

Sutherland Shire
Environment Centre Inc.

Annual Report
2011-12

*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 2011-12

Jenni Gormley (Chairperson)

John Nelson (Treasurer)

Phil Smith (Secretary)

Roger Bramble

Jonathan Doig

Tassia Kolesnikow

Michael McInerney

Ruth Zeibots

Development Officer

Graeme Booth

Natural Areas Campaigner

Dave Burgess

Chairman's Report

2011-12 has been a strange year for the environment movement. The environment has come under attack from many angles, some that we were not particularly prepared for.

After promises that it would "abolish Part 3A" it appears that the Liberal State Government has developed new planning legislation that is at least as destructive and perhaps even more oblivious to community concerns.

By working with other groups across the state we have found the strength needed to continue to fight this constant barrage. Hunting and tourism in National Parks, coal seam gas and long wall coal mining approvals, even more outrageous development proposals. In particular, we have worked with and provided assistance to NCC, TEC, 100% Renewable Energy, Stop CSG Illawarra. Pooling our resources like this makes us all more effective.

The results of the Local Government elections have given us a new council and the opportunity to form many new relationships. It will be up to all of us to do what we can to inform the new councillors about the beauty of our local area and the need to protect it from the threats of over-development, traffic congestion, loss of biodiversity and pollution.

Future generations are important. Our University of Wollongong Environmental Scholarship is now firmly in place, ready to commence in 2013. A public speaking contest (Speaking for the Planet) is in formation for Shire high school students. Who knows: perhaps next year ideas may have emerged about ways to work with even younger children in an attempt to increase their awareness of their local environment.

Our First National Park book is a mammoth tome, due to be printed in time for Christmas. While we hope it will sway the decision on World Heritage Listing in our favour we can certainly be confident that we are publishing an unrivalled resource for anyone interested in Royal National Park.

Once again, I need to thank the current board members for their support and diligence. Not only do they happily give up their time to ensure that the Centre continues to run according to its purpose, they are also strong and tireless active campaigners. These people have brought a valuable mix of knowledge and experience to the Board.

2012. We have now come of age... we are 21 years old. I hope our founding members are proud of the organisation we have become and that we can valiantly face the challenges of the coming years.

Jenni Gormley

September 2012

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.

Achieving our Purpose in 2011-12

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.*

- **Review of NSW Planning Act, and Transport for NSW –** Sutherland Shire Environment Centre made major submissions to these State Government policy reviews together with other environment groups around NSW. All submissions reinforced our call for sustainability, conservation and genuine community participation in decision making.
- **Coal Mining and Coal Seam Gas** – David Burgess, our Natural Areas Campaigner, is focussed on the campaign against damage caused by mining which includes threats to our own Woronora Reservoir, O'Hares Creek area and the upper Georges River Catchment. SSEC contributed \$1000 to Nature Conservation Council's state-wide campaign against Coal Seam Gas mining.
- **A Sustainable SSEC** – SSEC continues its journey to long term financial sustainability, with the view of seeing the Centre debt free possibly as soon as 12 months. Negotiations with NSW Nature Conservation Council have enabled us to save \$1500 pa on insurance premiums. (See financial report for more detail.)
- **Stop-CSG-Sutherland.** SSEC joined the Stop Coal Seam Gas campaign in May 2011 with a donation of \$1000 to the Nature Conservation Council to help them start their campaign. Met with Stop-CSG-Illawarra group in July/Aug 2011 and formed the Stop-CSG-Sutherland campaign. Coal seam gas mining in the Sutherland area is a direct threat to our water supply and the water catchment areas. The campaign was provided with a website and Facebook page as well as some funding for hats, t-shirts, etc. SSEC has also provided some financial aid to the Illawarra group for printing of brochures, signs, etc. The Illawarra group provides much of the detail required to prepare campaign material. Ongoing campaign.
- **Gandangara “Heathcote Ridge” development proposal at West Menai.** West Menai Action Group formed in October 2011 (initially as Ridge Action) to stop residential development in pristine bushland between the Menai district and the Heathcote Road. SSEC

provided a website, Facebook page and mass email facilities and assisted with the design and productions of signs and brochures to create public awareness of the campaign. As a result of community action the planned development has been reduced in size with an increase in the land made available as conservation area. Ongoing campaign.

