



THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE SUTHERLAND
SHIRE ENVIRONMENT
CENTRE

Desperately seeking solutions

By Paul Martin

After a while you realise that highlighting environmental problems to the government does not mean that anything will be done. Often, even if what you say is heard and understood, no-one in government has any real idea of what to do about it, so your issues find themselves neatly deposited in the 'too hard' basket.

For a long time, Port Hacking has been left in this situation, as have many of the other problems up and down the coast. The Port Hacking Protection Society has been highlighting issues for almost 20 years but the Port continues its measured environmental decline, and the forcing out of low impact uses in favour of the most harmful activities.

In an attempt to move past the 'too hard' or 'no ideas' stage, a Coastal Solutions conference was put on by the Southern



Exploring options for effective coastal management
top—bottom: Les Robinson, Kathy Ridge and Professor Bruce Thom.

Catchment Management Board, the Sutherland Environment Centre, Port Hacking Protection Society, Sutherland Shire Council, the Sydney Coastal Councils Group, and the NSW Coastal Council, in November. This is part of a two-stage process to come up with a clear strategy for fixing the problems that have been identified over the years. Stage two will be a workshop in 2004 to take what came out of the conference and

turn it into a strategy. The aim is to present to government a well thought out management strategy to solve problems, not merely to present the problems once again.

The conference was a great success. There were around 80 people there, including community group and local government representatives from up and down the coast, as

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Nuclear Update

By Michael Priceman

NSW Inquiry into the Transport and Storage of Nuclear waste. Originally the committee was to give its report by mid-December. This has been put back until the 17th February. There are 2 ways of looking at this. Optimists say it is because the subject is far more complex than the members thought. Pessimists say it is to delay it until after the ALP National conference in Sydney during January.

Meanwhile, in South Australia the State Government has lost its case in a Federal Court to prevent the Commonwealth

from using a site for a waste dump. The SA Government says that the matter isn't over and will use it as an issue in a Federal election. This could lose some government seats in Canberra. We can only hope that the Committee will report in a way that will spur the Carr Government to act in a similar manner. So far its public statements, to be kind, have been contradictory

What to do in the event of a major accident at Lucas Heights. The confusion continues. The NSW Health Department has scrapped the plan to 'shelter' that had been in

place for over 25 years. It wouldn't have worked anyway and it is only because of the valid arguments, put by community representatives, that the NSW Health Department came to realise it. In its place we now have evacuation—over a 12-hour period – which won't work either.

Health refused the sensible suggestion to pre-distribute stable iodine tablets to some of the nearby population. These tablets are not available to the public in Australia. The original – unworkable—plan was their

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I read about a dinner party conversation in Lebanon. The hostess had an eclectic set of friends around the table: A Christian, a Sunni Muslim, a Shi'a Muslim, and a woman from America. She asked her friends whether it would ever be possible to have a true democratic government in Lebanon, rather than the pre-arranged deal that currently operates to satisfy all the Lebanese religions: The president must be a Christian Maronite, the prime minister must be a Sunni Muslim, and the house speaker must be Shi'a Muslim.

Her Lebanese friends initially responded positively but the discussion quickly became defensive. Each friend tried to justify how open democracy would enable the best teachings in their religion to rule and held that if any of the other religions ruled the system would certainly fail. Finally the American friend said, "To be honest, I'm not sure Lebanon or the Arab world can be a democracy. It's a mentality thing. You're too tribal. Too sect-oriented. You don't think: who can run the country better? You think: do I want a Muslim or Christian in power? We don't think like that in the US and so it works."

I was relating this story to the Mayor of one of the Coastal Councils and remarking dryly that in fact there were few differences between the way that Lebanese voters apparently behave and the way that Australian voters behave. We may not think in terms of religions, but we think in terms of parties (tribes?): Liberal, Labor, Democrats and Greens – and then there are Independents. "What's more," I bemoaned, "Councillors tend to operate as blocks. It's often so predictable that you don't even have to think in terms of what individuals might think, just what the Party thinks. And you can further reduce that 'thinking' by noting which Ward they come from and therefore what information they're likely to take an interest in."

The Mayor surprised me by saying: "Well of course you'll have that in the Sutherland Shire because you have Wards and Councillors endorsed by political parties. We got rid of that some years ago. It's stopped a lot of the silly fighting and rivalries between Parties and Councillors are much more sensible

now."

