



Annual Report

2015-16

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre works with others in the community – including business, council, government and residents – to achieve a sustainable environment in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions.



Patron

R.D. (Bob) Walshe, OAM

Board Members 2015-16

Jenni Gormley (Chairperson)

John Nelson (Treasurer)

Tassia Kolesnikow (Secretary)

Kelly Abeleven

Roger Bramble

Jonathan Doig (Climate Change)

Phil Smith (Environmental Education)

Ruth Zeibots

Development Officer

Graeme Booth

Statement of Purpose

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre will work with others in the community – including business, council, government and residents – to achieve a sustainable environment in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions.

Statement of Functions

The Board agrees that the following list comprises the priority functions of the SSEC:

1. Establish the SSEC as the Peak Environment Group in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions, one that supports low-impact lifestyles, practices and behaviours in the community.
2. Establish efficient communication processes with the community.
3. Develop and conduct education initiatives.
4. Campaign publicly for protecting and improving the quality of the environment in Sutherland and its bio-regions.
5. Support members and local community organisations in their efforts to protect their local areas.
6. Establish efficient information, operation and management systems for Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.
7. Strengthen relationships with Sutherland Shire Council, other councils and other community and environmental organisations.
8. Raise funds to carry out the functions of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre.

For all of the above, the principles of working in partnership with others and in concert with other initiatives apply. Consultation and collaboration are vital elements of effective partnerships.

The overall aim is to create an environment centre! One that is welcoming and useful for the community. And one that models and demonstrates environmental and sustainability values in its decisions, practices and actions.

Chairman's Report

Another eventful year has passed. As I looked over the Report that is being presented to you this evening I am so impressed with the hard work of many of our members.

Tonight we turn 25 years old. Some of the people who are out there campaigning were with us at the beginning, in 1991, when we came together to successfully oppose the MegaTip that threatened the bushland in West Menai.

Since then we have had a lot to say about a vast range of issues. We have made countless submissions, spent many hours meeting with elected representatives and decision makers and endured uncountable hours holding banners and even being chained to fences and semi-trailers. We have held public meetings, organised public rallies, marched with other community organisations... lots and lots of things we've done!

We have conducted seminars, workshops, and supported other initiatives to increase the participation of our local community's involvement in the democratic process.

There have been offices, stalls, petitions, letters written, website, Facebook pages and newsletters. Banners painted. Signs and slogans developed.

Many things have changed. And yet at the same time many remain the same. While battles are won and Megatips are stopped, the war goes on. In 2011, at our 20th anniversary celebrations, Bob Walshe reminded us that *"we live in a wonderful world and we need to continue our opposition to anyone, any proposal, that would damage it – loggers, polluters, coal seam gas extractors, and the rest"*.

While some of the battles we wage may seem to be bigger than The Shire they are still our battles to fight. Coal and CSG extraction threaten our water supplies and the beautiful natural bushland that currently protects it. Over-development wastes precious resources and changes the nature of our area. Fossil fuel energy for transport and power can change the climate for the whole planet, even in God's Own Country. Land clearing laws mean we hear the sound of chain saws ripping into trees that had outlived our parents and grandparents but may not survive us.

Reading through this report can only give me hope. Hope because there are so many of you out there who care passionately about this wonderful world and are prepared to work so hard to protect it.

I hope that you will all find a few moments to read through this report in coming days and be inspired as I have been.

Jenni Gormley

September 2016

Achieving our Purpose in 2015-16

The “Statement of Purpose and Functions” (upon which this report is based), is the statement that guides all our actions and the implementation of our strategic initiatives.

1. *Establish the SSEC as the Peak Environment Group in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions, one that supports low impact lifestyles, practices and behaviours in the community.*

Community based campaigns and activities supported by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre:-

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2. *Establish efficient communication processes with the community*

Our primary methods of communication at the moment are email and Facebook, although we still turn to “snail mail” from time-to-time and of course nothing beats face-to-face communication via telephone or simply talking to people

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram. We are intending to make more frequent, regular use of social media in the coming year.

Newsletter / eco-news. Eco-news is not only once a week following a reduction in publication frequency of St George and Sutherland Shire Leader. Our newsletter is an e-news publication that is distributed quarterly.

Speechcraft courses. Four members took up the offer of a subsidised place at a Toastmasters Speechcraft course with a view to improve their public speaking skills. As environmentalists we are often called to speak up or answer questions about issues. The skills learned at Toastmasters help considerably to overcome nerves and to ensure that we say what we mean.

3. Develop and conduct education initiatives

- **University of Wollongong Scholarship.**



The SSEC Scholarship was awarded to sole applicant, Joshua Lester in May to assist with his project on monitoring and management of Rusa deer in the Illawarra escarpment.

