the starting point for a serious public debate."

The debate began immediately.

The Canberra Times carried an opinion piece next day from Dr Alex Robson, of the School of Economics at the Australian National University.

"The major problem with the report is that in assessing the likely impact of immigration, the CSIRO assumes that production and consumption decisions are based on simple physical relationships, rather than economic relationships."

"That is, the CSIRO scientists only concern them-

selves with physical quantities such as kilograms, joules and litres, rather than economic variables such as prices, wages and costs."

"The focus on the 'physical' economy rather than the actual economy leads directly to the conclusion that the allocation of natural resources should be managed according to how much of each natural resource is physically embodied in all goods and services produced in Australia, rather than via the simpler, more effective route of first defining property rights to natural resources, and then permitting consumers and producers to engage in voluntary exchange of goods and services in markets."

Dr Robson argues in support of market forces, but does not acknowledge the failure of market forces to protect the environment, or to ensure conservation of important resources.

Nor does he acknowledge that it is absurd to use GDP as a measure of progress. GDP measures both environmental destruction (e.g. landclearing) and environmental repair (e.g. treeplanting) as positives.

"The CSIRO approach ignores basic economic realities," moans Dr Robson.

CSIRO's report argues that

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A number of newsletters I'm picking up nowadays are starting off with words that say something like: "As we near the end of the year, we look back at what we've achieved – and what we still need to achieve."

The *News Sheet* of the *Kurnell Historic Drive Campaign* reflects:

- Australians are the second highest producers of waste per person in the world – with each of us producing almost 16 kgs for collection each week.
- 32 billion cigarette butts are discarded in Australia every year – if all these butts were lined up they would go around the world 16 times.
- Australians use more than 2.8 billion plastic bags each year – if tied together they would stretch around the world 17 times.
- Over the past 12 years "Clean up Australia" volunteers have collected enough rubbish to fill 190 Olympic swimming pools.
- Plastic items still represent the

largest polluter.

Rosemary Neill writing from *The Australian* (1/11/02) adds:

- Australians are still the highest per capita users of water in spite of living on the driest continent and in spite of being in the grip of a severe drought (water consumption has actually gone up in the last few months!)
- We are air polluters of the first rank, being among the developed world's highest per capita emitters of green-house gases. Yet among rich nations, we stand alone with the US in refusing to ratify the Kyoto protocol on climate change.
- We clear more land than any other industrialised country. This is a major cause of dryland salinity, which now afflicts 6 million hectares of land.
- We have a private car fetish and the sale of fuel-guzzling 4WD vehicles has soared

long way to go...

At the Environment Centre we are doing our best to chip away at overcoming the many pressures that our definition of a "good life" places on the environment.

And this year we've made significant gains, some resulting from our own initiatives, and others in collaboration with council and government agencies:

- The Botany Bay Program has been high on the agenda, and the recent Statement of Intent (featured in this issue of the newsletter) as well as the announcement by Minister Refshauge regarding a study of Kurnell (featured in the last issue of the newsletter) are welcome moves.
- The state government's change of plans for the F6 corridor (featured in the last issue of the newsletter) was a great step forward and we are actively pursuing options for creating truly socially friendly options for the corridor.
- The creation of a Catchment Blueprint by the Department of Land and Water Conservation has the potential to benefit the whole of the Georges, Cooks and Eastern Beaches catchment. We worked hard with other Catchment Board Members to ensure that all major issues for the Shire were properly considered.
- Our library, featured in this newsletter, has blossomed, thanks to a grant from National Heritage Trust.
- We are well on the way to proactively managing a program to enable sustainable access into wonderful bushland and urban areas – the Great Kia'mia Way (featured in the last issue of the newsletter).

- We have run a most successful
- (Continued on page 8)

By Ruth Zeibots

We will greatly miss "our Jean", as we called her.

Jean Rodger became a member of the Environment Centre in 1991 and was involved in the Megatip campaign and thereafter in opposing Sandmining at Cronulla, the Nuclear issue at Lucas Heights and the Holsworthy Airport proposal of 1997. She gave generously of her time and energy to these and many other Centre activities.

