

## An Hour in the Wilderness SSEC AGM 2003

This year's Annual General Meeting was no traditional meeting. The Centre decided it would be a good idea to treat members and guests to an opportunity to meet informally over nice nibbles and drinks and then hear from an adventurer extraordinary.

Over a hundred people accepted the invitation, from members of the Centre, to Parliamentarians, to Councillors and council staff, to representatives of businesses.

The conversation flowing around the tables of food and drink was an interesting mix of "catching up with old friends", earnest campaigning, politicking and information seeking.

But the conversations were stilled when Ian Brown, the guest speaker for the evening began to flick through his extraordinary collection of slides. Photographs taken as he experienced a range of wilderness areas: The Blue Mountains – rugged terrain of sandstone gorges, ancient plants, clear waters, and one of the

crucibles of the Environmental movement in Australia; New Zealand, around Milford Sound – granite cliffs to challenge rock climbers, lightning changes of weather, stunning scenery; Antarctic – a one thousand three hundred kilometre journey over snow and ice pulling sleds, challenged by wind, frostbite and the monotonous, flat, white scenery; Cape York – lush, teaming with life, full of

Aboriginal dreaming stories. For almost an hour and a half, Ian Brown held his audience enthralled.

It was hard to think about the bureaucratic process of holding the official part of the AGM after Ian's talk!

Business of the Annual General Meeting of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, 2003.

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## Casting a shadow on light - part 2

*By Ian Jeffrey*

In our June edition of *The Centre*, we discussed the major consequences of light pollution, its massive elimination of the stars, caused by the overuse and misuse of electricity and consequently the excessive production of greenhouse gases. The USA alone wastes up to \$2 US billion/year in excessive electricity use and produces 19 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>/year.

We illustrated some of the tragic events which could ensue, the loss of Earthbound astronomy, the inability to contribute to Earthbound asteroid and comet

monitoring and the unnecessary contribution to greenhouse gases.

In this issue we look at the effects of light pollution on humans, fauna and flora, not necessarily the same impact as a visiting comet, but, nevertheless, of relevance to our ecology. In a search of web sites, by far and away the monopoly of the research has been and is being done in the USA. Unfortunately, and despite the wealth of talent available in Australia, we can give the impression of being somewhat dismissive in this area. With the well known

propensity of the human race for anthropomorphism, we will deal first with the human problems, that is, the ones associated with light pollution.

### **Humans**

Too much artificially generated light can lead to disruption of natural circadian rhythm's which, in turn, can lead to an increase in the risk of developing certain types of cancer.

For example, suppression of melatonin ( the sleep hormone ), can increase the risk of the

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**THE NEWSLETTER OF  
THE SUTHERLAND  
SHIRE ENVIRONMENT  
CENTRE**

# From the Chair

By Miriam Verbeek, Chair

This year's annual report amply demonstrates the maturing nature of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre. Each year it builds upon previous years of experience to more effectively react to environmental issues as well as influence the sustainability agenda for the Sutherland Shire and bioregions.

From advising on developments in Botany Bay to making submissions against overdevelopment, active involvement in the design of catchment blueprints and Local Environment Plans, calling for sustainable transport planning, and enthusiastically supporting opportunities

for the community to be involved in safeguarding the environment through activities such as the community garden and the Great Kai'mia Way, the Centre's volunteers and staff have delivered an impressive list of achievements! It is most appropriate that in this foreword to the report I record my sincerest thanks for effort by all.

In this age of information, I would like to particularly highlight the incredible contribution made by the many volunteers who work in the background at the computers and at the research desk in the office. Their contribution makes possible

projects such as the website, the Great Kai'mia Way, forums papers and information sheets, the library facility and even our administrative systems.

Notwithstanding the Centre's achievements in the

past year, it has been a year of consolidation.

The Management Committee has begun the work of charting the future course for the Centre, setting goals from which strategies for the Centre's activities can be developed. I commend Jim Sloan and Jo Winkler for the work they have done to develop financial and campaigns reporting protocols, and on fundraising and website strategies.

A goal with high priority is to continue to foster partnerships with others in the community to achieve sustainability. Sutherland Shire Council has been exemplary among Councils in attempting to provide opportunities for partnerships, and the Centre has benefited from the relationships – as has Council from the Centre's involvement. The role and cooperation of other community partners is detailed in the pages of this report. We – members, staff, volunteers and friends of the Centre – have a challenging period before us. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the ever-increasing pressures of urban and economic development. The Centre has built a firm foundation and achieved a credible reputation. Our challenge is to work from that platform and ensure that we continue to speak clearly and persistently on behalf of sustainability.