Although Joshua was a worthy recipient, the SSEC was concerned by the lack of applicants and has requested that the scholarship be opened up to students in all disciplines rather than being limited to Bachelor of Science Honours, Bachelor of Environmental Science or a Bachelor of Engineering (Environmental Science).

The scholarship office has agreed to amend the scholarship agreement and advertising materials accordingly. In addition, a press release with photos of last year's and the current scholarship recipient is being organised for publication in the *Leader* to further promote the scholarship.

- **Speaking 4 the Planet.**

With SSEC support, three Speaking 4 the Planet and one Art 4 the Planet events were held this year: Sutherland Shire, The Hills Shire, Liverpool City and Campbelltown City. All were very successful. S4P is a public speaking and drama competition for high schools students. This year, the UN's World Environment Day theme focused on the illegal trade in wildlife. The competition in Sutherland Shire was held at Engadine High School. The Mayor, Carmelo Pesce, opened the event with a wonderful talk on the role of public speaking in community. His speech is available on the SSEC website (ssec.org.au).



Here's a poster based on an artwork submitted by a student from Eagle Vale High School in the Art 4 the Planet competition.

This year, as with previous years, the quality of the prepared and impromptu speakers continues to astound. The insightful drama pieces continue to throw useful and sometimes entertaining perspectives on global issues and crises.



A full report is being prepared on the Speaking 4 the Planet. Members can request an electronic copy through Phil – after November. (phil@ssec.org.au)

During 2016, Toastmaster groups continued to invite the winning speakers to present at their local meeting. And SSEC continues to work with Liverpool Toastmasters to develop a junior Speechcraft course for students.

In October this year, winners in each of the categories are invited to speak and perform at the Youth Eco Summit at Sydney Olympic Park; these students will also be trained to be the media crew for the 2-day event.

SSEC has won a Sutherland Shire/Toyota Community Grant to run and evaluate another Speaking 4 the Planet competition in 2017. The event will take place at Kirrawee High School on Tuesday 6 June. In Liverpool, we are working with Liverpool City Council to hold a combined Art 4 the

Planet and Speaking 4 the Planet event at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.

• **Speechcraft Course**

Four members of the SSEC did a Speechcraft course with the Miranda Toastmasters in February/March this year. Kelly, Jenni, Roger and Phil enjoyed themselves enormously – and they learnt a lot about preparing and delivering speeches. Although it was not a requirement of the course, SSEC attendees took advantage of the opportunity to prepare some short speeches on environmental themes (see Roger’s “Concrete carpark” speech appended to this report).

As a result of this course we hope that they are in a better position to speak up in public about environmental issues. The board will consider extending this offer to members for 2017.

• **National Infrastructure Summit, June 2016**

report by Roger Bramble

A SSEC representative attended the National Infrastructure Summit in June due to the ever growing need to be aware of any threat posed by oppressive or poorly conceived infrastructure planned, to aid environmental input and planning around any envisaged infrastructure, to keep abreast of and understand the future plans relating to our district, and to positively influence infrastructure and local planning where appropriate.

The summit was attended by professionals and government across all levels and from local to international cities. Some key aspects of relevance to SSEC and in keeping in line with our statement of functions were gaining an understanding of the key drivers and conditions around infrastructure development, plus knowing what’s important to such projects and therefore potentially how to influence improved outcomes.

Global Macroeconomic Drivers

- o Slowing of manufacturing and construction led growth in China, meaning lower demand for mined materials from Australia, but increased focus on infrastructure that supports populations.
- o Global low inflationary environment and low interest rates is aiding investment but risks remain due to ongoing structural debt burdens.
- o Movement of people globally and domestically especially from and within developing countries.

- o Infrastructure industry consolidations, looking globally for contracts and returns

Australian and NSW State Conditions

- o Movement away from mining led economy and entwined transfer of employment from mining to infrastructure and construction project focuses
- o Low interest rates enabling project investment growth and hence development funding
- o Significant population increases increasing housing and related infrastructure investment especially for major and capital cities Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane.
- o NSW State Government with progressive infrastructure rollout focus including State targets for dwellings and then associated infrastructure. Sales of State assets to part fund projects.
- o NSW State Government with a transport focus due to commuter and industry interests in effective transport networks.

SSEC also made comment that the Government's aim to infill dwelling development in an attempt to reduce urban sprawl and reduce land usage, minimize additional large infrastructure costs, reduce distance and travel based loss of productivity, minimise environment impact and economy impacts from this sprawl, also need to be considered on the exact same terms but with reference to urban vertical sprawl e.g. higher and higher and denser dwelling buildings and their impact on existing and established areas and their environs.

