

State Govt wants more development!

Despite community pressure on Council to curb overdevelopment, the State Government is determined to push the Shire to approve more development, not less.

This was made clear when Mr Gary Prattley from the Department of Planning addressed Council's advisory committee which is drawing up a Local Environment Plan (LEP) for the Shire.

Under spirited questioning from Shire councillors, staff and community reps, Mr Prattley defended the "urban consolidation" policy which has drawn fierce criticism from all over Sydney—described as a "pack 'em in" policy by speakers at the Shire's November "Localities and Community

Forum".

"The Government told us urban consolidation would prevent urban sprawl," said community rep Neil deNett. "Now it is clear that policy has failed, as Government releases huge slabs of land that will send Sydney sprawling outward. And the sprawl is rapidly extending up the north coast and down the south coast.

"The Government is in panic. It has no answers. It refuses to address alternatives to Sydney's unsustainable growth, which would require cooperation of Federal (e.g. immigration limits), State (e.g. regional development), and Local (e.g. genuine localities planning) Governments."

The Prattley message puts

the Shire on the spot. How can we maintain the Shire's environment and character in the face of his "you'll cop it sweet" policy?

The Shire community is ready to follow a strong lead which must come from its State MPs and Councillors.

■ Shire Watch Independent Councillors were elected on an anti-overdevelopment policy.

■ Labor MPs Ian McManus, Barry Collier and Alison Megarrity all campaigned against overdevelopment, as did Labor Councillors.

■ Liberal MP Malcolm Kerr and Liberal Councillors should follow their State Leader Kerry Chikarovsky in condemning "urban consolidation".

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre stands ready to host a Sydney-wide Forum of Federal, State and Local Government interests which

Localities & Community Forum

The second step in SSEC's sustainability program

In March 2000, the Centre was fortunate to receive a grant from the federal government to host four community conferences on sustainability issues. The first looked at issues to do with population. The second looked at urban development practices and how these affect communities. This was held in November and, like the population conference before it, was a huge success!

The *Localities & Community Forum* was attended by over 100 fee-paying participants and was opened by Sutherland Shire Mayor Tracie Sonda.

The Forum's key speaker was Dirk Bolt from the Netherlands. Dirk gave an overview of the different approaches to urban development that enable communities to live so their resource-use is low but the quality and sociability of towns and

urban centres is maintained.

There were a few points to this 'secret recipe' for success. The first was a commitment to good physical planning. This meant putting in the right kind of transport and infrastructures *first*. Road and tollway building did not dominate his examples. Streets were designed to accommodate people and cyclists, and there was plenty of high quality public transport.

Resourcing communities so they can participate in decision-making was also a key ingredient. This means allocating space for local meetings and resources to enable volunteers to get through the paperwork—all within the local area.

Professor Peter Newman spoke next, focussing on transport issues

and the need to overcome car dependency. He also stressed changes in the demographic of our population and why different forms of housing are needed. This points to the need for smaller unit dwellings—or 'urban consolidation'.

Many speakers from the floor expressed the view that State Government's urban consolidation policy had been a hopeless failure and it was time to stop forcing high rise and other forms of high density development on communities who didn't want them.

Peter responded by explaining how his community had gone about 'reurbanising' the local area in Fremantle. None of the buildings were over three storeys, a range of heritage programs was implemented, and the rail service was brought back. This made for a healthy mix, the result being a better Fremantle today.

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by **Jim Sloan,**
Executive Officer

Seasons Greetings, everyone! Summer is here again and it is time to rejoice and think about family, Christmas dinner and our accomplishments over the past year. We are just finishing our busy season here at the Centre and I must say it has been a satisfying time.

Centre Activities

In September, we celebrated the Centre's AGM & 10th anniversary at the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts with over 70 in attendance. Copies of this year's annual report can be found on our website at <http://www.ssec.org.au/AGM2001.html> It was a good turnout to an important year for the Centre.

In October, this year's annual dinner at the Gynea Trade Union Club, with 70 present, was one of the best ever. We had the Bushrangers Bush Band in attendance, lots of dancing, prizes, and great socialising. I now know what a heel & toe polka and the dronga are.

In November, we hosted the Localities & Communities Forum at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre with over 100 people in attendance. Our speakers all did a wonderful job in the morning and early afternoon in setting the stage for a robust panel debate in the afternoon. On behalf of the Management Committee, I would once again like to thank CROSS, Eco-Transit, TEC and Council for supporting us in hosting this forum. The timing of the federal election may have hurt us in attendance figures, but judging by the comment on the day, all of the participants found the forum very worthwhile. The full proceedings of the forum should be available on our

website by Christmas.