Events Committee at work!

## SSEC Financial Summary 2002-3

The financial year 2002-3 saw an increase in income and expenditure for the Centre from the previous year.

The Centre had a total income of \$298,402, with an increase in grants, and boosted by the rent received from the leasing of unit 4a to Shawby Investments.

The total expenditure was \$318,803, representing projects, campaigns and forums being coordinated by the Centre, advertising, superannuation and wages and accommodation costs.

A special thank you goes to Shirley Renshall for her commitment and effort in completing and tracking financial details on a weekly basis!

## 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 Winkler.

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- ❖ The Mayor, Phil Blight, made a statement to the meeting, highlighting important issues currently of joint interest to Council and the Centre: The Reactor at Lucas Heights; the People's LEP. He noted that the SSEC continues to be an important partner for council.
- ❖ The Chair, Miriam Verbeek, presented her report (summary text in "From the Chair" article on page 2).
- ❖ The Executive Officer, Jim Sloan, presented his report and the Treasurer's Report (refer to summary of finances in box on page 2). The Annual Report is available from the Centre for members, as well as on the Centre's website.
- ❖ The following Constitutional changes were agreed to:
  - The traditional eight-member Management Committee to be called the Board
  - A Management Advisory Committee, comprising seven members, be appointed. This Committee to work with the Board in governing the Centre
  - Members of the Board and the Advisory Committee to be appointed for a two-year term, with half of the members standing down each year with the option of re-nominating for a position.
- ❖ The new Board and Management Committee appointments are listed on page 7.

In recognition of his leadership role and significant support for all its years of operation, a motion was unanimously passed declaring Bob Walshe a Patron of the Centre.

## 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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## Casting a shadow on light

development of breast cancer. People working nightshift have a 60% greater chance of developing breast cancer.

Excessive light can be caused by the poor standards applied in your area. It may be caused by light trespass caused by a generous donation of light to your property by your neighbour, including your bedroom window. Loss of sleep will not make you an easier person to live with.

Excessive light can create an impression of greater security, but this feeling is ill-founded. More burglaries occur in daytime. Also light should be evenly distributed, not with dark spots and shadows.

Another feature of light pollution is glare, that beam of high light intensity that hits you in the eyes as you are driving along or crossing the road, with possible serious consequences.

### Fauna

Research, almost entirely from the USA, gives observation from various situations and for various species.

- Invertebrates, ( aquatic and terrestrial )

- Amphibians
- Reptiles ( primarily sea turtles )
- Fish
- Coral
- Birds ( land and sea )
- Mammals

### Examples

Insects attracted to artificial lights, which in turn attract their predators.

Sea turtle hatchlings disorientated by inland lights and run over in large numbers when leaving the beach to cross the highway. All this and predators too.

Birds flying into high buildings, this particularly applies to night time migratory birds flying into high buildings with lit windows, lost in the canyons and thousands gone to another world in one night.

The observations so far found on mammals, with the exception of the bats, are minimal. This does not mean that there is not work to be done, but maybe that we have already reduced their numbers substantially.

### Flora

This is also not an area of extensive information, but there is a suspicion that extended day length caused by excessive lighting

could be killing trees, shrubs and flowering plants. Maybe in the case of trees and shrubs, the longer light period gives a longer growth period and so the wood has less time to harden.

### Is there an answer and what is it?

As we have already noted, light pollution in the USA alone, costs \$US 2 billion/year and contributes 19 million tonnes/year of CO2.

The good lighting principles are already available, as is the suitable equipment, but it needs to be mandatory, we all need to be aware of it. It is for the benefit of our lives, our health and well being, not forgetting the glorious heritage of the heavens.

It is not just the mandatory fitting of new lighting, but existing installations can be retrofitted, and as a big attraction, the fittings will not cost more. All this is a smaller electricity bill, plus a significant contribution to the Kyoto Agreement.

We in Sutherland can set an example, with a review of our own doorstep, and if necessary, the implementation of any necessary corrective measures. Some other areas are striving toward this end, here is our chance to do our part and even take the lead on this important issue.