She explained that like many rural and regional Councils, hers has never had political party divisions within Council. In the past there have been both Liberal and Labor Party members sitting on Council however they sat unendorsed by the Parties and therefore acted as independents in terms of decision/policy/position. There used to be Wards also, but these were abolished in the 1980s.

Recently her Council considered the issue again - together with the popular election of the Mayor - and decided not to proceed with either proposition.

Several groups in her Council have registered "political party" names which allows them to mount a ticket on the Ballot paper, which permits above the line voting. Her Councillors are a mixture of Independents and party unendorsed Labor, Greens, and Liberals. Their status gives them the freedom to vote with conscience on all matters, and because there are no Wards they take an interest in the whole Council area.

She noted: "That is probably the issue, wherever they come from, each must be able to assess issues in the light of their own research and knowledge and vote accordingly not bound by any other allegiance – whether Ward or Political Party."

I wondered whether it was a model that could work for the Sutherland Shire Council. She smiled. "Oh, I don't think the Political Parties would encourage that. It would give them less direct power in that area of their electorate."

It seems a pity really. I wonder whether having a political decision-making body in local government that is independent of the state political decision-making bodies would be beneficial for the people of the Shire. I wonder whether it would ameliorate some of the bitterness that Council debates sometimes take, and enable a better uptake of information to inform the debates.

Well, with those ruminations, let me turn to a lighter subject, befitting this time of the year:

I hope your Christmas festivities go as planned, and bring you happiness and peace, - and a wonderful entrée to the New Year.

From the Board, Management Committee and staff of the Environment Centre, thank you for your support in 2003 and hope you're around to do it all again in 2004!

About SSEC

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre was founded to speak for the environment of the Sutherland Shire and its bioregions. The Centre seeks to bring to its advocacy role: well-researched information, participation of all stakeholders in debates; inclusion of the needs of future generations; and a genuine desire 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 supply up-to-date information about Centre activities. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are the authors', and not necessarily policy of the Centre. The editorial committee comprises: Pam Cook, Don Pagé, Vicki Simpson, Narelle Towart, Miriam Verbeek, and Jo Pajor-Markus (nee Winkler).

Contact us:
Sutherland Shire
Environment Centre
Suite 4, Level 1,
2-4 Merton St,
Sutherland
PO Box 589,
Sutherland NSW 1499
Ph: 02 9545 3077
Fax: 02 9521 1477
office@ssec.org.au
Web www.ssec.org.au



Has your ISP been letting you down lately?



Then Help Fund the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre by joining our Internet Service Provider Program (SSEC-ISP).

When you join SSEC-ISP and nominate us as your preferred supplier, we will be rebated \$4.00 per month per paid connection of SSEC-ISP each month, while you pay a very competitive rate for your internet connection. By helping yourself, you will be helping us. The SSEC is now able to provide our members with a cost-competitive Internet Connection via Modem or ADSL broadband. *Note! The Centre has switched to Loyalty ISP for our Internet connection.*

How SSEC-ISP works

SSEC-ISP works through Loyalty ISP a service founded on the principle of allowing not-for-profit/community organisations an opportunity to share in the earnings potential of the Internet.

They have achieved this by developing an unparalleled Affiliate program. When SSEC refers new customers to Loyalty ISP, we receive a cheque in the mail for \$4.00 for each person who has signed-up with our referral. Every month, for as long as you stay online with Intertask, we receive a \$4.00 rebate. **SIMPLE AS THAT**

Loyalty ISP recognised their program could offer clubs, groups, schools and organisations an opportunity to raise money to support their activities. In addition, it is a way to assist our community to gain a foothold in this new internet revolution. This is a very simple and legitimate way for you to create a long term income stream for SSEC, requiring no investment by the Centre. Loyalty ISP is the only major national ISP offering this unique opportunity. One that actually pays us **monthly** cash commissions for every supporter that uses **SSEC-ISP** for as long as they remain a paid member.

Modem - 56K unlimited hours & downloads.

Sydney Metro: \$17.95/month,

Regional 1: \$18.95/month,

Regional 2: \$21.95/month,

Note : Each plan comes with 3 pop email addresses. Your email address will be "(yourname)@ssecmember.org.au".

You also get 5 meg of personal web space

All dial up accounts incur a \$10.00 Setup fee

ADSL - Permanent connection, unlimited downloads.