In December, you may have heard the whisper that we are moving house. Yes! It's true. After ten years in the Eton Arcade, the Centre is moving to a new home. We are moving to Unit 4, Level 1, 2-4 Merton Street Sutherland. Our new home gives us over twice the space we have in the Eton Arcade. No more 39-degree summer days or 11-degree winter days. We are able to move to the next stage of development of our reference library because we will finally have the room to house more resources and the visits of studying students.

The other exciting news about our new home is that we are purchasing it—yes, that is right, we will *eventually* own our own environment centre. We are purchasing half of it with a grant from Perpetual Trustees LEAF Fund and the other half we are mortgaging. This means that ½ of the two hundred square metres we are purchasing will be available for lease to help service the mortgage. Also, in the coming years, we will be running an ongoing fundraising campaign asking the community to donate to us so we can retire our 15 year mortgage early. Donors of \$500 or more will be recognised and named on our foyer plaque.

Ongoing, the Centre continues to tackle difficult community issues. Over the past two months, the Menai District Sports Club has been generating a lot of community comment our way. This has been because of our opposition to the siting of a sporting complex on an endangered ecological community. We have responded to every letter and email (with the exception of one email from an address with the name Stuart Cloney that was too abusive to respond to) that has come into the Centre. We believe that our responses, while not changing the minds of most of the 30 or so residents who have commented, have at least earned their respect for

our position. Moreover please remember we have had over 100 positive written responses to our position when we distributed our pamphlet to 9,500 Menai resident. They appreciated our views on the best site for the sporting complex.

The Centre now has four community Sustainability Fact Sheets available for the public. We have timed their release with our forums this year. *No. 1*, "Population and the Environment" was released in March; *No. 2* "Local Planning & the Environment", *No. 3* "Ecologically Sustainable Development", and *No. 4* "Globalisation Fact Sheet" were released in November. We will continue with our community sustainability series next year, with a focus on rivers and biodiversity.

Staff

In October we welcomed Aaron Skelsey, a 2nd year engineering student doing a 14-week practicum with us. In November we welcomed Shirley Bell who has joined us for six weeks part-time to improve her accounting and administration skills.

We are sorry to be saying goodbye in December to staff member Anita Lenzo. Many thanks, Anita, your efforts on behalf of the Centre in preparation for the Localities Forum have been appreciated. We would like to wish you well in your future endeavours as a newly graduated social worker. It is obvious to those of us who have worked with you over the past months that you picked well and will be a valuable asset to you chosen profession.

Give a Membership Gift for Christmas

In closing, I am asking each of our Members to consider and/or encourage others to give a one-year membership to the Centre as part of your gift-giving this Christmas. What better way to extend your season's greeting and support the Centre in our efforts to overcome challenges that face us in bringing about a sustainable commu-

Menai, biodiversity and other thoughts...

Over the past month Menai has lost another patch of bushland to commercial development.

The Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP) for the area both foreshadowed and allowed the loss of bushland for such development. The developer and Sutherland Shire Council might be forgiven for feeling aggrieved that some members of the community protested the destruction of trees, understorey and habitat. A spokesperson for the developer said with genuine puzzlement: "But development is going to happen anyway!" The Land and Environment Court agreed that "development" had to, and that he could proceed.

Over the next couple of months, forty-four car parking spaces outside Menai Marketplace will disappear with the building of a service station. Residents, shopkeepers and even Council protested, but once again the Land and Environment Court agreed that "development" had to and could proceed.

Still waiting in the wings is the possible building of an indoor sporting complex in bushland classified as an endangered ecological community, at Alison Crescent. Once again the Land and Environment Court will be asked to arbitrate on whether "development" should proceed.

Also being planned are further housing developments in the Menai area.

All of this is happening at a time when there is a lot of talk about the need to look after our environment. I am struck by how curious this "look after our environment" phenomenon is. All of us (well, at least most of us) are guilty of believing that other people should be doing this "look after our environment" bit... I believe that it's alright for me to build my inground pool (and divert the groundwater flows), and import soil and have a lawn and veggie patch (thereby making it harder for native vegetation to survive), and take away native habitat (to increase safety for my children in my yard). I do not think that the developer has a right to clear his land of vegetation to keep down his cost of construction. As a developer I not only believe I have the right to do as I like with my land, I think that someone else, probably Council or residents, should bear responsibility for environmental health. And so the story goes on - urban versus rural, conservation area versus resource-use area, neighbour to neighbour.