In more recent years her efforts were directed to fundraising at stalls held regularly at Gynea and each year she would invite Centre members to her local annual fete.

Jean was a person who "did" things. She cooked cakes, was an avid recycler and was not one to waste a resource. Oh, that the world could



Obituary

Jean Rodger

have more Jeans – we would solve a lot of the environmental problems that beset our society today.

Her many friends will miss her enthusiasm and dedication in keeping the Centre's wheels turning as she cared about the environment and community in which she lived. Of course her special concern was for the Menai/Illawong area in which she grew up.

Well done, Jean! Your deeds and work will long be remembered with pride and great affection by us all.

By MICHAEL PRICEMAN

The recent tragic events in Bali have heightened concerns regarding the security of the Lucas Heights reactor. Listeners to talk back radio will have heard discussion of this on both 2UE and 2BL.

Contributors have been understandably concerned about the safety issue and even John Laws was heard to admit that having a nuclear reactor in a suburban area was wrong.

On the political front, Premier Bob Carr has had the most to say and specifically mentioned the security of the reactor in his address to Parliament on 23rd October: "...we must strengthen the security and protection of the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor – Australia's only reactor."

He called for Commonwealth defence force personnel to guard the facility "where there is a specific threat." How much notice we will get of an impending terrorist attack remains to be seen!

After Bali: the Shire's own nuclear target

As far as insurance is concerned the Commonwealth has boasted for the past couple of years of its "Deed of Indemnity" in the case of claims against ANSTO following a reactor accident.

It said that it was far better than commercial insurance—which was unavailable. The catch was that the community would first have to successfully sue ANSTO for negligence under common law and the government would cover the costs of any awards.

On 25th October the Commonwealth announced the detailed plans of a scheme for replacement terrorism insurance.

The definition of a terrorist act in the legislation will be based on that commonly used in the market (the "Munich Re" definition). The

scheme will cover damage caused by terrorist activity and will include events such as fire, flood, explosion, impact of aircraft, biological and chemical attack but not nuclear causes. So where does this leave the local community?

What you can do: Write to the Premier expressing your concerns over the presence of a nuclear reactor in a suburban area; remind him that President Bush has warned of a 10 year time scale in the fight against terrorism and ask if an army presence will be outside ANSTO for the entire time.

—(Adapted from the newsletter of *People Against a Nuclear Reactor*, 2nd Dec 2002)

Centre news

ABOUT US

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre was founded to speak for the environment of the Sutherland Shire and its bioregions.

The Centre uses well-researched information, full participation of all stakeholders in debates, includes consideration of the needs of future generations, and genuinely desires to seek win-win solutions to competing aims for the utilisation of natural resources.

Officially launched on 22 July 1991, the Centre is a totally independent body, open at all times to public scrutiny and public participation.

This newsletter is provided to members and interested readers to

provide up-to-date information about Centre activities. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are the authors', and not necessarily the policy of the Centre.

The editorial committee comprises: Miriam Verbeek, Don Pagé, Pam Cook, Vicki Simpson, Narelle Towart. Contact us at:

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Many thanks to Jim & Narelle Towart

The national biennial Coast to Coast Conference with its Source to Sea Theme (4-8 November 2002) attracted well over four hundred participants. It included representatives from all levels of government, industry, scientific community, indigenous community members and NGOs. All issues, relating to the coast zone and catchments were addressed. Many of these issues are relevant to urban coastal catchments, such as the Sutherland Shire.

Many thanks to Jim and Narelle Towart who represented the Centre at the Conference and returned with much invaluable information

(See article on Page 5)

New moves against overdevelopment

By Neil deNett

It would appear that the battle to control over-development in Sutherland Shire has been won. For now, anyway.

At a full Council meeting in October, councillors unanimously adopted Option 1 to be the preferred Housing Strategy. The community reps on the People's LEP advisory group, who have been actively promoting Option 1 since the beginning, were pleasantly surprised at the total support for this *minimal development option*.