- **First National Park.** This campaign to have the Royal National Park declared a World Heritage area was launched in early 2011 with a public meeting held at Sutherland council chambers. A committee was formed and a website and Facebook page provided. The committee hired Dr Geoff Mosely to write a report at an agreed price of \$12,000. That report is currently being turned into a book to be used to promote the campaign and is a great source of reference material covering the natural assets of The Royal National Park.

The book is ready to be printed and should be available before Christmas 2012. Funding for this project/campaign has been made available to SSEC by Perpetual Trustees Local Environments of Australia Gift Fund.

- **100% Renewables.** This project is being run by SSEC's Sutherland Climate Action Network in conjunction with other like-minded organizations around Australia. The centre has recently contributed \$1000 towards this ongoing campaign.
- **University of Wollongong Environmental Scholarship.** The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre will be offering support (\$2500 pa) to Honours students who are committed to environmental issues impacting the Sutherland Shire. The purpose of this scholarship is to provide recognition and reward to any student in the Environmental Engineering or Environmental Science disciplines, working on a specific project or thesis that will examine, enhance or improve the environmental sustainability of the region.

As well as encouraging research that will inform future work of the Centre, the provision of this scholarship will enhance the Centre's profile in the community.

Tassia Kolesnikow (director) has been instrumental in achieving this agreement with UOW and deserves our sincere thanks for her hard work.

- **Action Against Excessive Development.** Proposed developments at the Sharks and Kirrawee Brickpit site were the targets of many submissions and letters to local papers. Both projects have now been approved with some minor changes.

2. *Establish efficient communication processes with the community*

- **Facebook.** Both Facebook pages and groups have proved to be useful tools over the past year. As more people in our Shire community and wider become familiar with this application our use will inevitably increase and become more refined. ("Like" us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SutherlandShireEnvironmentCentre)
- **Public meetings, flyers, stalls.** These tried and trusted means of communicating with our local community are still very effective and are frequently used by many of campaigners to great effect. SCAN, Stop CSG and West Menai Campaigns all held successful events over the past 12 months. (Help is always needed so please contact the relevant convenor for more information.)
- **Letters to the Editor.** Despite frequent media attention about newspapers being passé, a simple letter to the editor is still probably the most effective way of raising community awareness about local issues. Letters not only create awareness amongst the general community but are of particular concern to decision makers, both elected and staff. Keep your letters short, to the point and provide your name and address. (The *Leader's* email address for letters is leaderletters@fairfaxmedia.com.au)

3. *Develop and conduct education initiatives*

- **UOW Scholarship.** The annual \$2500 scholarship agreement has been finalised with UOW and will commence in 2013.
- **Speaking for the Planet.** This major public speaking competition for high school students in Sutherland Shire is being developed by Phil Smith and will focus on environmental topics. The competition will be conducted in partnership with HotRock, a charity based in WA that supports sustainability education in schools. It is hoped that this (annual?) event will commence in 2013.

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

a) Communication. We have at our disposal a number of communication tools: website, email, newsletters, facebook, twitter, flyers, letters to local papers, media releases. The number of methods of communication and the variety of skill sets of those with whom we would like to communicate make this a constant challenge.

b) Natural Areas *report by Dave Burgess*

It has been a difficult climate in NSW for those trying to protect remnant bushland and other natural areas from developers' "footprints". The promised return of the NSW planning system to the community and local government has not eventuated, and the current planning 'Green Paper' gives every indication that the term State Significant will essentially become the new Part 3A. The factors driving the housing shortage are many and still being debated. However the NSW Government's response has been to list 43 sites across Sydney for development fast tracking.

One of these was the *West Menai* development. Saved once from a Landcom proposal in the 1980s, the land is now owned by Gandangara Aboriginal Land Council who last year put forward their plan to build 3000 homes and an industrial area over 490ha of the 850ha site. SSEC opposed the development application which had omitted the presence of several endangered species and represented a largely pristine site as a "dumping ground". We also helped facilitate the activities of West Menai Action Group. A smaller development proposal has since been submitted and we are awaiting a decision but it is still very disappointing that the Government is still considering a massive housing development in a rugged fire prone area with poor infrastructure.