The fact is that everything in the environment is interconnected. The more that scientists uncover the way the environment works, the more we know that its health is like a thousand-piece puzzle with the picture being environmental health. As pieces are lost, we get to see less of the picture. As we get to see less of the picture the puzzle has less and less meaning - less and less health.

Unlike puzzle pieces, there is no chance that we'll find missing bits again. The best we can hope for is that another piece will fit, but it will have a different pattern. Much of this has to do with the nature of biodiversity. Biodiversity is the word used to describe the variety of plants and animals, microbes, insects, fungi - all living creatures. It is a key element in creating an environment that sustains us. We don't know whether humans can exist in an environment that is depleted of biodiversity. We don't know at which level of depleted biodiversity our ability to exist on planet Earth will cease to be possible.

If you think about it in those terms, we should be very concerned about loss of biodiversity and we should be making individual (in my back yard) and collective (in everyone's backyard) decisions to make sure that we keep the conditions that enable biodiversity to be sustained. **Here are the characteristics of biodiversity that should guide our thinking:**

- We know that biodiversity loss is irreversible - like a puzzle piece that's lost.
- Many species - especially the invertebrates, microbes and viruses - have yet to be discovered. It's therefore dangerous to think that we can simply relocate a micro-environment (e.g. bit of bushland, wetlands) to another place. We have little knowledge about what the essential features of most micro-environments are.
- Ecosystem diversity exhibits threshold effects - so there comes a stage as we modify a micro-environment when suddenly the whole environment dies. This has been especially dramatic in several estuaries where there have been a number of small modifications over years then suddenly, with just another small modification (say the removal of a seagrass bed through dredging), the whole estuary becomes a mess of algae and is totally unusable.
- Many biodiversity problems cannot be solved by merely proscribing certain behaviour - it needs the changes of behaviours of many people using the

area.

- Much biodiversity has no immediate economic value - this causes people to believe that the problem of caring for the environment should be someone else's problem, because it either costs money or impinges on the way people can use their own land.

The first three characteristics have caused both international and national governments to adopt the *Precautionary Principle* when making decisions. This means that where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. Although the principle has been adopted in legislation, it appears from the Menai examples quoted above that it is not being applied by decision makers from the Land and Environment Court or by Sutherland Shire Council.

Even more worrying is that most of us are not seriously considering what part we can play in maintaining the biodiversity we inherited in the areas we live in or work in or play in. In developing our land we should perhaps consider what we can leave intact - perhaps we should reconsider what we think of as a beautiful backyard, or perhaps we can design our houses, and the size of our houses or our developments so that we are kinder to the plants and animals who also want to live on the land.

Perhaps we should put a lot more effort into our various regulations such as Local Environment Plans (LEPs) to spell out the importance of retaining bushland and natural water courses, and then we should penalize those people who endanger the health of our environment for short term financial gain or comfort. Perhaps we should put a lot more effort into working with developers (including home owners) to ensure that the structures they put in place sit "lightly" on the ground, retaining as much native vegetation as possible and not relying on a future planting regime to restore vegetation cover.

Perhaps if these sorts of efforts were taken, new developments would not cause the controversies they are now causing—in Menai or anywhere else in Sydney.



Miriam Verbeek

In September, **Bob Walshe** stepped down after being Chairman of the Environment Centre for 10 years. He is interviewed here for opinions on the November 10th Federal election.

Reflection on an Election

Has the election helped Australia's environmental needs? Hardly. Neither Liberal nor Labor provided solutions to those needs, which are huge. Both came up grudgingly with a few points – enough, they hoped, to quieten the many people who feel concerned. Neither offered a vision. Not surprisingly the vote for the Greens party rose by several points, which has attracted attention and made Bob Brown a voice that will be heeded by the media. But the Democrats, who have also had good environmental credentials, lost ground...No, the task ahead of us remains hefty.

What's the policy of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre to the parties – during and after the election? SSEC has always been non-party, independent. Our members are of every political persuasion. We don't side with even an avowedly environmental party such as the Greens. The Centre's role is to win Liberal, Labor and the smaller parties to environment-protecting policies. In this interview, by the way, I am speaking of highly political issues as an individual, an independent, and not as a Centre spokesperson.