There is no requirement for more re-zoning for flats with this option, no townhouses in the residential "a" zones, and villas are controlled by the "Trees not Traffic" Development Control Plan. Since Council adopted the "Trees not Traffic" DCP in October 2001, medium density has been effectively curbed in the residential "a" and "e" zones. No medium density development has been approved by Council since that date (SEPP 5 excluded).

One of the gains, we believe, in maintaining a lower density of development, is that the catchments of the urban creeks in the Shire will be better able to act as filters for the waterways. Siltation in the bays of Port Hacking is looming as a major environmental problem. Loss of seagrass beds and diminished recreational value are two that readily come to mind.

Remaining pockets of native bushland and large trees are essential for maintaining remnant biodiversity in the Shire. We must be vigilant in protecting these.

At a Council level we now have the unanimous support of Shire Councillors in controlling over-development. The Australand



housing proposal at Kurnell has been suspended. There has been no response from Planning NSW to Council's decision to opt for minimum development until 2011, despite the Department previously writing to Council saying that none of the proposed options, 1 to 6, as described in a Council leaflet, would be recommended to the Minister.

ELECTION JITTERS

The State Government has done an about face on the sale of two previously non-negotiable school sites. And land at Callan Park is now not to be sold for development. MP Barry Collier has come out strongly against over-development in Sutherland Shire. The opposition Liberal Party has strongly opposed the Government's Urban Consolidation Policy.

Does it all sound too good to be true?

While all of these commendable events have taken place, the Federal Government has announced a significant increase in the

immigration numbers for the coming years. Over 40% of all overseas migrants come to Sydney. We will probably experience an increase in internal migration as the drought bites and forces more country people to the cities seeking work.

Where are all these people going to live?

Perhaps we will know after the State election in March 2003.

The Centre has been at the forefront in the campaign to control excessive and unwanted development in Sutherland Shire. But it is also realistic enough to acknowledge that the pressure for more housing in Sydney is continually increasing and governments have a responsibility to house the population.

We believe that there is an urgent need for the Federal Government, the State Government and Local Councils to meet and address this most pressing problem. It cannot be ignored, particularly at the Federal level, any longer.

(Cont. from Page 3)

Pressure to develop

The Tasmanian experience at coastal zone management echoes a familiar story. Chris Rees from the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries Water and Environment provided a paper on his State's experience.

In October 1996 Tasmania adopted an innovative Coastal Policy. It successfully eliminated coastal ribbon development, and residential development outside existing settlements and on mobile landforms



such as dunes.

But the Coastal Policy was not popular with either local or state politicians, nor developers, and so was poorly implemented and funded. It was eventually successfully challenged in the Tasmanian Supreme Court and ceased to exist in June 2002. Tasmania now has no coastal zone policy.

Sutherland Shire's foreshore has nominal protection with "Foreshore protection zoning", but breaches of the zoning continue to degrade the foreshore zone. In addition, development pressures disregard what should be environmental constraints caused by issues such as acid sulphate soils and saltmarsh areas.

Acid sulphate soils

Acid sulphate soils (ASS) occur naturally in virtually every estuary and floodplain on the eastern coast of Australia. Such soils and sediments

Coast to Coast Conference

contain iron sulfides, such as pyrite (FeS₂) which remain chemically stable while buried in oxygen-free, normally waterlogged environments. But when exposed, atmospheric oxygen combines with water to produce sulphuric acid.

The acid run-off has caused major fish and mollusc kills on the NSW coast.

Researchers Mike Melville (UNSW) and Ian White (ANU) and their students have been working with Tweed Shire council and canefarmers at McLeods Creek to develop land management techniques of international standard. The studies show that drainage, excavation and lowering the water table can cause ASS oxidation. Fresh water runoff can cause high levels of acid to enter the estuary.

Sutherland Shire, Georges River, Cooks River and Botany Bay all have ASS just below the surface to some meters deep. Some soils may already be oxidised, but there is evidence that much remains volatile.

Detailed state and national strategies to address ASS have been developed, but progress on the strategies has been slow because of poor funding support.