## Kurnell saved from Gold Coast-style resort!

On the 8th August, the Land and Environment Court blocked a multi-million dollar resort-style development to have been built on the Wanda sandhills. This significant judgement saw Besmaw Pty Ltd, a Holt Company, lose a 2-year court battle with Sutherland Shire Council over a dispute regarding the commencement of works on the development.

### History of the issue

Back in December 1989, Sutherland Shire Council granted development consent for the resort, comprising 2 international standard hotels, 1,400 condominiums, a private hospital, a research centre, a retail centre, ancillary offices, a theatre, a golf course, an equestrian centre, a tennis ranch, swimming facilities, a sports ground and a network of pathways for walking, jogging, bike riding and horse riding, and associated roads and infrastructure.

The proposal was given consent at a time when comprehension of the Peninsula's environmental problems was limited.

### Why the dispute?

After initial consent was granted in 1989, the proposal was modified a few times, with various consent conditions laid

down. Final development consent was given in 1992.

The dispute arose in 1997 when Sutherland Council alleged Besmaw Pty Ltd had failed to meet a requirement under environmental law that work start within five years of consent being granted.

Besmaw claimed that construction work had commenced with the bulldozing of 1km of dirt track for an access road on 19th September 1997.

### The court case

During the course of the trial, Phillip Holt, managing director of Besmaw, was questioned over whether Besmaw had any intention of completing the road. When cross-examined, Holt put forward that Besmaw had a time frame, but when questioned about dates for that time frame, Holt answered, "It's an indefinite time frame". He also added, "In September [1997] when it [clearing] commenced... Besmaw was not forming a view of when it would be completed other than at some stage it would be completed in the future".

Holt was equally evasive on questions posed over the abilities of his staff to complete the access road. He agreed that they had the experience in vegetation stripping, but not the skills to build haul

roads.

By the end of the hearing, the court found that the clearing work carried out in September 1997 was construction work, and prior to the lapse of development consent. However, the Court ruled against Besmaw Pty Ltd because it did not comply with other consent conditions, including groundwater testing.

### Significance of the judgement

Although Besmaw Pty Ltd is likely to appeal the decision, it is unlikely the development would be given the green light in its current form.

Bob Walshe, Chair of KREPC and community representative on the Botany Bay Strategy Advisory Committee, made the comment, "The judgement comes just as the State Planning Minister has directed his Botany Bay Strategy Team to draw up strict requirements that will stop developers from ever again being allowed to harm the environmental values of the historic Kurnell Peninsula".

"When these requirements pass into law, they will strengthen the power of the Land and Environment Court to make rulings like this one."

## The Bay community calls for action—Botany Bay Region Forum

On Saturday 6th September, a forum concerning the future management of Botany Bay and its catchment was convened by Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance (BBaCA), Kurnell Regional Environmental Planning Council (KREPC) and Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC).

It was timed to mark the 1 year anniversary of Deputy Premier Andrew Refshauge's 3rd September 2002 announcement of a "major environmental study into the entire Botany Bay catchment including the sensitive Kurnell Peninsula...[to] create a comprehensive regional blueprint... [which] will ensure – once and for all – that development is not allowed to harm the environmental and social values of this important area".

Since April 2003, the Botany Bay Strategy Advisory Committee (BBSAC),

comprising local government reps, industry reps, state agency reps, community reps and an aboriginal rep, has been working with the Dept of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) on a management strategy and action plan for the Bay area.

Between 40 and 50 people met at Rockdale City Council, representing community groups, Local, State and Federal Government and other Government agencies, to hear a progress report on the Botany Bay Study from the 2 community representatives on the BBSAC - Bob Walshe and Gary Blaschke. This Forum was the first opportunity the community representatives have had to report comprehensively to the Bay's many concerned organisations.

Delegates were also called upon to add to the record of community concerns for the

environmental and social health of the Botany Bay region.

It emerged that there has been a struggle within the BBSAC to clarify the true objectives of the Committee—the scope of the study and the 'strict requirements' Refshauge said would emerge to ensure "development is not allowed to harm the environmental and social values" of the area.

The outcome of the forum were 4 resolutions which will be forwarded to DIPNR Minister Craig Knowles and his Botany Bay Strategy Team, together with a request that he receive a delegation from the NGO sector.

*For a copy of the resolutions, contact Jo Winkler at SSEC on 9545 3077.*

## What price water?



*Left, Photo by Peter Rae, SMH 16/11/2002*  
Warragamba Dam at 60% capacity in 1994, a similar level to what it is currently. When the dam is full, this bridge is 9 metres underwater.