What did you make of the voting? It was all over the place. More than a million made no choice – they either didn't vote or voted informal. Another million didn't even trouble to get on the electoral roll! Add to all that the fact that a million-and-a-half voted Greens, Democrats or One Nation... It totals over 3 million. That's staggering. You could say, that more than one in five eligible voters refused to vote for either major party. Guessing, you could also add that many who did vote for either party did so without enthusiasm. There you have the big disenchantment-with-politicians factor so evident now in all modern parliamentary systems. I find it sad and cynical. So many people are saying, "Whether I vote or not, the circus will go on – only the clowns will change".

Is it disenchantment or plain lack of interest? Well, I hate to face it, but most voters just don't want to think about politics. The culture is so heavily con-



sumerist, sport-mad, entertainment-seeking that there's no time for political *thinking*. Not one in a hundred would read a book on politics. Talk-back radio was recently called a 'swamp' of extremist views. Too sweeping, no doubt – RN's "Australia Talks Back" is invariably intelligent. But there is a lot of ockerish vulgarity, greed, irresponsibility.

Why a landslide to Howard? Hey, wait on, there was no landslide. Howard has a comfortable majority in the Lower House, brought about by enough swings in (mostly) marginal seats. But, broadly, 49% of voters did not favour his government. I noticed Keating asserting that "...the swing was 1½%. That's three in every 200 changed their minds from the last election.". I remember that Beazley lost that last election (1998) despite the fact that he got 51% of the two-party-preferred vote. Now, in 2001, he got just under 49% and yet the system is such that he is being said to be comprehensively defeated. That's shallow. It was nothing like a "landslide". Moreover the Senate will be a little more difficult for Howard than it was before.

Are you saying we're stuck in a Tweedledum and Tweedledee alternation of the major parties? That's too glib. It overemphasises what the parties have in common but glosses over their differences. There are too many differences to go into here – differences for instance of history, congregation, powerful backers and so on. It's more intelligent to see them as rival management teams, each heavily bureaucratised, no longer attached to the ideals of their founders, cynically pragmatic, and elevating electoral expediency (vote-catching) above all values.

The best management team won? That's how it goes. It's the Howard management team's third victory. Before that, Hawke's team had four victories, Fraser's three, Whitlam's only one, and between 1949-63 Menzies' team had seven in a row. Next year, as the world recession impacts and consumer debt proves unsustainable, Howard will run into a heavy recession and his present electoral upswing will go into downswing...

Can You see Labor shaking off its present despondency? Not entirely. I'd like to see an on-the-ball Opposition because parliamentary democracy needs it. Crean will of course make some changes, proclaim a "New Labor" as Tony Blair did successfully in Britain. But he won't be able to get rid of all the lead in Labor's saddlebags. For instance, he's unlikely to end the dead-hand of the Right Faction on selecting candidates, he's unlikely to equalise the trade union with the non-union membership's voting-rights within the party, and he's even less likely to present a vision, an ideal that will cause people to rush to join the Party and engage in community work. At present, you know, national membership has fallen below a pitiful 40,000 – and most of these do little or no work in their communities, they seldom even attend branch meetings regularly. A parlous state of affairs – and the Liberal Party presents the same sorry picture at branch level.

Are the major parties' relations with "the community" really so awful? They certainly are. I was fascinated to hear the veteran Labor Senator Peter Cook discover, just after the election, that both sides of politics needed to do more to *involve the community*: "We are becoming a media circus rather than a community show. We need to get back to the community," he said (*SMH*, 14.11.01). Bang on! Here in Sutherland Shire disgracefully few Liberal or Labor branch members are active in community affairs. Certainly the five Labor and four Liberal councillors are active but beyond them, scarcely a handful of others are at all visible. [Incidentally, Bob Carr too has just discovered the community: he's told his MPs to treat every electorate as marginal

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Reflection on an election

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and “become active at grassroots levels” as the March 2003 election approaches (SMH, 18.11.01.)]