Declining Salt Marshes

Saltmarshes are swampy, grassed, treeless flats that used to occur in many estuaries along the NSW Coast. Saltmarsh biological diversity increases further south along the coast. They are critically important for migratory wader birds, fish and invertebrates, and are also a habitat for swamp wallabies, grey kangaroos and insectivorous bats.

Increased silt loads and nutrient levels, caused by the development of catchments, and rising sea levels have caused saltmarsh losses – and promoted the growth of mangroves. This trend significantly affects animal life in estuaries because saltmarshes have greater productivity levels than mangroves in non-tropical areas.

In spite of their importance, no legislation protects saltmarshes. Our Shire estuaries, Port Hacking and Botany Bay, have already lost most of their saltmarsh areas, with those remaining being under threat.

Significant issues

Conference proceedings, including over one hundred presentations, are available in the Centre's library. They cover a substantial range of coast care topics, including:

- Pollution effects and monitoring programs
- Coastal indigenous issues
- Fisheries management
- Stormwater management
- Residential controls and institutional barriers to management
- Estuary management
- Aquatic reserves
- The importance of education
- Social attitudes to the coast.



By Nick Benson,
Project Coordinator

It is nearly two months since Bob Symington and I began working on a joint project between The Centre and Georges River Environmental Alliance to examine the feasibility of a regional trails network for Southern Sydney, linking tracks and trails in the Georges and Woronora valleys. We have hardly had time to pause for breath.

The project began with a community information and consultation event on Saturday 7th September 2002—“Trails – A People’s Forum”. The day provided a platform for lively discussion of the values and challenges of public access trails, based on the 4 broad themes of movement, heritage, health and biodiversity. Examples of local and international initiatives, including the concept of Botany Bay Trail and the 400 km long San Francisco Bay Trail, were presented to an audience of more than 80 people.

The Forum provided a valuable opportunity for the wider community to participate right at the inception of the project, sharing ideas and concerns through a questionnaire survey into the value of a Georges River Trail. We received good positive feedback from people attending the event. Roy Dixon, Mike McGreevy, Wilf Hilder and others have since emerged as key people within the community, with valuable contributions to make to the project, in terms of local knowledge and helping with research and promoting the concept.

A Project Strategy has been developed, based on a long term vision: “The Great Kai’mia Way”. This theme links the 3 distinctive trails for Botany Bay, the Georges, and the Woronora. *Kai’mia* is the Aboriginal name for the Botany Bay and Georges River Region, and is

River-walk project off to a flying start



echoed by the spectacular *Gynea Lily*, which we have adopted as a logo for the project.

Within the context of learning how to enjoy and manage our environment more sustainably, the strategy has 4 main components: Community Building, Research, Education & Promotion, and Future Funding.

WORKING UP A SWEAT

The research phase began on 3rd October with a 10 km mountain bike tour of Loftus and Forbes Creeks in the Woronora Valley, hosted by Don Pagé. We explored the fire trails, which connect the surrounding suburbs to the valley.

It was hard to believe we were in an urban area at times. The new bridge built by the Army has restored a good access link across the creek. Noticeable are the *Gynea Lilies* in full bloom. Considerable erosion of the trails close to the new bridge from misuse by motor bikes is one regrettable aspect.

We actually saw a motorbike rider. Noise and danger would detract from the native bush experience for walkers. We encountered a few short sharp steep sections but overall the gradients were gentle up to Loftus, Yarrowarra and Engadine.

We returned back down past a tumble of boulders which form a dramatic waterfall in times of heavy rain. Evidence of car wrecking showed that we were very close to civilisation. We arrived back at Prince Edward Park just before dark. After a hot day’s trek, we enjoyed a well deserved cold beer at the welcoming Woronora RSL.

Our impressions were that if the route were well signposted so people didn’t get lost and if a more formal route were adopted by the community, then some of the eroded de facto routes could be rehabilitated with native plants and trees. A theme for this area could be adopted

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on the signage - of course one based on native wildlife.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

We have also been out with keen Bonnet Bay bush walker Barry Bulmer to look at The Needles. First impression was that this is a tremendous natural playground for swimming and just being with nature, close to an important pedestrian crossroads/ meeting point.