By Vicki Simpson

Water is cheap in Sydney. If you had a 2000 litre rainwater tank, it would hold the equivalent of \$2 worth of tap water - the price of tap water charged by Sydney Water being 98 cents per 1000 litres. Could this be why Sydneysiders are so extravagant with one of our most precious resources? We continue to hose our drives, turn sprinklers on in the middle of the day and top up the swimming pool, even in periods of low rainfall and drought.

Mr Bob Wilson, chair of the independent expert panel on environmental flows for the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Shoalhaven and Woronora rivers, says, "There's no consciousness in the community that one of the major elements supporting Sydney - water - is in short supply." He says that consumers must take more responsibility for easing Sydney's water shortage. This would also in turn prevent our rivers from dying a slow ecological death.

Also of concern is our groundwater supply - it is thought our springwater aquifers are depleting in areas such as the Hawkesbury River village of Mangrove Mountain, where Coca-Cola has set up a bottling business for its popular brands Mount Franklin, Peats Ridge and Neverfail. The water itself costs Coca-Cola an absurd \$1.34 for a million litres. Coke then sells every litre of bottled water for more than a million times what it pays the Government for the right to extract it. And for its soft drink, Coke uses 1.6 billion litres of water nationally, much of it Warragamba Dam's finest.

Other factors also contribute to our water shortage: a burgeoning city population; and climate change.

It is estimated that an extra 56,000 people make their home in the city each year. But despite education campaigns, Sydney Water customers use 15 per cent more water per person per day than those of the Gosford and Hunter Water companies, and Sydney Water has been severely criticised for its poor performance in convincing its customers to cut consumption.

As for climate change, the northern hemisphere this summer has experienced extreme weather conditions, the likes of which we in Australia may also experience in our summer season. Whatever the reason for global warming - to what extent human activity is to blame - climatologists estimate that world temperatures will rise by about 5-9 degrees over the next 100 years and they predict that extreme weather seen this year will increasingly become the norm. Consequently the world's population may have to face some very dangerous, expensive and uncomfortable years, and we in Australia can expect higher temperatures and lower rainfalls for our already dry continent, resulting in more droughts and low dam levels.

So unless there are radical changes to the way in which our city uses its water, a social, economic and environmental disaster is not too far away.

In order to avoid this, the Hawkesbury Nepean Management Forum (of which Bob Wilson is also a member) suggests that big water users should pay more for water under a two-tier price system; water-efficiency rules should be mandatory for new houses (rainwater storage tanks, better stormwater controls, re-use of grey water, improved washing machines and dishwashers); and effluent should irrigate agricultural areas in western Sydney.

The only other options would seem to be to pump water from Tallowa Dam to Sydney when the Shoalhaven is experiencing high flows, or to build another dam, probably in the Shoalhaven - both of which are opposed by environmental groups.

.... or perhaps Sydneysiders, because of our changing circumstances, will just have to accept the harsh reality that water is not a right, but rather, a vital and precious commodity. Like other Australians across the nation, we, too, will have to learn to live within our limits.

### *The 3 R's of Saving Water*

- **Reduce** your water consumption and save money by changing your water use habits, e.g. don't leave the tap running while brushing your teeth, and don't over-water the garden (use mulch and/or plant natives).  
When buying a water-using appliance, such as a washing machine, look for the water conservation rating labels and choose products that use less water.
- **Rainwater** can be collected and used instead of tap water in some instances. Why use drinking-quality tap water for gardening and toilet flushing? Install a rainwater tank - Sydney Water has extended its deadline for rebates to June 2005. For details, visit the Sydney Water website ([sydneywater.com.au/everydropcounts/garden/rainwater-tanks.cfm](http://sydneywater.com.au/everydropcounts/garden/rainwater-tanks.cfm))
- **Recycle** the water that is used first in the bathroom, laundry and kitchen - 'grey water' - though not from the kitchen sink or toilets, and use on the garden, etc. But get some expert advice first, as grey water recycling is a fairly new development. Water authorities are concerned about grey water recycling because they don't want to risk public health. Currently, only in Victoria can you divert untreated grey water for immediate use (not to be kept in any kind of storage tank).

As of October 1, 2003, mandatory water restrictions will be in place in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawara.

Under the restrictions, sprinklers and water systems will be banned at all times, although drip irrigation will be permitted.