Do you agree with those who say Howard made it a racist election? Keating, whom you mentioned, said on the John Laws’ show, “Howard got elected on a racist manifesto – that’s the long and short of it.” Well, not the jackboot fascist degree of racism. But Howard seized on Labor’s sorry “policy vacuum” and pumped up a massive public fear of foreigners. He was incredibly lucky. He’d have lost the election if it had been held early in the year. It would have fallen into Beazley’s lap. Beazley was then pursuing the 1998 Howard policy of being a “small target” – that is, say as little as possible and so avoid criticism. Howard began to throw money at vote-catching causes and he made up some ground. Then, heaven-sent (devil-sent?), came the “Tampa” refugee crisis and September 11th. Howard linked the tragic “boat people” to terrorists. FEAR seized the public mind – fear of “illegals”, “asylum-seekers”, “terrorists”! Beazley scurried thoughtlessly into “bipartisanship”. One Nation supporters swung heavily to Howard... A time of insecurity favours the incumbent: Howard cruised in.

To what extent, then, “racist”? Beyond doubt, the latent racism of the Australian community has been given an ugly legitimacy. “White Australia” and all that. Call it fear of foreigners, xenophobia, intolerance – in all honesty it’s there and the best way to handle it is to talk openly about it. Who in the Shire hasn’t heard of “Hurstville overrun by Chinese”, “Lebanese gangs on the trains”, and so on. Many commentators attribute the pro-Howard swing in Sydney’s west to the fact that Muslim immigrants are more visible there than in the

rest of Sydney. Getting that nasty racist genie back in the bottle won’t be easy. It should be the first concern of the new Government. As to the bevy of right-wing columnists (McGuinness, Devine, Salusinszky, Sheehan et al) who have rushed to say Howard wasn’t benefiting from “the race card” – they protesteth too much!

You obviously aren’t easy with the term “racist”? I want to qualify it in several ways. Words can be dangerous. So many shades of meaning are possible. Racists, terrorists, illegals, queue-jumpers, and so on – in every case there’s a need to say specifically what you mean. This election has been sour with name-calling. What’s an “elite”, what’s an “aspirational voter”? Dishonest politicians use such tags to avoid confronting serious arguments. And, by the way, there’s too much of that from some councillors.

Did any wholesome vision come out of the election? Definitely not. It’s the election’s saddest feature! Even the conservative *Herald* felt it had to deplore “An Election without Vision” (8.11.01). The “boat people” issue was a wet blanket thrown over all other issues. Over, for example, globalisation, international investment, productivity, taxation (other than GST), worker protection, and so on; even rising violence, drug addiction, declining family values; and what was said on education, hospitals and nursing homes wasn’t nearly enough; as to great national issues like reconciliation, the republic and the environment, they were totally neglected. It’s disgraceful! Even immigration wasn’t seriously discussed despite, or because of, “...the emotional wrangling over the boat people [which, said the *Herald*] has been exploited by John Howard, whose manipu-

lations have been effectively condoned by the complicity, equally shameful, of Kim Beazley”.

What environmental vision would you have liked to see? I sent a “21st Century Vision for Australia” to several political leaders, a page I wrote for Dr Mary White’s big book, *Running Down: Water in a Changing Land*. It was based on the view of UN’s Maurice Strong that Australia is “an environmental superpower... the only island constituting an entire continent... home to a huge assemblage of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth...” I urged that our political parties should deliberately take on the role of steward of this fragile continent – and should invite the world through our science and our tourism to understand us. Similarly, the Australian Conservation Foundation urges Government and Opposition to “adopt a fundamental commitment to an ecologically sustainable economy and society”... Alas, no response.

And, briefly, how about the Shire’s environment? Impossible to be brief. Our 40-page *Annual Report* sketches the Centre’s activities. We keep in touch with Federal MPs Bruce Baird (Cook) and Danna Vale (Hughes). Bruce assures us he will continue his Kurnell efforts against sand-mining and in favour of buy-back of significant areas. Danna, with whom we disagree fundamentally over the new, Argentinian reactor, has been helpful on a number of other issues. More broadly, we urge our Federal MPs, our State MPs and our Councillors, regardless of party affiliations, to do all they can to invigorate the participation of their supporters in all community affairs – and, of course, especially in protection and enhancement of the Shire’s environment, green, marine and

Forum

from front page

The discussion and debate pointed to a mismatch between transport development and the kind of building patterns the community wanted. As Les Robinson pointed out, this was held together by a decision making process that was basically undemocratic.

The range of presentations demonstrated these points and many others.

If you weren’t able to make it to the Forum in person, you’ll still be able to catch up on the discussion on the Centre’s website at www.ssec.org.au In addition you can pick up one of four fact sheets from

the Forum, available at the Centre’s office.