Sydney Metro:

256/64K \$79.95/mth,

512/256K \$99.95/mth,

1.5M/256K \$229.95/mth

1: Account activation and Service setup costs are \$295.00 (includes modem) on-site visit extra.

2. Setup costs are and monthly fees are payable in advance.

3. Does not include telephone line rental.

4: Minimum Contract period for connections is 6 months

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distribution, house to house, by the Ambulance Service. The ambos recently refused to do this, bringing the matter to a head. This is where the evacuation plan came in. Any tablets would be administered at evacuation centres. Health says that concerned members of the community who want earlier prophylaxis may buy liquid soluble iodine for their local chemist. But they have never heard of it! There are many more arguments to come.

ARPANSA, the 'independent' nuclear regulator, deserves a mention here. It has refused to release its own analysis of a worst-case terrorist attack on the reactor site to State Emergency Services - on grounds of security. Without this how can they plan?

Draconian restriction of information. The passing of amendments to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act a few days ago almost went unnoticed. With the exception of members like Senator Kerry Nettle the amendments were approved in the Senate. This severely restricts the news from the nuclear industry - read 'ANSTO' - and imposes large fines and prison sentences for whistle blowers, persons passing on information to the press, journalists and the media. This takes us back to the dark ages before 1986, when the Australian Atomic Energy Commission (AAEC), later ANSTO operated under the Australian Defence Act. *The Leader* immediately went into print on 2nd December with a strongly worded article and an editorial expressing its disapproval.

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well as representatives of government agencies. We were able to engage leading expert speakers, including some key coastal policy makers in government. The talks spanned the use of legal action by citizens (lawyers from the Environmental Defenders Office and Phillips Fox Solicitors), new approaches to using markets (with economists from the Australian Graduate School of Management and the Environment Protection Authority), ways of making regulation work (from the perspective of a community activist and a senior government agency manager), improved overall governance and reporting approaches (from senior academics who have been actively involved in coasts and estuaries governance) and finally dealing with approaches to better involvement of the community (from the perspective of managers working with community groups).

There were some interesting ideas canvassed like:

- Why don't we have community

groups 'adopt' part of the Port? Then they can feel confident in their oversight role, and government will have low cost supervision.

- How about putting a cap on foreshore permissive occupancies (like boat houses) and let people trade the right to have them? Then we would be able to compensate people while at the same time clawing back some of the overdevelopment.
- Is it possible to increase the effectiveness of policing by better oversight, or by sharing policing resources? Then maybe we will make the existing laws work as they are meant to.
- Would it help to have a series of special interest stakeholder panels, rather than try to consult through the existing Management Panel? Then perhaps we can get real progress on improving management policies.

We were also exposed to some of the initiatives that are now being undertaken, like the work that is underway towards an integration of all the plans for Port

Hacking, and various community voluntary programs.

The day ended with a workshop, designed to come up with actionable approaches to improved management. Some of the key outcomes of that activity are:

- More local and community involvement;
- Use existing instruments properly;
- Strengthen community and government partnerships;
- Re-evaluate the role of government.

Where to from here?

In the series of Hacking forums we have now explored the physical and other challenges to Port Hacking, and we have looked at the range of mechanisms that might be possible to address these. The last two stages are

1. to bring this together into a clear management program; and
2. get action going.

That is the agenda for 2004. IF you want to be involved, contact Nick at the Environment Centre on 9545 3077.

A hugely expanded Port Botany—to be or not to be?

What's happened so far?

In 2001 the then State Transport Minister, Carl Scully, announced that planning for Port Botany's expansion as well as for the Enfield 'inland port' was proceeding and would include community consultation. The main push for the expansion came from the **Sydney Ports Corporation** (SPC) – the old Maritime Services Board, but since 1995 a corporatised quasi-government body under the NSW Ministry of Transport.

Growing public concern about likely Port Botany expansion has prompted the formation of an angry coalition of 33 community groups in southern Sydney, the Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance (BBaCA), which includes Kurnell Regional Environment Planning Council (KREPC). Many councils in the region are also strongly opposed to the Ports expansion, including Sutherland Shire Council.

To address concerns about Botany Bay the NSW Government had earlier formed a **Botany Bay Strategy Advisory Committee** in 2002, which proceeded to meet nine times between April and October 2003, producing major documents aimed at protecting Botany Bay.