A fine of \$220 will be imposed on anyone caught hosing hard surfaces, including vehicles, footpaths and buildings.



## National Tree Day—27th July

By Josephine Winkler

SSEC became involved in National Tree Day this year – a result of partnerships built through the Great Kai'mia Way project.

The Gandangara LALC have long been fighting illegal trail bike and 4WD use on their land near Lucas Heights. The trail bikes and 4WDs have degraded large sections of the land, damaging plants, disturbing the fauna, causing soil erosion, which, in turn, has led to the siltation of Mill Creek. Aside from the physical damage, the spiritual and cultural significance of the place is threatened by these activities, as it disrespects the complex relationship between the Aboriginal community and 'country'.

In an effort to increase understanding within the wider community of the importance of the conservation of Gandangara land, the Environment Centre proposed a tree planting on one of the more degraded sites to coincide with National Tree Day.

Gandangara LALC were very enthusiastic, and a local 4WD club that had been performing regular clean-ups on the land were engaged to help co-ordinate the day. The NSW Waste Services Nursery at Lucas Heights very kindly donated 300 plants, all indigenous native species (including *Angophora costata*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Viminaria juncea*). Sutherland Shire Council donated the use of an earth-mover prior to the day, to break up the hardened soil to make it was ready for planting.

On the day, 39 volunteers came out, including local Menai MP

Alison Megarrity and her two sons. In no time at all, 300 plants were in the ground, and the Gandangara rangers set up temporary barriers around the regeneration site to deter unwelcome interference. A barbeque, organised by the Gandangara LALC, was enjoyed afterwards by all.

The day really did work to unify different community groups. It must be understood that the actions of the tree day do not fix the damage that has already been done. What we hope it has achieved is improved communication between stakeholders and an understanding that biodiversity conservation is everyone's responsibility.

*Special thanks to:* Tom McLoughlin (SSEC volunteer), Robbie Bell (Gandangara LALC), Hemmi Voges (Suzuki 4WD Club) & Christine (NSW Waste Services Nursery).



Many hands make light work—the site prior to planting.

## Community Garden Buzz!

By John Vlamitsopoulos

Picture this... The space is a buzz with activity. People coming and going, tending to their first Winter crops, preparing for their first Spring season. Workshops have begun, not just gardening and recycling workshops, but also music, art, and the occasional cook-up from the vegies in the garden. People from all walks of life are coming together to share this magical experience. There is a real sense of community input and ownership here on the site.

The Sustainable House component is underway, and in conjunction with the garden, is set to be a showcase for renewable energies and waste-minimisation for home renovators and developers who are beginning to see the value and ease of building self-sufficient, sustainable homes.

Even though a number of different organisations including Council are involved, this is a perfect example of how a project between government, business and community can work and be sustainable.

Too good to be true? Perhaps, but the possibilities for the community garden

are endless, and we're feeling very optimistic!

Last November, when we had our first meeting, 30 people turned up. All keen to work on a community garden. However, the reality seemed very distant. Since then, significant progress has been made, and a community garden for Sutherland is just around the corner!

Sutherland Shire Council has approved the garden to be developed on their property next to the PCYC and Leisure Centre. Council also has plans to turn that

house into a demonstration Sustainable building. Many local community and neighbourhood centres have offered their help, Bushcare and Waste Services are keen to be involved, local businesses are offering their products and services, and Padstow TAFE are looking into the possibility of running permaculture courses on-site.

Now with the help of a \$5000 grant from the EPA, our vision for the community garden is looking less like fantasy and more like reality!

## Help us celebrate—Garden Open Day

To get this community initiative underway, we would like to invite you and your friends along to an open day at the garden site. We will be holding a barbeque on Saturday 27th September between 12pm and 2:30pm to give people the opportunity to view the site, meet others interested in becoming involved and share thoughts and ideas about the design and future direction of the garden.

**It is YOUR garden—have your say!**

The garden is adjacent to Sutherland Leisure Centre and PCYC, or a 5 minute walk from Sutherland train station—follow the Old Princes Hwy south and turn into the Leisure Centre.

*For more information, call Jo Winkler at the Environment Centre on 9545 3077.*



## Centenary Medal recipients

Although Australia's Centenary of Federation was two years ago, Centenary Medals have been awarded this year to more than 15,000 Australians in recognition of their contributions to the community and their achievements at the time of the Centenary.