SSEC also focused on the *Sharks* and *Kirrawee Brick Pit* development proposals. Both were considered poor examples of appropriate planning. The Sharks development was approved with some modifications increasing the buffer zone between the development and the mangroves. The Brick Pit development was also approved with added conditions by the Planning Assessment Commission on August 28.

On a brighter note the final longwall panel to directly undermine the Waratah Rivulet is about to be completed. The 2010 approval for a further 30 years of mining under the Keneally Government prevented further mining under the watercourse however Peabody Energy had

already managed to align two further panels under the Rivulet. An inspection late in 2011 revealed further subsidence cracking had taken place and another inspection of the area where the latest panel has been mined will take place on September 25.

c) Sutherland Climate Action Network (SCAN) report by Jonathan Doig

Melting of Arctic sea ice and the Greenland ice shelf have hit new records this year. In the face of severe drought, polls show Americans are at last joining the dots between extreme weather and climate change, but this most critical of issues has yet to rate in their presidential elections.

Here in Australia we have a price on carbon set to raise \$10 billion for investment in renewables by the newly legislated Clean Energy Finance Corporation. Hopes are high that Port Augusta will lead the charge by replacing their aging coal power stations with baseload solar thermal plants. However, the shift to renewables suffered a blow when the government dropped its promise to buy out 2 gigawatts of dirty coal power.

Solar power is now as cheap as coal in parts of NSW, while our state government has cut feed-in tariffs, dismantled its climate change department and introduced planning guidelines to penalise wind and facilitate coal seam gas drilling.

In the Shire, the Sutherland Climate Action Network has continued working with the 100% Renewables campaign to amplify the community's near-unanimous support for the shift to renewable energy.



Sutherland CAN members show off 24 hour baseload solar thermal power at the launch of the Let's Build Big Solar campaign on Cronulla Beach in March.

- In February, Col Ryan, Tassia Kolesnikow and Jonathan Doig went to the national Big Solar Boot Camp at Youthworks on Port Hacking, and were delighted to welcome two new members from this inspiring weekend: green powerhouses Andrew Castle and Sue McKinnon.
- In March thirty members of Sutherland CAN launched the Let's Build Big Solar campaign (pictured) to call on the government to use funds from the carbon price to build big solar power plants and start the shift away from coal power, our biggest source of carbon pollution.
- From March to May, we polled over 430 people across the Shire and found a whopping **89% support government funding for Big Solar power plants.**
- In May Bill and Col Ryan travelled to Canberra with 100% Renewables to present the results of the Big Solar poll to federal politicians and lobby them to support big solar and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation. They had a cordial and productive meeting with federal member for Hughes Craig Kelly, but just a short and terse meeting with Scott Morrison, member for Cook.
- On 5th May we staged a photographic display outside Scott Morrison's office in Cronulla for the international Climate Impacts Day coordinated by 350.org. The exhibition connected the dots between extreme weather, climate change, fossil fuels and renewable energy solutions like big solar baseload electricity.




Tassia Kolesnikow and Bill Ryan with Col Ryan standing in for Scott Morrison MP, connecting the dots from extreme weather to climate change and solutions like big solar power plants. Cronulla, Climate Impacts Day, 5th May 2012.

- In August, Col and Bill travelled 500 km to support the farmers of Boggabri in their fight to protect the Leard State Forest from coal mining. Remarkably this time, they stayed out of police custody!

- This month (September), our indefatigable duo Col and Bill are at it again, leafleting planning minister Brad Hazzard's electorate to support the people of Newcastle's efforts to stop construction of a fourth coal terminal to further expand Australia's deadly coal exports.
- Jonathan's presentation on renewable energy and climate change has reached around 500 people and gained very positive feedback at Probus groups across the Shire. **If you know a group that needs a guest speaker, please get in touch.**

Sutherland CAN meets at 6:45pm on the first Tuesday of the month at Sutherland Library.