Then at the ALP State Conference on 5 October 2003 came Premier Bob Carr's surprise announcement of a '**Ports Growth Plan**'! This sent shock waves through the whole of Sydney and surrounding regions, as there had been absolutely no community notice given or consultation involved prior to the announcement. It has since become clear that this 'Plan' had been rushed together at the last moment to legitimise the Premier's announcement.

And now, on 1 December 2003 SPC has formally lodged a Development Application, with accompanying Environmental Impact Statement, to expand the already busy Port. This is expected to go on public exhibition in



Current visual amenity at Botany Beach



Visual amenity after Port Botany expansion is complete

Images courtesy of Save Botany Beach Inc.

January.

A parliamentary inquiry into the Port's expansion has been set up, and due to angry public reaction to SPC's proposal, an independent Commission of Inquiry has also been set up. Craig Knowles, the current Planning Minister, has stated that any decision to expand Port Botany would have 'significant' implications for the State's social, environmental and economic fabric, and promised it would be subjected to "the most rigorous scrutiny".

Sydney Ports Corporation's proposal

The proposal is to expand Port Botany by reclaiming 70-80ha from Botany Bay by deep dredging of its sandy bottom and then filling for the wharf extensions – to be located between the existing Patricks facility and the airport's third runway. The announced cost of the dredging, reclamation, wharf construction, and road/rail access is \$580 million.

Community groups are extremely concerned that such expansion will:

- destroy the remaining struggling ecology

of the Bay, which is already burdened by the international airport, the huge oil refinery, the dangerous Banksmeadow chemical storages, and the existing massive container port, because further extensive dredging of the shallow bay will engender increased wave energies destructive of seagrasses, mangrove shores, and beaches such as Towra;

- pose a danger of the dredging releasing chlorinated hydrocarbons into the Bay, because a huge plume of polluted ground-water containing these toxic materials (emanating from Orica/ICI's Banksmeadow storage tanks) is steadily seeping towards the Bay.
- cause major traffic congestion in the already congested southern Sydney region.

The 'real' agenda

Although Premier Carr at the State ALP Conference on 5 October stated that Port

Botany, Newcastle, and Port Kembla would *all* be expanded in the future, his first and foremost plan is to concentrate on closing down Sydney Harbour as a working port and **expand Port Botany**. Since this announcement, it has been widely claimed that only SPC and developers – scheming to build high-price, high-rise apartments on Sydney Harbour foreshore – would benefit from the Premier's 'Ports Growth Plan'.

Where is the community consultation, Mr Carr?

To make matters worse, this unexpected announcement was made by Premier Carr without consulting even his Government's own **Botany Bay Strategy Advisory Committee**, whose members (including KREPC Chairman, Bob Walshe, and Gary Blaschke of BBaCA) were utterly stunned – no-one had heard of the 'Ports Growth Plan'. Allegations have been made that the 'PGP' was simply a figment of Premier

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In the name of Freedom

By Miriam Verbeek

War has many faces. One we see often is the one of our gallant leaders earnestly telling us how necessary a particular war we have decided to support is. Another face is one of our gallant leaders telling military personnel how heroic they are. A more disturbing face is that which tells of the human cost of war – the destruction of homes and towns, injuries, deaths and ruined lives – collateral damage.

A face we don't often see is that of the environmental damage caused by war – but it is a grim face indeed.

Did you know that bombs not only destroy human infrastructure but can annihilate flora and fauna as well as destroy the lower levels of the soil. A 1,000-pound tomahawk cruise missile - can generate temperatures up to 5,400 degrees fahrenheit. Soils hit with this kind of power can take 1,500 to 7,400 years to regenerate.

Often the targets for bombs in a war – such as the war in Kosovo and in Iraq - are the chemical and energy infrastructure of the “enemy” nation. When these targets are hit, they release a toxic nightmare. In Sydney there is widespread concern when a fire threatens an oil refinery, or a gas or chemical plant or when an oil tanker leaks its contents into the environment. In the war in Yugoslavia, the toxic nightmare not only effected the war zone, but drifted to neighbouring countries.