On Tuesday 8th July, a number of Shire residents were honoured and presented with their medals at a ceremony hosted by Danna Vale, Federal Member for Hughes. The Environment Centre applauds those who offer their time selflessly within their community - those who were recognised this time, and those who were not.

Recipients of the Centenary Medal associated with the Environment Centre include: Geoff and Louise Broadhead, Neil deNett, Norm and Betty Dixon, Daniel Hammond, Gordon Hocking, Annette

Hogan, Jean Leyendekkers, Michael Priceman, Bob Walshe, Milton Way and Ruth Zeibots.

Congratulations to all!

*Left to right: Norm & Betty Dixon, Ruth & Michelle Zeibots, Bob Walshe*



## SSEC Board 2003-4

Les Bursil  
Neil deNett  
John Nelson

Don Page (2 years)  
Miriam Verbeek (2 years)  
Josephine Winkler (2 years)  
Ruth Zeibots (2 years)

## SSEC Management Advisory Committee 2003-4

Graeme Booth  
Anne Long  
Michael Nancarrow  
Dave Shaw  
Vicki Simpson

## Fundraising

A HUGE thank you goes to the Environment Centre's Fundraising Team! The Centre held a stall at the recent 3-day Craft Fair at Sutherland Entertainment Centre, where they managed to raise just over \$1,300!

Thanks must also go to those who have supported, and continue to support, the work of the Environment Centre.

Should you like to contribute to our fundraising efforts there's a couple of

things you can do:

- you can volunteer to help man our monthly stall—it's just one day per month and a great opportunity to make new friends;
- donate good-quality bric-a-brac—we have an over-supply of books, but all other items are very welcome.



*Ruth Turner, Elsa Hocking and Ruth Zeibots manning the stall at the Sutherland Craft Fair.*

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION :

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



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre  
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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.....

## GREEN LIGHT FOR GM CANOLA

By Vicki Simpson

On 25 July, 2003, as predicted by many, the Gene Technology Regulator granted Bayer CropScience a licence authorising the commercial release of genetically modified canola in all canola growing areas in Australia.

Following its "comprehensive evaluation" of Bayer's application, the Regulator concluded that "this canola is as safe for humans and the environment as conventional canola."

The GM canola from the proposed release would be used as oil in human food, or in animal feed, in the same way as conventional (non-GM) canola. This GM canola is approved for growing and human consumption in the USA and Canada, and oil derived from it has been approved for use in human food in Australia.

This particular GM canola includes a gene

that confers tolerance to the herbicide glufosinate ammonium which will be used on crops of this GM canola for the control of weeds. Glufosinate ammonium is not registered for use in any other broad-acre agriculture in Australia.

Notwithstanding the licence having been granted to Bayer, the Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan (RARMP) admits "the likelihood of some gene transfer from the GM canola to other cultivated canola is high but diminishes rapidly away from close proximity to the crop." If gene transfer to other canola did occur, according to the RARMP, it would pose "negligible risk."

Because this is the first licence issued for the commercial release of GM canola in Australia, the Regulator intends to report on the implementation of the GM canola release after three years of commercial plantings.

The NSW State Government and other State and Territory Governments have, however, imposed restrictions on the commercial release of the GM canola to allow time for concerns regarding possible marketability and agricultural trade impacts and segregation protocols to be resolved.

*For further information:*

- The RARMP and licence conditions are on-line (at [www.ogtr.gov.au](http://www.ogtr.gov.au))
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au>) is responsible for food safety assessments and food labelling.
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (<http://www.apvma.gov.au>) for the use and safety of insecticides and herbicides.

## USEFUL WEBSITES



### **Saving Water:**

[www.sydneywater.com.au/everydropcounts/garden/rainwater-tanks.cfm](http://www.sydneywater.com.au/everydropcounts/garden/rainwater-tanks.cfm)  
[www.planetark.org](http://www.planetark.org)

### **Community Gardens:**

Australian Community Garden Network  
[www.magna.com.au/~pacedge/garden/](http://www.magna.com.au/~pacedge/garden/)  
Seed Savers Network  
[www.seedsavers.net](http://www.seedsavers.net)

### **Besmaw Pty Ltd V Sutherland Shire Judgement**

[www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/caselaw/caselaw.nsf/pages/lec](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/caselaw/caselaw.nsf/pages/lec)  
(It's judgement No.181 of the Land & Environment Court)

### **GM Canola:**

[www.ogtr.gov.au](http://www.ogtr.gov.au)  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)  
[www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au)



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