Numerous key and supportive contacts were also made which will be beneficial to SSEC going forward in our causes of attempting to minimise or combat disturbing development.

4. Campaign publicly for protecting and improving the quality of the environment in Sutherland Shire and its bioregions

a. Shire Bicycle User Group (Shire BUG)

report by Tassia Kolesnikow

A design for the **Sutherland to Cronulla Active Transport Link** (SCATL) was released in early 2015. Following a public submission period which closed in July 2015, the NSW Transport Office has been assessing the

feasibility for suggested changes to the design and no further information has been released this year.

Work on the last segment of the **Woolooware Bay Cycling path** will commence in February 2017 and is scheduled to be completed by June 2017.



RNP Mountain Bikes – On March 3, 2016 Jenni Gormley, Gary Schoer (NPA) and Tassia Kolesnikow met with representatives from NPWS; Royal Area Manager, Gary Dunnett, Regional Manager, Kane Weeks and Park Ranger, David Croft to discuss the proliferation of illegal mountain bike tracks within the Royal National Park. Building on prior communication between NPA and NPWS, maps with coordinates and photos and videos of the illegal tracks were provided to NPWS to illustrate the damage to the park and the danger the unofficial tracks pose to walkers.

NPWS acknowledged the existence of these illegal tracks but said that due to State Government pressure, they would be expanding mountain bike trails in the park and were looking into options for making existing tracks less prone to erosion. They were unwilling to take any direct action to close down the illegal tracks. However, follow-up e-mails by Gary Schoer prompted the removal of many wooden and painted signs for the illegal tracks by NPWS.



Before removal



After removal by NPWS

b. First National Park

report by Dr Geoff Mosley

First National Park – Campaign for World Heritage Listing of Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park and Garawarra State Conservation Area.

The last news SSEC has received re progress with the World Heritage proposal was in June this year. Thanks to a question in Parliament by Dr Mehreen Faruqi we received the news that in May 2015 Dr Anita Smith and Context PL had “completed an expert analysis re possible pathways to seek World Heritage listing”, and that “the Office of Environment and Heritage had commissioned further work on potential values and the best possible approach for making a World Heritage nomination”. It was noted that “the report is expected to be completed soon and will be submitted to the Commonwealth Government”. In other news a National Heritage Strategy is to be released at the end of 2016 and this will include an updated list of areas for Australia to submit to UNESCO for its Tentative World Heritage List.

If all goes well the Commonwealth will include the Royal Reserves on its Tentative List by the end of February 2017. It can then be nominated by February 2018 and the WHC can make a decision in mid-2019.

SSEC has received a Commonwealth grant that will help finalise the video aspect of the WHL project.

c. Save Our Shire

The “Save Our Shire” facebook page continues to be a hub for Shire residents concerned about inappropriate development and consequent environmental damage.

d. Gandangara West Menai/Heathcote Ridge Development

We are continuing to monitor planning decisions in this area. A small area was approved for development of 300+ dwellings during the year.

e. Sutherland Climate Action Network

report by Jonathan Doig. scan@sutherlandcan.org.au

Sutherland CAN sent strong contingents to two outstanding climate direct actions in the last twelve months.



Ten members joined the 250-strong 'People's Parliament' which convened in the marble foyer of Parliament House Canberra on December 2nd to call for strong action from our government attending the Paris climate talks. Many were dragged from the building by police, but no charges were laid.

Sixteen of us took part in Break Free (from fossil fuels) in Newcastle on 8th May as part of protests organised by 350.org at key fossil fuel blackspots around the world. Murray Scott joined Col and Bill Ryan to block a railway bridge and stop coal trains from reaching the port, while the rest of us took turns with 2,000 others paddling kayaks to block the harbour.

As a result, the largest coal port in the world was closed for the day, saving nearly 300,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Murray, Col and Bill were among 66 arrested. They are awaiting trial, but other protesters have recently had their charges dismissed, so it's looking good for our climate heroes.

These events raised good media and they're a lot of fun. It feels great to finally do something with all those emotions we feel about our leaders' inaction in the face of climate change – why not join us next time?



Jonathan Doig also paddled and provided on-water safety to a group of 50 kayakers led by Pacific Islanders in the Mana Moana (power of the sea) trip from Blues Point to Malcolm Turnbull's mansion in Point Piper on 25th June, just before the federal election.