Two more community conferences will be held in 2002. The first on the problems of Port Hacking.



Michelle Zeibots



Turpentine-ironbark forest connections in Sutherland Shire

Turpentine-ironbark forest (*Syncarpia glomulifera-Eucalyptus paniculata* tall open forest) is a Listed Endangered Ecological Community. Most of this forest has now gone and today only a few samples of it can be found in the Shire in places such as Menai, East Heathcote, Loftus and Kirrawee.

Characteristic tree species varied somewhat according to location and climatic differences. Characteristically turpentine *Syncarpia glomulifera* and grey ironbark *Eucalyptus paniculata* were present, accompanied by a range of other species including white stringybark *Eucalyptus globoidea*, red mahogany *Eucalyptus resinifera*, grey gum *Eucalyptus punctata*, blackbutt *Eucalyptus pilularis*, Sydney red gum *Angophora costata*, and Sydney blue gum *Eucalyptus saligna*.

However, it is important to see these communities as more than just mixed groves of trees. They are true ecological communities, which include a great range of equally important shrubs, herbs, insects, birds, reptiles and small mammals. To properly conserve these communities, one must consider as many of its components as is possible.

Many of the remnants are very vulnerable to disturbance from rubbish dumping and nutrient enriched urban runoff in particular. These frequently contain weed dispersals and disease organisms, which can have disastrous effects.

However, the most difficult thing to overcome for these forests is lack of recognition and acknowledgment of their value to our community.

Even recognition of these communities in the first place is a cause for concern as the following tale relates. Of particular concern is the use of land surrounding the old tram depot in Royal National Park as a dump for roadamill or crushed bitumen. The actual store area was 'cleaned up' first by removing understorey vegetation and groundcover, old trees and stumps, rocks and rubbish and then the roadamill was dumped in piles up to four metres high. In a number of places it has buried the base of healthy trees. These activities represent massive disturbances to the Listed Threatened Ecological Community turpentine-ironbark forest. The very structure of this system has been drastically damaged. How could such a terrible thing have been allowed to happen?

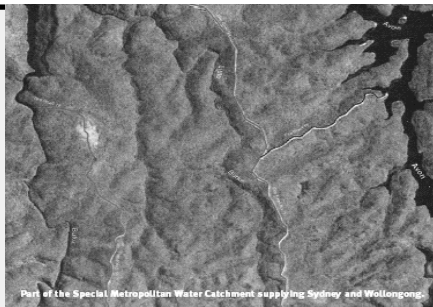
Another important remnant of turpentine-ironbark forest can be found in Pollard Park on the corner of Oak Road and President Avenue Kirrawee. This patch could be very effectively rehabilitated and managed as urban bushland conserving a part of the natural heritage of Sutherland Shire and as an important sample of Listed Endangered Ecological Community. I am sure that the cost of weeding every few months would be much cheaper than mowing, as is the practice in Pollard Park.

Not only that, but this public landscape can become a reservoir of wildness consecrated to the plants, insects, birds and soil, which the surrounding private landscapes can draw upon and add to, allowing the integration of the natural environment into our community.

We must pay attention to the world in our own backyard and conserve and integrate its unique wildness into our community. The turpentine-ironbark forests are part of our unique natural heritage and responsibility and we would do well to recognise the opportunity that the small remnants of these forests provide to integrate our civilised community with wildness.

A question of survival

There's nothing more precious than a clean, reliable drinking water supply. But intensive mining is damaging Sydney and Wollongong's water catchments. Underground coal mining is collapsing the land surface, opening large cracks in stream beds, draining rock pools and wetlands. Once pristine streams no longer hold water or flow after rain! Mining is also causing pollution and damaging key water supply structures.



Part of the Special Metropolitan Water Catchment supplying Sydney and Wollongong.

Your drinking water is draining away, water catchments are cracking up!

Your drinking water is being lost today and your supply during future droughts is being undermined. Who lets this happen? The government's mining agency that has sole legal control.

URGENT - More damaging mines are proposed. Support protection of the catchments.

WRITE to Bob Carr, Premier of NSW; Andrew Refshauge, Planning Minister; Bob Debus, Environment Minister; and Eddie Obeid, Mining Minister; C/- Parliament House, Sydney, 2000 and ask them to protect your water supplies from mining and pollution.