However, it was 2 days after the terrible bushfire which devastated parts of Engadine and the extent of the damage to the south bank of the river was obvious and showed one the risks of encouraging access. We attempted to pick our way back through Shackles Estate, but only went about 500m before thick undergrowth stopped us.

Bob and I joined Miriam Verbeek and GREA members Sharyn Cullis and Tim Carroll for a field trip to look at the Georges River around

Campbelltown, between Ingleburn and Appin. We visited some spectacular gorges along the river at Ingleburn Reserve, The Basin and Freyes Crossing. There are few trails linking these sites so it would be a costly exercise to build from scratch and would also be potentially damaging to the flora and fauna.

There are problems with antisocial behaviour at the track heads, where car parks and picnic grounds are constantly vandalised. Common sense improvements have helped, including the placement of gates where they can be watched.

A trail linking the residential suburbs east of Campbelltown with spurs into the river reserves could encourage more visitors as well as proving a sustainable transport option for the communities along the main spine. Improved public transport could also increase visitor numbers and deter miscreants.

CONFERENCE IN W.A.

During the week of October 13th to

18th, we both made the trip to Mandurah in Western Australia to attend the 2nd Australian National Tracks and Trails Conference. The purpose of our trip was to share information and learn about current issues from a universal perspective. To help with the brainstorming and networking we took along some hastily prepared promotional leaflets about the Great Kai'mia Way. Some excellent contacts were made with delegates in both the govt and NGO sectors, from both Australia and abroad. The recurrent themes of the conference were: 1) cultural heritage and environment, 2) physical activity and health, 3) community and sustainable development.

How can I sum up the conference? Well, this excerpt from the official press release puts it succinctly!

“The spectre of a single-celled amoeba, called ‘Trail One’ – (DNA circa 2002) growing to a national trails movement and seen through the eyes of presenters from around the world.

“The animated antics of a professor of environmental science juggling balls and using rope tricks to promote physical activity using recreational trails of the ‘walk, bike, ride (non-motorised)’ and the hilarious misadventures of Harry Hill horse riding, canoeing and walking along the Hume and Hovell Track (NSW) ... the Second Australian Tracks and Trails Conference (Mandurah, Western Australia, October 2002) had everything for the amateur, business sector and government agency representative, trails and recreation practitioner, planners and enthusiasts for physical activity, history, Aboriginal culture, heritage and the environment.”

We learned about Aboriginal song cycles—the theme to bush tucker trails in the Broome area—from Frans Hoegland, a Dutchman who has lived with an Aboriginal family for the last 28 years.

From now until Christmas, we will be focussing strongly on researching existing and potential trail routes.

Alternatives to the F6 freeway

By Michelle Zeibots

Why the F6/M6 is a bad idea can be best appreciated by looking at what happened in the wake of the M5 east—the motorway that cuts through the centre of the south-western sector.

Just after opening, the East Hills Rail Line, which runs parallel to the M5 motorway, experienced a 7 per cent drop in rail commuters. Within months of opening, the M5 was operating at capacity. What happened was that some people who were catching the train started to drive their car instead. This added to traffic congestion and pollution levels in the south-west sector.

At present, the Illawarra Rail Line is operating at capacity during the peak period. If an M6 motorway were built, some people currently catching the train would drive their cars instead. This would put more cars on the road within Sutherland Shire and Rockdale.

It is also important to know that of

the four arterial routes that cross the Georges River—Alfords Point Road, the Illawarra Rail Line at Como Bridge, the Georges River Bridge and Captain Cook Bridge—the railway carries more people in the morning peak, when congestion is at its worse, than all three road bridges combined.

If a light rail or some other form of public transport is built along the F6 axis then it is likely to mean a shift of 7 to 10 per cent of traffic from roads to rail—a reverse of the situation that has taken place in the south-west sector after construction of the M5. This is the best and most realistic way to reduce traffic congestion and pollution.

Since the State Governments decision to abandon a motorway option, a real opportunity now exists to do the sorts of things that genuinely should have been done decades ago.