The SSEC hosted the Coal Reality event to a packed house at the Hazelhurst Gallery theatre on May 31. Sutherland councillors, Steve Simpson and Peter Scaysbrook attended as well as the ALP and Greens candidates for Hughes and Cook, Diedree Steinwall, Phil Smith, David Atkins and Nathan Hunt. Water quality expert and UNSW Associate Professor, Stuart Khan spoke about the impact of existing and future coal mines on Sydney's water supply and illustrated how the approval process for mines is failing to safeguard our drinking water. The second presenter was top financial analyst and director of the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis Australasia, Tim Buckley who painted a coherent picture of the global transition to renewable energy leading to the structural decline of the fossil fuel industry. As one attendee wrote in the comment section of the post-presentation survey: 'Stuart Khan and Tim Buckley reminded us again tonight of how deep the problems of government policy failure run. Shonky licence conditions on mining and deliberate barriers to renewables are not just damaging our precious

natural resources and contributing to rapid global climate change, they are undermining energy and resource security and holding back the economic and employment growth that go with innovative technologies.'

SCAN members helped to establish Solar Bundeena-Mainbar which held successful events to share knowledge about home solar and battery installations.



Col and Bill Ryan, Jonathan Prendergast, Jonathan Doig, Tassia Kolesnikow and Judy and Greg Walker held four separate meetings with Hughes MP Craig Kelly to discuss community renewable energy, coal and CSG impacts and climate science. Disappointingly, Mr Kelly seems to have learnt nothing from any of this. An outspoken denier of climate science, he is now using his position as chair of the parliamentary committee on Environment and Energy to attack renewable energy on our behalf.

Sue McKinnon, Jonathan Prendergast and other Sutherland CAN members joined a rapid response organised by Solar Citizens to protest this appointment outside Mr Kelly's office in Sutherland.

Tassia Kolesnikow has given presentations on personal responses to climate change including fossil fuel divestment at VIEW Clubs, the women's national charity organisation.

Sutherland CAN members have visited Environment Minister Mark Speakman and been involved in the campaign against the state government's proposed Biodiversity Act which threatens to unleash a new wave of land clearing, further contributing to climate change and loss of habitat.

f. Stop CSG Sutherland

report by Col Ryan

Activity of members

- 23Sep15 Continuing weekly vigil outside AGL HQ outside 101 Miller St North Sydney (Week 103) supporting action to stop AGL Gasfield surrounding the town of Gloucester and to pressure AGL to close down CSG wells at Camden. Wells that are 200m from homes. More housing is planned for that area with prospective homeowners not being aware of the gasfield. Doorknocking in the area revealed numerous cases of sick children with nosebleeds, rashes and hair loss.
- 30Sep15 AGL HQ vigil
- 7Oct15 AGL HQ vigil
- 7Oct15 Supported Film screening of 'BLACKHOLE' anti open cut coal mining documentary at Newtown Dendy theatre
- 12Oct15 Supported Leard Forest arrestee Bronwyn Vost at Downing Centre Court.
- 14Oct15 AGL HQ vigil
- 21Oct15 AGL HQ vigil
- 21Oct15 Screening of 'BLACKHOLE' anti open cut coal mining documentary at Cronulla cinema. Full house
- 21Oct15 Vigil outside Origin AGM Martin Place to remember George Bender. Queensland farmer who took his own life after a long struggle against QGC. Coal Seam Gas wells destroying his water at farm.
- 25Oct15 Wollar and Bylong weekend to support coal mining affected community.
- 28Oct15 AGL HQ vigil
- 30Oct15 Rally outside Whitehaven Coal AGM Macquarie St Sydney
- 4Nov15 AGL HQ vigil
- 11Nov15 AGL HQ vigil
- 14Nov15 Attended Stop CSG Sydney AGM

- 16Nov15 Joined Illawarra Knitting nannas at Environment Minister Mark Speakman's office. The nannas were having knit-ins at all MP's offices prior to elections.



- 17Nov15 Stand Up to polluters rally.
18Nov15 AGL HQ vigil
25Nov15 AGL HQ vigil
29Nov15 Attended People's Climate March
3Dec15 Attended "The People's Parliament' in Canberra



- 8Dec15 PAC meeting Wollongong
- 9Dec15 AGL HQ vigil
- 16Dec15 AGL HQ vigil then proceeded to protest nearby outside Metgasgo AGM North Sydney.
- 20Jan16 AGL HQ vigil
- 22Jan16 Started vigil outside Santos HQ Circular Quay to support action to stop Santos operation in the Pilliga Forest NSW.
- 29Jan16 Santos HQ vigil
- 3Feb16 AGL HQ vigil
- 5Feb16 Santos HQ vigil
- 10Feb16 AGL HQ vigil
- 12Feb15 Santos HQ vigil
- 19Feb16 Santos HQ vigil

26Feb16 Santos HQ vigil

2Mar16 Action to stop AGL CSG waste trucks disposing of frack water at Transpacific Waste facility at Olympic Park. This waste was not being treated properly. A truck entering the facility was stopped Melinda Wilson (CSG Free Western Sydney) and Bill Ryan (Stop CSG Sutherland) locked on to the truck. Police were called, no fines or arrests.