Visit our web site to see the evidence cracking water catchments <http://www.nccnsw.org.au/member/tec/>

I enclose a tax deductible donation of \$ _____ by cheque to Total Environment Centre Inc or Please charge my Bankcard Mastercard Visa

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Signature _____ Date _____

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Address: _____



More sandmining on Kurnell Peninsula?

Sandmining could well expand on the Peninsula if State Government gives the go-ahead to a proposal by Rocla to mine on a new site to a depth of 22m. The company is currently preparing an EIS for sandmining on a site adjacent to Holt's property.

The new proposal involves removing sand to 22m below ground level which will exhaust the sand body down to the underlying clay and bedrock. The site contains a number of Aboriginal middens, an extensive high dune and a small freshwater wetland system.

There is grave concern over this latest proposal particularly since it is in clear contradiction to the Peninsula's REP which points to the phasing-out of sandmining. But if Rocla are given the green light to extract up to 5 million tonnes of sand from their new site, it is quite conceivable that we could see sandmining activities continue on the Peninsula for another decade.

Under the proposal, the lakes that will form as a result of the mining are to be filled. Then light industrial development could be the likely final landuse.

The company has indicated that the State Government, rather than Sutherland Shire Council, will be the consent authority for this development given that it is considered to be of State significance.

This proposal comes at a time when the Healthy Rivers Commission has recommended to State Government that a review of extractive industries on the Peninsula be conducted. The HRC's Final Report released last month pointed to the need for an assessment of the overall impact of sandmining on the stability of the Peninsula and that such an assessment should be undertaken on the "entire sand body of the Peninsula" rather than on a site-by-site basis.

Elsewhere, the long awaited Final Report of the **Botany Bay Program** will

be launched later this month. Among many other of its achievements during the past 18 months, the Botany Bay Program has provided the catalyst for the formation of a new Bay environmental organisation and has initiated discussions regarding a new Botany Bay Studies Unit at UNSW. But with this optimism comes news of a number of major developments on the Bay such as Cook's Cove and the huge Port Botany expansion. The need for more wholistic and strategic management of the Bay is now more pressing than ever.



Simon Kimberley

sale

Office Furniture



The Centre is in the process of moving to new premises. In order to meet our needs in larger premises we tendered for some newer furniture. An auction was recently held in the city in one of the Olympics 2000 offices that closed. We were lucky enough to get more furniture than we currently need at a very good price.

What this now means is we have a number of computer desks and work-stations for sale:

- 2 U-shaped white melamine office desks.
- 2 Wooden desks
- Miscellaneous cabinets & chairs



Please call us and buy one of the above items as it will help to defray our costs of moving.

Good news! Menai B clean up has begun

Sutherland Shire Council has begun cleaning up the bushland at Alison Crescent, Menai. Over the past two weeks, Council staff have removed: over 700 tonnes of spoil/fill to Cronulla landfill, 50 tonnes of tip material to Lucas Heights landfill including dozens of whitegoods, 10 tonne concrete for recycling, 6 car bodies, 3 tonnes of asbestos fibro.

Many tonnes of clean fill were used on site to level depressions in the main access track. Large rocks have been retrieved and used to create a temporary barrier around the perimeter of the site. Once this barrier is in place Council will trial the removal of the construction fence.

We hope this a start of management of bushland which Menai residents should be proud to have at the heart of their suburb.



Miriam Verbeek

Annual Dinner Raffle Results

Once again we enjoyed a very successful and enjoyable Annual Dinner at the Sutherland District Trade Union Club on Friday 26th October.

Sponsors who donated door prizes were Belmont Bistro, Café Riccio, Pappadam Restaurant at Sutherland, Café Quil and Glendanna Coffe Shop. These local businesses have often supported us, which is much appreciated.

Our raffle results:

Wiseman's Ferry Retreat
Winner: Simone Zeibots
Ticket No. 3570

Tree Tops Resort at Bundanoon
Winner: Betty Williams
Ticket No. 7080

Urunga Holiday Cottage donated by Gy-mea Tradies
Winner: John Lincoln

I could not believe it when my daughter Simone won the Wiseman's Ferry prize. Simone and Michael, both Horticulturalists, have booked their stay for early January to celebrate Michael's birthday, and will give us a green/environmental aspect report on it for our next Newsletter.

We look forward to your support with our 2002 Raffle – I will ban Simone from buying a ticket, I promise!

Have a wonderful Holiday Season.

Ruth Zeibots

Want to Help or Simply Find Out More?

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

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I'd like to join Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....

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

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

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

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



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