The convenor of SCAN is Jonathan Doig 0409 049185
www.SutherlandCAN.org.au

Find us on 

d) Stop Coal Seam Gas! Sutherland *report by Phil Smith*

The Stop CSG Sutherland group has stepped up its action in this past year. Although a relatively small group, its members have been active in

- ♣ Working closely with neighbouring CSG and water catchment community groups.
- ♣ Meeting with politicians: Tony Markham (SCSGS) has spoken to Lee Evans, Member for Heathcote (many times – and he signed the petition opposing CSG exploration and mining); Melanie Gibbons, Member for Menai; and Mark Speakman, Member for Cronulla. He met with Craig Kelly, Member for Hughes and Scott MacDonald, MLC, at the SCSG Illawarra community conference; he has also had a phone conversation with Bill Heffernan on CSG in our area.
- ♣ Communicating concerns and ideas for action through stalls, at railway stations and letterboxing.
- ♣ Selling merchandise (hats and t-shirts) to raise funds.
- ♣ Meeting with Councilors and council staff.
- ♣ Promoting and participating in rallies and events (Newtown rally, HotRodders event at Boys Town, SeaCliff Bridge Walk).
- ♣ Making or supporting submissions opposing drilling and mining in drinking water catchments.
- ♣ Posting signs throughout the Shire (Col Ryan & Brian Johnson have kept this up).

On 20 August, Tony Markham and Phil Smith made a series of recommendations on behalf of SCSGS and SSEC to a specially-convened council meeting. A week later and the full council meeting, many of these were adopted in the council's resolution:

MOTION: (Towell/ Simpson)

- 1. That Council supports a moratorium on Coal Seam Gas exploration and development until it can be proven scientifically that all adverse social and environmental impacts can be successfully avoided or mitigated.*
- 2. That Council supports a total ban of Coal Seam Gas exploration and development in our drinking water catchments (these include Woronora and Warragamba).*
- 3. That Council works with other local councils to oppose Coal Seam Gas mining.*
- 4. That Council works with local community groups in the Sutherland Shire to oppose Coal Seam Gas mining. One such level of support would be to co-host a public meeting with SCSGS on this matter.*
- 5. That Council announce its position publicly on the Council's website and through the media and to State and Commonwealth Governments.*
- 6. That presenters Phil Smith and Tony Markham be thanked for their presentation.*



A collation of photos of the marvelous Stop CSG signs created by Col Ryan



SCSGS has already initiated communication with council regarding the joint development of a brochure and conduct of a public meeting.

SSEC has been greatly supportive of the Stop CSG Sutherland group, and it has provided funding to support the work of the Stop CSG Illawarra group.

The convenor of Stop CSG! Sutherland! is Phil Smith, ph 0412 338 687 info@stop-csg-sutherland.org

e) First National Park: Soon We Will Publish to the World!
report by Bob Crombie

More good news. The former Premier of NSW and now Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Bob Carr, will write the Foreword to our big book, *The First National Park: a Natural for World Heritage*, by Australia's leading authority on national parks, Dr Geoff Mosley. Bob Carr frequently bushwalks in the Royal with friends. He loves it.



Bundeena woodland at the time of changing bark. Many of the gum trees shed their bark annually. The new bark can be very colourful. Photo: Bob Crombie

Upsurge in consciousness around 1870. While our Park was the first of its kind to be officially dedicated as a “National Park” (in 1879) there were other parks elsewhere in the world that were dedicated with similar functions. Four deserve mention.

Yosemite. The Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Sequoia Redwoods were reserved in 1864, by a federal grant, “as a park for public use, resort and recreation”, and ceded to the State of California. It was the first of its kind (national park in function), however, as the responsibility of management of the park was handed over to the State of California, it could not be named as such. It was named Yosemite National Park in 1890.

Yellowstone. Was “... dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people...” in March 1872. It was *popularly* known as Yellowstone National Park, and it was under the control of the Secretary of the Interior who was to make rules and regulations for the “... reservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, mineral deposits, natural condition [and it] shall provide against the wanton destruction of the fish and game found within the park and against their capture or destruction for the purposes of merchandise or profit...”

Although the park’s use was for a national park, there was no funding until 20 June 1878 when an Appropriations Bill of \$10,000 was passed, and in that Bill Yellowstone was designated Yellowstone National Park for the first time.