The bombing of one chemical plant alone released three tons of caustic soda, 1,400 tons of ethylene dichloride, 800 tons of hydrochloric acid and 1,200 tons of the toxic, explosive and carcinogenic substance vinyl chloride. In a desperate effort to avert

additional explosions at the complex, authorities at the facility dumped large amounts of toxic chemicals directly into the Danube River, the source of drinking water and irrigation for 20 million people and home to a complex of precious ecosystems. Fires raged for days from other bombed facilities. Poisonous clouds drifted east to Romania and Bulgaria and north to Hungary and the Ukraine. Oil slicks, hundreds of kilometres long, drifted down river systems.

We could detail similar environmental horror stories from Afghanistan and Iraq and other war zones. The residues of depleted uranium used in bombs in all countries that have experienced the weapons of mass destruction used by friendly forces continues to be a problem for all residents and visitors of the now freed countries.

On an even more sinister level, the urgent necessity for the US military to protect national security is causing the Bush administration to approve the most far-reaching rollback of marine mammal protection in the last 30 years. It exempts the US military from obeying core provisions of the US Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. In spite of the most stringent efforts of environmentalists, the changed laws in the name of freedom will allow the US military to:

- Use high-intensity sonar and underwater explosives – these harass and kill whales, dolphins and other marine mammals
- Entirely exempt itself from all environmental review under the (US) Marine Mammal Protection Act



- Destroy the habitat of endangered birds and mammals that live on 25 million acres of land under the Pentagon's jurisdiction

The Bush administration claims that these drastic steps are necessary because environmental laws are compromising combat readiness for the war on terror.

Australia is the only country that has fought by the side of the US in every major international conflict the US has been engaged in. Does this mean that the Australian government will be urging Australians to violate their sense of care for the environment so that we can remain an ongoingly solid partner in the fight for freedom?

Are we also going to turn a blind face to the needs of a sustainable environment in the name of freedom?

www.savebiogems.org
www.emagazine.com
<http://postconflict.unepich>

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Carr's imagination. After

chasing a bureaucratic trail of inquiry, many astounded people have discovered that **no such document existed** before the Premier's speech! However, remarkably, SPC's October newsletter does refer to the plan. Could it be that only a privileged clique is privy to Premier Carr's grand vision?

A staff member from the Transport & Ports branch of Treasury later revealed to Bob Walshe that the Premier's announcement was the result of the State Government's concerns over its freight problems; that part of the small container trade closed down in

Sydney Harbour could go to Port Kembla; and that Newcastle would only be given consideration as a container port after Port Botany reached its capacity around 2010. The essential thrust was **to double then treble its present capacity** to 3 million by 2025.

Will you ever listen, Mr Carr?

So, with the communities of Wollongong/Port Kembla and Newcastle clamouring for a greater share of the container trade, with opposition to the closing down of Sydney Harbour as a working port, and opposition to the expansion of Port Botany, when will the Government take notice?

State Governments have for years blundered along without a state-wide freight transport policy. They have especially failed to build adequate rail infrastructure.

Now the Government has an opportunity to upgrade port and rail capacity at Newcastle and Port Kembla so that the growing container trade will flow to the Sydney market from those regional centres (the Hunter and the Illawarra) and thereby save southern Sydney from the Port Botany expansion that will gridlock our traffic and destroy the Bay's ecology.

World Class Feature – Towra Point

By Miriam Verbeek

In 1971, in the Iranian town of Ramsar, the international community decided on a Convention to halt the loss of wetlands around the world. The Convention recognises that Wetlands are vital for sustaining life on earth.

- They provide habitat for wildlife, are refuges for wildlife in times of drought and fire, and
- are breeding grounds for many animals, particularly fish and waterbirds, helping to protect biodiversity.
- They purify water by trapping sediments and nutrients, reducing erosion, as well as providing protection from floods.
- They also protect coastal shorelines from the action of waves and often act as natural firebreaks.

As of January 2003, Australia has 63 Ramsar sites with a total area of approximately 7.2 million hectares. Ten of these are in

NSW, one of them being Towra Point Nature Reserve in Botany Bay.

The Nature Reserve was listed as a Ramsar site in 1984 because it contains approximately 50 per cent of Sydney's remaining mangrove communities and 90 per cent of the city's remaining saltmarsh communities. Approximately 200 bird species have been recorded from the Towra Point area. It's possible to find 31 of the 66 species presently listed in the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement, as well as species listed in the China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement. Several species listed as threatened or endangered in NSW are also found within the Nature Reserve.