From the Chair

(continued from page 2)

Recycled Art Program with the highest number of schools ever participating.

And of course we've moved into a new office, gained new staff, including many wonderful and talented volunteers.

I reflect with a tinge of sadness when I think of volunteers. 2002 has seen us lose two very dear volunteers who gave selflessly for all the years the Environment Centre has been operating: Pat Elphinston, of whom much has already been written and said; and Jean Rodger. Ruth Zeibots has written about "our Jean" for this newsletter (page 2).

In fact, I could say "our Ruth"! Or more accurately: "our Ruths." Ruth

Zeibots and Ruth Turner have been amazing all year, picking up many of the tasks Pat and Jean carried out, as well as their own commitments. The two Ruths head our fund raising group – vital for the Centre's operations.

On the side—if you are able to help with items for the store (bric a brac, jams, pickles, cakes, plants) or with time to help the fund-raising group, please contact the Centre.

We are looking forward to 2003, with plenty to do, lots of plans, many challenges. We hope you'll stay on board to support us.

In the meantime, have a great end of year period, and stay safe.

Greening up your own backyard

Interested in promoting biodiversity in your own backyard? Here are a few tips from the Threatened Species Network (TSN).

TSN is part of the World Wildlife fund, which has an interesting website with many facts about conservation efforts in Australia and overseas. (www.wwf.org.au).

Ideally, according to TSN, your garden should have:

- At least one tall fruit or nectar-producing tree above 2.5 metres high;
- A variety of native plants producing pollen, seed, fruit and nectar, from large trees and open shrubs to small dense ones to provide a range of habitat to birds of varying sizes;
- Native grass or short native plants to provide ground cover for small birds, reptiles and insects;
- Space with earth, leaf litter, stones and wood, where birds can scratch for insects and lizards can bask and hide;
- Plants that are local native species; for information on the right plants, try your local nursery, Sutherland Shire Council or Greening Australia;
- In a place out of reach of cats and near to shelter, a safe place for birds to bathe which is highly visible.

So with a bit of advice and some thought in advance, it is not difficult to go "native" in your own garden — at least in a part of it.

Library with a difference

By Pam Cook

Did you know that the Environment Centre has a wealth of information available to its members and the public on just about any local environmental issue – or global one – you can think of?

For the last ten years our trusty volunteers have been scouring the local and daily papers and compiling clipping files that are all catalogued and listed on a database for easy access. These files have been a fantastic resource for school and university students over the years and also a valuable source of information for Centre staff and members. In addition there are many brochures and leaflets on various topics and a variety of journals and periodicals from numerous environmental agencies

and government departments. These include statistical reports, research reports on issues like the Kurnell Peninsula and archival material on the fight against the Mega Tip. We also have copies of journals such as *The National Parks Journal* and newsletters like *Shire Life*.

New Library coordinator Becky Lo is excited by the challenging job she has ahead of her in maintaining and expanding the Centre's Library.

"There is so much material here for people to use," says Becky "and in the future we hope to link up with the Council and other libraries so that everyone will have full access to our resources." The Centre is currently investigating this option and in the meantime will continue to add to its collection. Says Becky: "We are always in need of volunteers to help with data entry. There is always plenty to catalogue."

Along with the materials already mentioned there is an interesting video collection, many of which are useful to schools, on issues such as Recycling, Managing Household Waste and Exploring the Woronora. Activity files on Eco education, Estuaries and Waterwise Solutions are also available. There is also a small but growing selection of CD ROMs.

How can you gain access to these resources? You can come along to the Centre and photocopy any of our library materials. Teachers are able to borrow for a limited time. Anybody wishing to use the library is asked to give Becky a call on 9545 3077. She will be able to check if we have the information you are after and organise a time for you to visit the library.