Mackinac. This island in Michigan USA was set aside as a national public park in 1875. It differed from other American parks in that it was for 115 years a military fort, which between 1812 and 1815, was fought over by the British and the US until 1815. As well as being scenic, it plays an important role in American History. The Federal Government declared Mackinac to be “dedicated and set aside as a national public park, or ground, for health, comfort and pleasure, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” in March 1875. It was popularly known as Mackinac National Park. The military remained there, administering the park between 1875 and 1895 when the Federal Government withdrew its troops and handed the park over to the State of Michigan. It was renamed Mackinac Island State Park and seems to have faded into obscurity.

Other Parks. Australia followed the US with National Park (Royal) in 1879, Belair (1891), Tower Hill (1892) and Kuring-gai Chase (1894). New Zealand reserved Tongariro (1887) and Egmont (1900), Canada reserved Banff Hot Springs Reserve (1885), Waterton Lakes (1895), Yoho (1886), Glacier (1886) and Rocky Mountain Park (1887).

The Modern Worldwide Movement. What is in no doubt is that from around the 1870s, a movement for the reservation of lands in the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand led eventually to the development of the modern national park system in those countries and later the rest of the world. Our book will tell the story of the special significance of The Royal Reserves (Royal and Heathcote National Parks and Garawarra State Conservation Area) in this history that makes them worthy of world heritage listing.

The convenor of First National Park is Bob Walshe ph 9528 0444.

f) “Heathcote Ridge” (West Menai) report by Allan Green,
President of West Menai Action Group (WMAG)

The Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council’s ‘response to submissions’ has attempted to address the concerns raised in the large number of responses to their 2011 development proposal, the vast majority of which were in opposition. In addition the DPI had made a strong recommendation to reduce the size of the development and made a list of recommendations for change and asked for further information and GLALC has attempted to respond to these.

An examination of the GLALC response to submissions by reference number reveals that many submissions have not been fully responded to.

It is apparent from the documents available on the DPI website that the GLALC is making a strong pitch to the NSW Government with specific mention of its development goals and statements like ‘this proposal **will assist the NSW State Government** to meet housing and job targets’ and ‘ticks a lot of boxes **for the Government** to boost job creation and ease housing shortages’. Given recent press coverage of ministerial statements, GLALC are trying hard to sing the government’s song.

The proposal has been reduced by 15% in area which translates to 300 less homes and the employment land reduced from 76 Ha to 51.4 Ha. We are told that this has resulted in a 40% reduction in the traffic predicted to be generated. This is hard to swallow when employment land has been reduced by only 27% and the number of houses by a mere 11%. Similarly we are told the number of employees will now be 4700 which is a whopping reduction of between 54% and 69% from the previous estimate by GLALC consultant Urbis of 10200 to 15200 employees. An earlier estimate was 30000 employees when retail areas were included. It is difficult

not to think that much of the estimation supporting this proposal is very 'rubbery'.

Aside from other very flexible figures the GLALC make the claim that the new 50 Ha (9.6%) increase in the conservation area is a 'net gain for the environment'. Clearly GLALC has no real commitment to conservation when they view the clearing of 283Ha of bushland habitat as a gain for the environment.

The whole proposal still poses many unanswered questions such as the details of the Voluntary Planning Agreements to be entered into with respect to provision of important infrastructure – like the East West Road link – and ongoing services – like the weed management proposed to be undertaken and other conservation management services to be provided presumably forever.

WMAG remains opposed to this proposal and supportive of individual GLALC members who also oppose it.

WMAG also notes that there is no consideration of the impact of this development on the area specifically as koala habitat which sightings in the past and recently establish it to be. Recently the koala was listed as *vulnerable* under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), effective as of the 2nd May 2012. The consequence of federal protection of the Koala under the EPBC Act means that any development or action that has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on important koala populations or their habitats may require federal environmental approval.