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre's website has more information on the Reserve: www.ssec.org.au/towra/

If you're a bird watcher you may like to participate in the Birds Australia project to investigate the birds inhabiting the Botany Wetlands. Contact: Michelle Cox, Ph (02) 9436 0199, or email: michelle_p_cox@bigpond.com

Community Garden Update

By Gareth Thomas

A lot has been happening in the community garden over the last few months. From the beginning in the imagination of John Vlam and his continuing amazing efforts, the permaculture garden has been steadily growing. Every week finds us with new people, and the committed regulars too, all contributing to the diversity of the community garden. There have been a few difficulties in differing ideas on how to begin work on the garden, but this happens in groups that are wanting to have all participants actively involved in decision making.

A community garden is for the community and works when all involved are valued and are empowered to contribute the best and worst of what they are. In permaculture diversity is an important element providing healthy interactions which create a healthy garden. Hopefully this will continue to be nurtured in the future.

After moving from meetings at the Environment Centre and Menai Youth Centre to the site in Sutherland the group has begun getting their collective hands dirty. We began with general tidying of the yard and house, which now is a great space to meet, we have now taken a few vital steps in gardening by constructing a composting system, creating a temporary shade house, planting our first seeds and seedlings and building a herb spiral.

As well as learning new gardening skills and putting them into practice, the garden has been an excellent way to get to know locals from all kinds of backgrounds all over the Shire who we might otherwise never have known.

It is an exciting project with a lot of potential for the community to get together and create something really special together. Thanks to all that have been involved these last few months, giving your time, bringing ideas, talents and resources. There is much to look forward to in the new year!

The group meets every Saturday at 10 am

for workdays followed by a delicious shared lunch. Bring a plate of food, your self and any ideas you might have. A community garden relies on the resources and ingenuities of the people involved and we are always looking for more of these.

If anyone has access to resources such as rocks, food scraps and organic matter for the compost, seeds, seedlings, and general gardening tools, call Jo at SSEC on 9545 3077.

Vale John Vlamitsopoulos

By Josephine Pajor-Markus

It is with great sadness that I communicate the premature death of John (Vlam)Vlamitsopoulos, a delightful, energetic soul, without whom Sutherland Community Garden would not be a reality today.

I first met John a year ago up at the Environment Centre, during the time he was initially rounding up people interested in a community garden. His enthusiasm was infectious and I found myself involved with the project.

What always impressed me about John was the ease with which he could engage people. It seemed that every time I spoke with him he would say, "I met this person, and we had a really good talk about..."

John loved talking about the community garden, but his interests were spread



John Vlam, protesting against the war in Iraq at Sutherland NSW Liberal Electoral Campaign Launch on Sunday 16 March 2003.

across a wide range of environmental and social justice issues.

Never one to be idle, John was involved with the Greens (he was the Cronulla candidate for the March State Government elections), he was an active member of PANR, he studied Social Welfare at TAFE, and at the beginning of December, John embarked on a 4-week trip to Maleny in QLD to investigate co-operatives.

This had been a much-anticipated trip by John, as

he had worked without pause for a well over a year. However, on December 11th, at Kondalilla Falls in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, an accidental fall claimed his life.

John's tireless, unassuming efforts in all his community endeavours won him the respect and friendship of many.

He will be sorely missed.

People's LEP

By Neil de Nett

Peoples Plan

The draft document, the third version, is large and complex. The principles of Plan First are largely discarded and there has been a return to conventional planning procedures. It will be exhibited from 1 December 2003 to 16 January 2004 at the Council offices and libraries. A disc is available at a modest cost for those with computer skills.

Where do you start?

Some people may want to know how various controls will affect their property, others may be concerned about the creeping spread of high rise units, others may be getting frustrated with traffic congestion, or some may see a need for more open space and playing fields.

First, read the user guide at the beginning of the document. It will give you an idea where to look for your particular interest. Following page 29, there are 7 un-numbered pages which have a summary of planning controls, such as, density (floor space ratio), landscaping setbacks etc. Unfortunately, it does not show the changes from the previous LEP, so for comparison you will need a copy of LEP 2000.

There are also 8 sets of maps. These cover flood liable land, bushfire areas, greenweb, threatened species and wetlands, acid sulphate soils, heritage items and building heights. These maps would be of special significance if you are worried about the loss of bushland and native fauna and flora in the Shire. This concern will be magnified if the new Peoples Plan does not adequately address the increasing density of

development in the Shire. If there are more people, there will be increasing pressure on the natural environment, both land and water.