4Mar16 Santos HQ vigil

11Mar16 Santos HQ vigil

15Mar16 Attended Anti Protest Laws Rally Sydney. Opposing draconian laws /harsh penalties for those fighting coal and coal seam gas.



Clare Twomey (Knitting nannas against gas) locked on to PH gate till late in the night. Police visited regularly but no fines or arrest.



18Mar16 Santos HQ vigil

21Mar16 Joined the knitting nannas knit-in at Prime Minister's office.
Bondi Junction.



1Apr16 Santos HQ vigil

6Apr16 Land and Environment Court supporting People from the
Liverpool Plains Versus Santos.

8Apr16 Santos HQ vigil – Joined by well known U.S. anti-CSG
campaigner John Fenton.

15Apr16 Santos HQ vigil

22Apr16 Santos HQ vigil

29Apr16 Santos HQ vigil

4May16 Santos HQ vigil

8May16 Attended Newcastle Port blockade (350.org). The world largest coal port. All coal ships, coal loaders and coal rail movements were stopped for the day. There were 66 arrests including 6 SSEC members. (Bill Ryan, Colin Ryan, Murray Scott, Most arrests for blocking coal rail track.



13May16 Santos HQ vigil

20May16 Attended Glebe Pub to celebrate win on Container deposit scheme with Greenpeace. SSEC members had supported various Greenpeace actions on this campaign.

27May16 Santos HQ vigil

29May16 Anti Baird rally

3Jun16 Santos HQ vigil

10Jun16 Santos HQ vigil

17Jun16 Santos HQ vigil

- 23Jun16 World's Biggest Lock-on at NSW Parliament House to protest Baird Government draconian anti-protest laws. Hundreds brought lock on devices and locked themselves to the front fence of NSW Parliament House.



- 24Jun16 Santos HQ vigil
- 1Jul16 Santos HQ vigil
- 15Jul16 Santos HQ vigil
- 22Jul16 Santos HQ vigil
- 31Jul16 Bus tour of Hunter region (350.org) highlighting continued destruction of the region by coal. Increased carbon pollution by AGL owned coal fired power stations.
- 5Aug16 Santos HQ vigil
- 12Aug16 Santos HQ vigil
- 19Aug16 Santos weekly vigil relocated to Martin Place (near Chanel 7) for higher exposure. Plan is to build this vigil providing a central venue for continued protesting against coal and CSG. Encouraging/welcoming affected communities to join us. Every Friday 11am-1pm.
- 26Aug16 Santos - Martin Place vigil
- 2Sep16 Santos - Martin Place vigil

- 6Sep16 Attended Newcastle court for outcome of Breakfree Newcastle Port blockade arrests.
- 9Sep16 Santos – Martin Place vigil
- 16Sep16 Santos – Martin Place vigil



Thank you to all SSEC members who attended and supported these actions throughout the year.

g. Spring Gully Protection Group

report by Mark da Silva

Amended plans for a proposed eco-tourism resort on the former Scout land at Spring Gully, Bundeena were exhibited in April 2016. They propose the clearing of hundreds of trees including at least fifty-five hollow bearing trees from known Eastern pygmy-possum habitat. Many more trees, including majestic mature Angophoras are to have the majority of their canopy removed for bushfire protection purposes. The proposal involves removal of habitat from over two hectares of environmental conservation zoned land adjoining the Royal National Park and a new road easement through the park for vehicle access. Council received over 3,500 objections to the plans during exhibition. Hearing dates for the applicant's appeal to the Land and Environment Court against refusal of development consent

has been set, commencing with an on-site hearing starting at 9:30am Monday 13 February 2017. Objections to the development proposal can still be lodged via www.springgully.org.

h. Free Trade

report by Phil Smith

SSEC has continued to follow this issue. Submissions have been made to various government departments and members have attended rallies, AFTINET's AGM and annual dinner. Dr Pat Ranald, the convenor of AFTINET, was the keynote speaker at the 2015 Eureka Dinner. Her speech is available on our website (www.ssec.org.au).

SSEC supports the position of fair trade not free trade. The Trans Pacific Partnership and other secret free trade agreements threaten health, environment, and labour rights and conditions. Healthcare, food labelling, patents on medicines... The potential to sue governments for demanding environmental impact assessments... Keeping a cap on minimum wages and reducing employee conditions....All designed for the profit of global corporate pirates. All exacerbating the well-being of the environment and ensuring the health gap follows in step with the widening poverty gap.