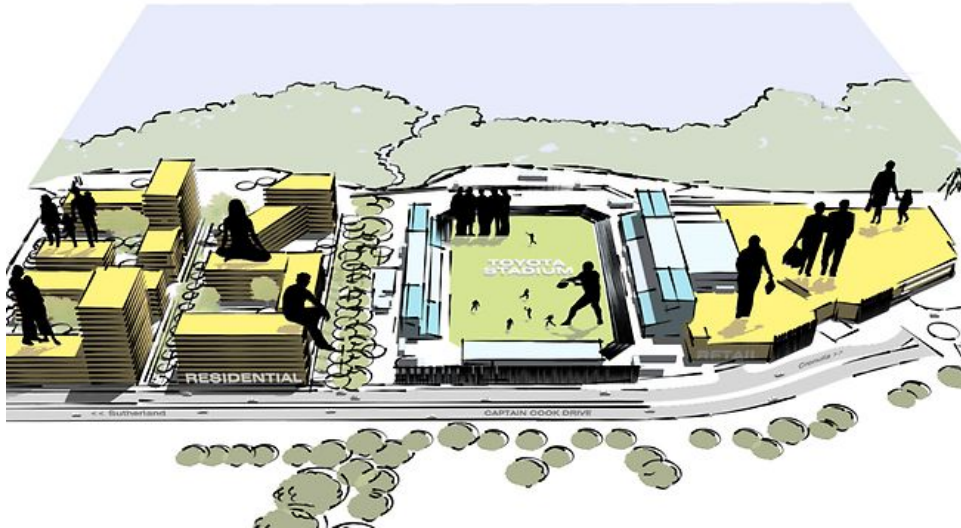
Whilst GLALC may be focussed on providing more homes for the growing human population it seems they remain committed to causing the loss of homes and shrinking populations of other Australians.

The convenor of West Menai Action Group is Allan Green ph 9543 5038 www.ssec.org.au/ridgeaction

g) Planning Futures *report by Roger Bramble.*

In this just completed SSEC financial year we saw some worrying trends established within the Sutherland Shire. Among numerous mid scale residential unit development approvals were two large scale and region altering developments. Both the Kirrawee Brick Pit development and The Sharks multi stage large scale developments will impact upon the Sutherland Shire forever in a way that has never been experienced before for local residential development.

These projects must be highlighted for the importance and scale of their impact and in the precedent they have set in our local Government area.



The \$300m development recommended for approval by NSW Government in July 2012

Once planning laws and Government allow such development within suburban areas there is almost never a return to prior lower density states or more open land use potentialities. Surrounding land use and population densities instead tend to follow such examples with higher and higher densities resulting. The residents of Sutherland Shire as of the planning approvals of year 2011-12 will now have such mega city like developments in our region.

One of the key designations of the world's mega cities is the density of their population. Larger, higher and more isolating structures are built over land which will be locked up in such developments for near on centuries and the human densities and all associated impacts and issues also get higher. To some these structures are pretty at least when they are new but they age rapidly into greying concrete eyesores. Just like the mega cities of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Mexico City, and others these developments set the foundation for massive future social degradation and decaying regional benefit. Do we really want to see the Sutherland Shire with block after block of high density concrete towers like in the world's mega cities?

In 2012-13 SSEC will continue to do its best to display the massive detriments of such large scale density developments. As residents of the Sutherland Shire we surely do not want the developments and issues of the Mega city right upon us.

h) Port Hacking and Hacking River *report by Michael McInerney*

Seven years ago the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre began a campaign to save the heads of the bays of the Hacking, North West Arm in particular. Naturally an environmental plan was required as a prerequisite and the New South Wales Government agreed to fund the plan 50/50 with Sutherland Shire Council.

Progress however was put on hold when the state govt. realised that the Port Hacking Plan of Management was quite out of date and needed revision. This was estimated to take 12 months but in fact it took over 3 years to complete, and emerged with the new title of Port Hacking Integrated Environmental Management Plan.

Much had also occurred in State government, with several changes of leader and a new Minister for the Environment. The promise of 50/50 had been forgotten and pressure had to be exerted again from the beginning.

After disposing of much red tape, funding for an Estuary Management Plan for North West Arm was approved by DEET. early in 2012, and the firm of BMT WBM was awarded the contract for the preliminary scoping study for sediment contamination and type. Sampling to a depth of 5 metres began in July/August and laboratory results will soon be available.