Useful Weblinks

Considering the current water crisis, it might be timely to include some web sites with information on saving this precious resource.

www.livingthing.net.au

As advertised on television and providing fairly basic but useful information on saving water and reducing waste.

www.sydneywater.com.au/everydropcounts/

An obviously official spot which has details on current water restrictions, hints on how to save water and information on rainwater tanks and rebates.

www.savewater.com.au

Tips, water-saving products and news as well as how to minimize water consumption around the home, garden and business.

www.waterwatch.org.au

A different slant to those mentioned above as it is a

national community water-monitoring program that encourages Australians to be active in protecting their waterways.

www.earthgarden.com.au

This is the website for the magazine of the same name which has a variety of articles on ecologically sustainable living. Of particular interest here is the information on the site relating to water conservation with tips on Low Water Urban Gardens, Frog Ponds, Rainwater Tanks and product Guide to Water Saving Devices. Very interesting and well presented!

Rebate for water tanks

Sydney Water is offering a rebate to customers who install a rainwater tank. Tanks help conserve drinking water and reduce stormwater run-off. The rebate program extends for a limited time and is based on the size of the tank and whether the rainwater is "plumbed" into the toilet or washing machine. For more information, see the Sydney Water site:

www.sydneywater.com.au/everydropcounts/

Contact Sutherland Shire Council regarding installation of tanks.

New Faces Part I



Our new Office Manager:
Josephine Winkler

Although I'm not native to the Sutherland Shire, some of my earliest recollections are of the sand dunes at Kurnell, and hearing every time we drove past them, how big they used to be.

Many happy childhood memories revolve around outings to the Kurnell Peninsula, and so it is with much excitement I am joining an organization that advocates, among many other things, the preservation and restoration of the peninsula's natural delights!

I've always loved being outdoors

and this influenced my decision to study Environmental Biology at UTS. The three-year course focused on Australian native flora and fauna, and involved a lot of field work. Since graduation, I've been a jack of all trades – taking jobs in hospital-ity, software testing, admin, not to mention some volunteer work with the Australian Museum, stream health project work with Bankstown Council, and volunteer field data collection for a biodiversity study of Wentworth Falls.

I am very much looking forward to getting involved with the Centre's activities, and to meeting all of you!

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A conflict of basic values

government policy input into managing stocks of natural resources [and infrastructure] is needed due to their long-term or non-replaceable nature.

They agree, however, with Dr Robson that "the discipline of the market is probably better at managing the fast moving flows [of energy, materials and waste] in most cases."

A well-known policy adviser, economist Chris Murphy, said at the report's launch that he was happy to support the second scenario.

He believed that the immigration program should support the needs of our labour market, maintaining a focus on skilled immigration.

He pointed out that an oversize intake, such as in scenario 3, would result in a lowering of the skilled component because Australia could not compete with Canada and the USA for skilled workers.

Murphy claimed that it was not possible to make a reasonable link between population and environmental stress: so immigration intake should be set to suit the labour market without reference to the

environment.

Murphy appeared on *Four Corners* (ABC TV) on November 4, berating the scientist who co-authored the report, Dr Barney Foran, for counting the environmental cost of a holiday to Cairns, when the enjoyment value had to be given due weight.

A few days later at the report's launch, one speaker asked whether Mr. Murphy believed that "we could belt the crap out of the environment, provided that we enjoyed ourselves sufficiently while we did so."

ENVIRONMENTAL COST

This amused the audience and created a difficulty for the economist when he was asked to apply the same approach to the lack of enjoyment suffered by Sydney residents who were now forming groups to protest against urban consolidation. How did he value discomfort?

Dr Roger Bradbury, former Chief Scientist (Bureau of Rural Services), was full of praise for the CSIRO report, noting that the study provides an empirical basis to refresh the

national debate on sustainable development.

In 2001, a local population forum was co-hosted by the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (proceedings at www.ssec.org.au/PopForum.html).

The CSIRO report highlights the challenges which Australia faces, no matter which scenario it chooses.

State governments now agree that there is an urgent need for the Federal Government to integrate the efforts of all Australians into a policy to cope with a changed future.

* At 336 pages, "*Future Dilemmas: Options to 2050 for Australia's pollution, technology, resources and environment*", is available at the Environment Centre's library. A companion summary, *Dilemmas Distilled*, is also on file (60 pages). It is published by CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, GPO Box 284, Canberra ACT 2601. Phone 02-6242-1600.