SSEC has recently made a submission on the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

SSEC will continue to support AFTINET and oppose secret, democracy-diminishing, environment-damaging free trade agreements in 2017.

5. *Support members and local community organisations in their efforts to protect their local areas*

As well as helping groups through financial sponsorship, provision of equipment, setting up/hosting of websites, networking, wording of petitions, artwork for brochures, etc. SSEC regularly fields phone calls from a range of Shire residents concerned about a wide variety of environmental problems. These callers are encouraged and supported in their concerns about how to protect our beautiful shire from those who would destroy it. Other valuable assets that are provided to the community are our Public Gift Fund (charitable) status, incorporation and banking and PayPal facilities.

New groups we have worked with this year have included Friends of Menai Conservation Park, and Overdevelopment in Sutherland Shire.

6. *Establish efficient information, operation and management systems for Sutherland Shire Environment Centre*

Our website continues to function efficiently and our presence in Social Media is steadily increasing.

The decrease in publication of *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* to once a week has seen a similar reduction in frequency of Eco-news. However, this continues to be a valuable tool in our arsenal.

SSEC also maintains and administers a number of other Facebook pages and websites for our associated groups:, including Save Our Shire, Speaking 4 the Planet, Veg-In, Ecoleles, West Menai Action Group.

7. *Strengthen relationships with Sutherland Shire Council, other councils and other community and environmental organisations*

- We have continued to work with NPA (Southern Sydney) in regard to the issue of illegal bike riding in Royal National Park.
- We are pleased to have a representative on Nature Conservation Council's Sustainable Population committee.
- At Sutherland Shire, a new general manager and number of staff changes have broken down of our existing network of contacts. We will be actively rebuilding these networks over the coming twelve months.

8. *Raise funds to carry out the functions of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre*

We continue to closely monitor our expenditure with a view to becoming debt free and so ensuring our long term viability. We are grateful to our members and donors for their support and also to Perpetual Trustees.

Our new website simplifies the membership and donation processes using Paypal and/or credit card facilities.

Treasurer's Report

The 2015/2016 Financial Year saw the Centre return a loss of \$22,280 which is similar to last year's result (23,122 loss). This was despite a small rise in income when compared to the prior financial year.

The increase in income to \$65,454 resulted from a small increase in rental income associated with the Merton St property offset by a small reduction in donations (with most other income categories being in line with prior year).

Overall expenditure rose slightly to \$87,734 compared to prior year (\$84,215). Increases in expenditure associated with Environmental Projects, Interest, Depreciation, Repairs & Maintenance and conference fees were partially offset by reductions in expenditure associated with Honorarium (ceased), Rent (ceased mid-year) and Donations (reduced).

Merton Street Office - the tenant has provided an ongoing income throughout the financial year. The rise in depreciation is associated with the installation of air conditioning equipment to service the office. The rise in interest paid partly reflects the impact of the loan drawdown late in the 2014/15 financial year to fund the purchase of the air conditioning unit and to assist in providing funds for the period that the office was vacant in that year (some of which was used to fund the repairs/maintenance of the office). The installation of the unit has resulted in a small reduction in Strata Fees in the year.

President Ave Office – the management committee reviewed the need for and benefit of the office that was being rented and concluded that the cost outweighed the need to maintain a physical public presence. As such, the office was vacated earlier in the year (no future rent paid).

The Management Committee continue to strive to generate more income through subscriptions, donations and other income producing activities (while keeping a close eye on expenditure). The rental income from the office has provided a major advance in the Centre achieving financial independence but there is still a way to go.

The Centre will continue to be grateful for the generosity of all our other supporters over many years and actively encourages past and prospective donors to support the Centre.

Again, as in prior years, of significant note in this year's Financial Statements are the movements in the Balance Sheet as a result of a small reduction in the mortgage that the Environment Centre holds and a reduction in funds held in bank accounts.

Attached you will find further commentary and analysis of Year End Financial Statements.

SUMMARY

The Centre continues with its aim to become financially self-sufficient with the goal to generate “sustainable, long term” income from its’ operational activities (subscriptions, fund raising and donations) and is currently with the income generated from the rented premises.

However, there is still a way to go to ensure full self sufficiency of the Centre and the Management Committee continue to closely watch and manage the finances of the Centre.

SPECIAL MENTION

I would like to make special mention and extend my thanks to Jenni Gormley for her commitment and effort in completing and tracking financial details on a weekly basis. Also, thanks are again extended Bruce Spaul and Melina Lidis from the accounting firm Munro Spaul for their and their staff’s time in auditing the accounts of the Centre.