Once the EMP has been completed there should be no further delay in remediation of North West Arm, with the heads of other bays to follow.

Michael McInerney represents Sutherland Shire Environment Centre on SSC's Port Hacking Management Panel.

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

- Sutherland Shire Environment Centre currently supports the following local groups: Sutherland Climate Action Network (climate change), First National Park (world heritage classification of Royal National Park), SharkBike (local bicycle user group), West Menai Action Group (West Menai), Stop-CSG-Sutherland (Coal Seam Gas) and from time to time informal groups of residents. Our support includes financial sponsorship of events, provision of equipment, setting up/hosting of websites, networking, wording of petitions, artwork for brochures, etc. Access to banking facilities (including PayPal and credit card), incorporation and our Public Gift Fund (charitable) status are all valuable assets for the local community to draw upon when needed.

- In October 2011 we celebrated our 20th Anniversary with a sit down dinner for 300 at Gynea Trade Union Club. Guest speaker was Jack Munday. As well as being a rare “get together”, the event was also an invaluable opportunity for networking between many who otherwise might rarely meet face to face. Congratulations to Bob Walshe and Phil Smith for their efforts in organising this highly successful event.

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

- The results that we have achieved (both in terms of our much improved financial position as well as our environmental achievements) speak to our success in this area. We will continue to embrace suitable new technologies as they arise.

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

- The recent council elections have provided an opportunity for us to form new relationships with Council. Sutherland Shire Environment Centre has worked well and often closely with the Sutherland Shire Council and looks forward to this good relationship continuing.
- Michael McInerney remains our representative on the Port Hacking Management Panel and continues to work extremely hard to ensure the Hacking River receives the necessary attention. The previous council expressed its support for the First National Park campaign to achieve World Heritage Listing of Royal National Park, and its concerns about Coal Seam Gas mining and well as long wall coal mining underneath the Woronora Dam catchment. We hope this support will continue under the leadership of the new councillors.
- Sutherland Shire Environment Centre has close links with NPA, Rivers SOS, Otford Protection Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Total Environment Centre, Oatley Flora and Fauna Society, Lock The Gate Alliance, Stop CSG! Illawarra, Save Dharawal, and Bicycle NSW. We remain a member of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

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

The primary focus this year has been to manage all our finances in order to minimise our exposure to debt and to take advantage of funds made available for suitable environmental projects.

Treasurer's Report

The 2011-12 Financial Year saw a small reduction in net income to \$46,664 as a result of slight increases in income offset by a slight larger rise in expenditure for the Centre when compared to the previous year. The increase in income to \$132,258 resulted from increases in Rent Received and Fund Raising Event & Sundry Income, while the increases in expenditure to \$85,593 largely resulted from increases in Consulting Fees, Project Expenditure, Fund Raising Activities which were somewhat offset by a reduction in Interest Payments/Bank Fees and Rates & Strata fees. This is a sound result achieved on the back of continued generous donations from individuals and organisations coupled with what is now a net inflow of funds associated with the Office premises owned by the Environment Centre.

Of significant note in this year's Financial Statements are the movements in the Balance Sheet as a result of a reduction, via a partial repayment, in the mortgage that the Environment Centre holds. This resulted in the total amount outstanding decreasing from the previous loan amount of \$105,000 to a little over \$61,000. This repayment and resulting reduction loan amount was undertaken as part of the longer term strategy which is being followed with the aim of making the Centre more financially independent.

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

SUMMARY. The Centre continues with its aim to become more self-sufficient and rely less on the generous donation of a major donor. This on-going goal to generate "sustainable, long term" income is currently aligned with the income generated from these rented premises.

However, there is still a way to go to ensure full self sufficiency Centre and until this is achieved we continue to appreciate the generosity of a key donor.

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 2012 the accounts of the Centre showed an operating surplus of \$46,664 compared to an operating surplus in the previous year of \$20,352.

INCOME. Total Income for the year was \$132,258, a slight increase when compared to the previous year's amount of \$128,640.

Items of note within Income of the Centre included:

- a small decrease in Subscription Income and Donations;
- a small increase in Rent received; and,
- an increase in income generated from Fund Raising Activities and Sundry Sources of Income

Again, as in past years, we continue to operate financially with the generous donations of individuals and organisations and the time devoted by a solid management team. It goes without saying that without such support the Centre could not afford to continue to operate as effectively as it does.