The report is on-line at www.cse.csiro.au/futuredilemmas.

Port Hacking needs help

By John Atkins *

Port Hacking is one of the Shire's best loved and used waterways, and is facing the same challenges as other urban waterways.

Incremental degradation by stormwater and sewage, weed invasion and urban development all threaten Port Hacking.

NSW Fisheries has reported on trials of control measures for the invasive algae, *Coleurpa taxifolia*, in a report to the Port Hacking Advisory Committee of Sutherland Shire Council.

Smothering the algae with salt has proved an effective way of killing it, but the large amounts of salt required for control make a general application of this method very difficult,

Unfortunately, this algae is now present through much of the Port and may already be negatively impacting on the local biodiversity.

Other issue raised at the committee was a case currently before the courts, relating to a group of waterfront properties in Gunnamatta Bay. The owners are arguing to extend their boundaries to include areas of sand which have built up between

their properties and the water.

If allowed, current public access along this section of Gunnamatta Bay could be lost.

The principle of maintaining and perhaps extending public access to our waterways has been strongly supported by the Environment Centre and the Port Hacking Protection Society. This principle now needs renewed support.

Port Hacking is a wonderful water-

way, providing unique habitat to a wide range of flora and fauna, with great opportunities for healthy, low-impact recreation.

With careful management and community support, the qualities of Port Hacking can be maintained for the future. To paraphrase a famous saying, "The price of maintaining our environment is eternal vigilance."

** John Atkins is President of the Port Hacking Protection Society*

New Faces Part II

May I introduce myself: I am Becky Lo, and I recently took up a position as Library & Outreach Coordinator at the Centre. I am married with two boys and live locally.

In addition to the co-ordination of our volunteers, my responsibilities include clerical support to the Centre Executive and getting the Library functional as an important resource for the public and particularly our schools.

I was a community volunteer at the Centre before taking up this position and prior to that I was Office Administrator for the Australian Chinese Community Association of NSW, a

large NSW non-profit community organisation. Nevertheless, every new position has its learning curve. I look forward to working with you.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION :

I would like to become a member of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre
 Suite 4, Level 1,
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 PO Box 589, Sutherland NSW 1499
 Telephone 02 9545 3077
 Fax 02 9521 1477
 Email office@ssec.org.au
 Web <http://ssec.org.au>

Name.....

Address.....

..... post-

code.....Telephone.....

.....

I enclose fee of: \$27.50 (1 yr) \$49.50 (2 yr) \$66 (3 yr)

\$16.50 (concession or student)

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

Motorway? No Way!

“I asked the RTA where would all the new traffic generated by the motorway go once it reaches the city? And they couldn’t give me an answer. So I decided to cancel the F6 motorway”

These words were startling, especially given that they came from the Transport Minister Carl Scully.

Resident group CARTS—Citizens Advocating Responsible Transport for the Shire—recently organised a picnic to celebrate abandonment of a motorway option for the F6 corridor. Minister for Transport Carl Scully attended along with over 100 local residents whose homes would have been affected by the M6 motorway.

The picnic was also attended by Barry Collier, the Member for Miranda, and Sutherland Shire Deputy Mayor Tracie Sonda.

The three all planted *celebration trees* as part of the day’s event to commemorate the decision not to proceed with construction of a motorway. Instead, much of the land within the corridor will



State Transport Minister Carl Scully (centre, in white shirt) with some of the residents who turned out to applaud the cancellation of the F6. The decision saved many homes from destruction.

be preserved as a nature reserve. The state Government in partnership with the five local governments that make up the southern sector of Sydney (Rockdale, Kogarah, Hurstville, Sutherland Shire and Wollongong) will work to develop a comprehensive public transport network for the region.

The Environment Centre has been central in bringing about the decision by the State Government to abandon the motorway plans, and in co-ordinating

the efforts of Councils. The efforts of the community, through CARTS and other forums, have been critical.

Over the next few months, the Centre will continue to ensure that the community’s voice is strongly heard by co-ordinating an agreed community document on transport options for the region.



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