OPERATING SURPLUS

At 30 June 2016 the accounts of the Centre showed an operating deficit (loss) of \$22,280 compared to an operating loss in the previous year of \$23,122.

INCOME

Total Income for the year was \$65,454, which was a small increase when compared to the prior year (\$61,093).

Items of note within Income of the Centre included a small increase in:

- Gross Profit from Rental Income – which reflects the full years income associated with the rental of our premises (prior year the office was untenanted for a short period).

EXPENDITURE

Total Expenditure for the year of \$87,374 which was a slight increase when compared to the previous financial year of \$84,215.

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

- Conference Fees – attendance at Infrastructure Summit
- Depreciation – reflecting first year of depreciation on new office air conditioning unit
- Environmental Projects expenditure – an increase over prior year
- Honorarium - which ceased at end of last year
- Interest – increase due to the average loan amount outstanding over the year being larger than prior year.

- Rates & Strata Fees – showing a decrease in expenditure over previous year
- Rent – decrease as we ceased occupancy of the President Ave office earlier in the year

BALANCE SHEET

Turning to the Balance Sheet, the property purchased in 2002 and its associated mortgage continue to dominate the Balance Sheet of the Centre.

The Centre has had to draw down on the loan thereby increasing the loan amount outstanding to \$38,631.

Our Bank balances (in excess of \$40,000) remains relatively healthy providing sound footings for Campaign support, works associated with grants or other activities.

John Nelson

Treasurer
September 2015

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

2015		2016
\$	Note	\$
	INCOME	
	OTHER INCOME	
718	Subscriptions	864
18,718	Donations	17,702
909	Grants	909
25	Interest Received	9
1,303	Fund Raising Events & Sundry Income	1,163
<u>39,420</u>	Gross profit from rental operations	<u>44,807</u>
<u>61,093</u>		<u>65,454</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

2015 \$	Note	2016 \$
	EXPENDITURE	
242	Bank Charges	369
32,526	Consultants Fees	31,669
-	Conference	800
521	Depreciation	3,749
500	Donations	-
559	Electricity	450
	Environmental Projects	
396	Scan	503
8,036	First National Park Campaign	5,968
924	Stop CSG - Sutherland	148
3,082	Speaking 4 the Planet	2,736
342	Veg-In	-
4,546	Environmental Education	2,500
118	Spring Gully Protection	3,319
-	Scatl	152
-	Eco News	2,009
-	Toastmasters	1,254
<u>17,444</u>		<u>18,589</u>
463	Fund Raising Activities	-
2,563	Honorarium	-
268	Insurance	315
844	Interest	2,819
884	Meeting Expenses	798
232	Postage	478
209	Printing & Stationery	200
20,054	Rates & Strata Fees	19,818
5,470	Rent	3,197
-	Repairs & Maintenance	2,915
360	Subscriptions & Licences	244
<u>1,076</u>	Telephone & Internet	<u>1,324</u>
<u>84,215</u>		<u>87,734</u>
<u>(23,122)</u>	Loss before income tax	<u>(22,280)</u>
<u>(23,122)</u>	Loss for the year	<u>(22,280)</u>
	Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	<u>558,599</u>
<u>581,721</u>	Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	<u>536,319</u>
<u>558,599</u>		

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2016**

2015 \$	Note	2016 \$
	MEMBERS' FUNDS	
558,599	Retained earnings	536,319
<u>558,599</u>	TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	<u>536,319</u>
	Represented by:	
	ASSETS	
	CURRENT ASSETS	
273	Cash on Hand	394
12,998	Public Gift Fund	19,988
45,750	Main Account	20,900
1,778	Security Deposit	-
1,190	Other Debtors	1,254
5,985	Prepayments	-
4,625	GST on acquisitions	955
<u>72,599</u>	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>43,491</u>
	NON CURRENT ASSETS	
	Fixed Assets	
506,353	Buildings - at Cost	506,353
44,059	Furniture & Fittings - at Cost	53,168
<u>(22,429)</u>	Less Prov'n for Depreciation	<u>(26,178)</u>
21,630		26,990
<u>527,983</u>	Total Fixed Assets	<u>533,343</u>
<u>527,983</u>	TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	<u>533,343</u>
<u>600,582</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>576,834</u>
	LIABILITIES	
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
150	Accrued Expenses	-
8	GST on supplies	1,844
<u>158</u>	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>1,844</u>
	NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	
41,825	Loan - Commonwealth Bank	38,671
<u>41,825</u>	TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>38,671</u>
<u>41,983</u>	TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>40,515</u>
<u>558,599</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>536,319</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

1 Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

Income Tax

Exemption from income tax has been obtained by virtue of Section 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Property

Freehold land and buildings are shown at cost.