EXPENDITURE. Total Expenditure for the year of \$85,594 represents an increase over the previous financial year of \$78,288.

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

- Consultancy Fees – associated with services provided to the Centre
- Environmental Projects & Fund Raising Events - which show an increase in expenditure over prior year reflecting larger expenditure associated with major activities
- Interest – reduction due to lower loan amount outstanding compared to prior 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 again taken the opportunity to apply money it was holding in bank accounts to pay down a portion of the total loan amount to be refinanced. This saw a reduction in the size of the loan from \$105,000 to slightly more than \$61,000.

Our Bank balances (in excess of \$27,000) remain healthy providing sound footings for any Campaign support or other activities.

John Nelson

September 2012 #

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

**FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
30 JUNE 2012**

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

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

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2012**

2011 \$	Note	2012 \$
	INCOME	
	OTHER INCOME	
918.09	Subscriptions	863.55
65,249.80	Donations	64,184.06
338.60	Interest Received	141.12
23.55	Fund Raising Events & Sundry Income	3,840.95
62,110.22	Gross profit from rental operations	63,228.29
<u>128,640.26</u>		<u>132,257.97</u>
	EXPENDITURE	
517.04	Bank Charges	387.76
24,999.97	Consultants Fees	30,000.00
1,186.00	Depreciation	855.00
1,000.00	Donations	-
300.10	Electricity	373.49
382.81	Education and Seminars	-
7,083.68	Environmental Projects	12,327.63
-	Fund Raising Activities	4,352.63
48.00	General Expenses	40.00
5,000.04	Honorarium	5,000.04
1,444.14	Insurance	272.72
12,873.90	Interest	8,400.21
677.64	Meeting Expenses	917.77
402.30	Postage	154.28
143.55	Printing & Stationery	394.00
15,805.26	Rates & Strata Fees	16,102.16
4,939.31	Rent	5,094.00
383.86	Subscriptions & Licences	167.45
1,100.86	Telephone & Internet	754.73
<u>78,288.46</u>		<u>85,593.87</u>
50,351.80	Profit before income tax	46,664.10
50,351.80	Profit for the year	46,664.10
380,648.93	Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	431,000.73
<u>431,000.73</u>	Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	<u>477,664.83</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 2012**

2011 \$	Note	2012 \$
	MEMBERS' FUNDS	
431,000.73	Retained earnings	477,664.83
<u>431,000.73</u>	TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	<u>477,664.83</u>
	Represented by:	
	ASSETS	
	CURRENT ASSETS	
285.04	Cash on Hand	273.24
8,042.30	Public Gift Fund	1,907.42
19,025.70	Main Account	25,591.07
1,778.00	Security Deposit	1,778.00
1,074.66	Other Debtors	156.55
2,547.00	Prepayments	250.00
928.64	GST on acquisitions	1,045.11
<u>33,681.34</u>	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>31,001.39</u>
	NON CURRENT ASSETS	
	Fixed Assets	
506,353.33	Buildings - at Cost	506,353.33
23,696.13	Furniture & Fittings - at Cost	23,696.13
(20,407.00)	Less Prov'n for Depreciation	(21,262.00)
<u>3,289.13</u>		<u>2,434.13</u>
<u>509,642.46</u>	Total Fixed Assets	<u>508,787.46</u>
<u>509,642.46</u>	TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	<u>508,787.46</u>
<u>543,323.80</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>539,788.85</u>
	LIABILITIES	
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
1,875.82	GST on supplies	992.41
5,175.85	Rents Received in Advance	-
<u>7,051.67</u>	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>992.41</u>
	NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	
105,271.40	Loan - Commonwealth Bank	61,131.61
<u>105,271.40</u>	TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>61,131.61</u>
112,323.07	TOTAL LIABILITIES	62,124.02
<u>431,000.73</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>477,664.83</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 2012**

1 Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act New South Wales. 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 2012**

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 GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

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

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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 2012, profit and loss 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.

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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 2012 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 17 day of September 2012