If your land is subject to one or more of the above (except building heights), you will not be eligible for exempt or complying development. It will cost you considerably more to lodge a development application.

Next, not only do you need to determine what may affect your land, you will probably be interested in what goes on at the property next door, in your street, or your suburb. Are you likely to have a dual occupancy peering into your backyard? A large villa complex dominating your street? Or find that you can't park because all the spaces in the streets near the shops are taken by cars overflowing from units?

Under this plan dual occupancies are restricted to a limited number of sites, there will not be many of them. Townhouses are gone from the local housing zone (the most common zone) but there will be an increase in the number and size of villa developments. In most centres the space available for unit development is almost used up, with the exception of Sutherland. Please note, however, that the current Housing Strategy, which this plan is based on, **does** make provision for re-zoning more land around the centres. This is not spelt out in the Plan.

There are two proposals for re-zoning for units in the Plan. The old Telstra site on the eastern side of Prince's Highway and Precinct 8, between the railway and the cemetery, both at Sutherland. Sutherland also has 5 sites available for 12 storey developments plus the potential to develop over the railway station. If all of these were to go ahead, Sutherland would become a very

congested area indeed. The building heights are now nominated in the LEP, as opposed to previously being in a DCP, which will make it more difficult to go down, but easier to go up.

This Plan has been watered down in some areas, notably medium density controls, as a result of directions from State Planning. It is interesting that they did not object to these same controls in the first version and issued a Section 65 certificate to allow exhibition, just before the State Election.

Finally, if you are not sure about anything, ring the council hotline, 9710 0800. The staff are very helpful. If you feel strongly that something should be changed, ring your councillor. In any case, write a submission to council and have your say.

TAKE ACTION!

- Prepare a submission for the Commission of Inquiry into the Port Botany Expansion. For more information see the article on page 4, or contact SSEC on 9545 3077.
- Write a submission on the new draft LEP, on exhibition till 16 January 2004. Call Council on 9710 0333 to find out exhibition locations.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION :

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



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre
Suite 4, Level 1,
2-4 Merton St, Sutherland
PO Box 589, Sutherland NSW 1499
Telephone 02 9545 3077
Fax 02 9521 1477
Email office@ssec.org.au
Web www.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.....

RULES FOR BEING HUMAN

I received this as an email, and thought it good to keep in mind as we stand on the precipice of a new year...(JPM)

1. You will receive a body. You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period this time around.
2. You will learn lessons. You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called life. Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant or stupid.
3. There are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of trial and error, a

form of experimentation. The "failed" experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiments that ultimately work.

4. A lesson is repeated until it is learned. A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can go on to the next lesson.
5. Learning lessons does not end. There is no part of life that does not contain lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned.
6. "There" is no better than "here." When your "there" has become a "here", you will

simply obtain another "there", which will, again, look better than "here."

7. Others are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects in you something you love or hate about yourself.
8. What you make of your life is up to you. You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you - the choice is yours.

Your answers lie inside you. The answers to life's questions lie inside you. All you need to do is look, listen and trust.

USEFUL WEBSITES



Help collect fishy data!

If you snorkel or dive or otherwise spend time investigating what lives under water you may like to help NSW Fisheries collect data on protected and threatened species. View records of threatened and protected species, access the NSW Fisheries database at www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/

Report sightings by accessing the form at www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/thr/community

Know your wetlands

National Parks and Wildlife service has just produced a report mapping the distribution and extent of the state's 20,000 wetlands – covering 4.5 million hectares at their maximum extent. Only 3% of these wetlands are in national parks and reserves and most of these are in coastal reserves whereas 93% of wetlands

are inland. To view the report, download from:

<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Distribution+of+wetlands+in+NSW>

Powerful Owl Genetic Study

This is not a website, but if you are able to assist in a genetic study of the endangered powerful owl, Fiona Hogan, Ph: (03) 9251 7605 or email: fehogan@deakin.edu.au would like to hear from you. If you have any information about the location of live, injured or dead powerful owls, barking owls, southern boobooks and/or samples from any of these species such as feathers or tissue, please report them.

Overfishing

The Australian Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) recently released its Fisheries Status Report 2002-03. Of the 70



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre
Suite 4, Level 1,
2-4 Merton St, Sutherland
PO Box 589, Sutherland NSW 1499

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