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia holds a mortgage over the property at Suite 4, 2-4 Merton Street, Sutherland.

Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

Revenue and Other Income

Investment property revenue is recognised on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease term so as to reflect a constant periodic rate of return on the net investment.

Interest revenue is recognised when received.

Revenue from the provision of membership subscriptions is recognised on a straight line basis over the financial year.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of GST. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as part of receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

munro
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated (the association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2016, income and expenditure statement, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act New South Wales 2009 and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

CORPORATE BUSINESS SERVICES

B. W. SPAUL B.Com FCA

PERSONAL TAXATION SERVICES

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

munro **SPAUL**

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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act New South Wales 2009 disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

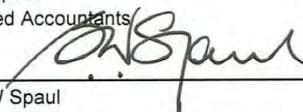
In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated as of 30 June 2016 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Associations Incorporation Act New South Wales 2009.

Name of Firm: Munro Spaul
Chartered Accountants

Name of Principal: _____


Bruce W Spaul

Address: Level 1, 33 MacMahon Street, Hurstville

Dated this 20 day of September 2016

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B. W. SPAUL B.Com FCA

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The Concrete Car Space

by Roger Bramble

Early one evening, not that long ago, an event occurred at a building strata meeting in downtown Sutherland, which may long be remembered as a small win in the battle for our planet.

This is the story of the concrete car space.

Walter the strata manager continues the meeting.

“Item number 11. Oh yes, the spare car space. Has there been a decision on this yet?”

“Can we sell it and split the dough?” immediately purged Ryan, the late-20s cost accountant from Unit 6.

“Well, its common property, shared by all residents, but, I don’t think the Owner’s Corporation would agree to that,” replied Walter.

“I use it to wash my 4WD,” said Ian the mid-forties heavy drinking beach fisherman.

“Yeah we know,” interjected Stephen from Unit 9. “Your mud gets sprayed everywhere”.

“My truck must be kept clean or the grit gets in my bearings,” Ian responded.

“It gets in ours too” came the little voice of Marjory, the 4 foot 6 inch grandma whose unit backs up against the space. “I’d like to see it removed” she continued.

Walter, having answered phone and email complaints for months, saw a faint chance to settle the issue.

This chance however was soon destroyed by Zac, the building’s 17-year-old Mr Cool.

“Where’m I gunna skate then?” he blurted.

“How about in the bus lane” replied Peter, a fastidious 59-year-old baby-boomer who has harboured a grudge against Zac ever since Zac skate-jumped the building’s front stairs nearly taking Peter out in the process.

Zac’s mother Sharon perked up defending her boy. “Now Peter, don’t be like that. Ever since his dad left, that skateboard’s given him some purpose. He’s still finding his feet you know”.

“He’ll find them faster without it” cracked Peter.

“Okay, okay, can we stay on track please” said Walter attempting to bring some order and direction to a directionless United Nations of residents.

“We don’t have a disabled spot, do we?” announced Julie, the generally quiet and softly spoken lady from Unit 1. “I’ve only a little car, and mum needs somewhere to park when she visits.” Julie then started to tremble and burst into tears.

“Hah” scoffed Ian, at the same time attracting the heavy glance of all the other residents, and the focused eye of Walter as well.

“You know what?” piped Marjory, partly in response to Ian, and partly out of pure exasperation. “I’ve had enough. I don’t like cars, 4WDs, carparks or concrete, and come to think of it I don’t like any of you either”

“Oh my,” now carrying a blushing red face she started rapidly back-peddalling, “I like you Shirley and Dan, and you Walter. Stephen you’re okay.”

“Anyway, just turn it into a garden and be done with it.” Marjory had spoken!

A hush fell over the meeting as each person computed and considered what they’d just heard.

Perhaps for some, even a touch of guilt arose as they thought about the stupidity of their ongoing arguments over such a tiny patch of land.

Again sensing an opportunity for resolution, plus the importance of not adding further fire to the burn, Walter calmly asked “Is everyone in agreement?”

Marjory stepping softly on Ian the 4WDer’s toes spoke first, “Yes we are!” she affirmed, “and whilst I think of it, you can arrange the gardener to collect the flowers as well.”

No one else spoke, defeated by the 75-year-old ‘Grandma of the Earth’.

The concrete car space would go.

The battle for the ‘little earth’ had been waged and won.

There’d be no more resource battles, and the natural earth would feel the shift of the wind, and the patter of the rain for the first time in 34 years.

Walter again spoke.

“Item number 12. Garbage collection.”

Prepared for Speechcraft course, 2016