



# *Annual Report*

## *2016–17*



*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 2016-17*

Jenni Gormley (Chairperson)

John Nelson (Treasurer)

Tassia Kolesnikow (Secretary)

Kelly Abeleven

Roger Bramble

Jonathan Doig (Climate Change)

Lyn McLean

Phil Smith (Environmental Education)

*Development Officer*

Graeme Booth

## **Statement of Purpose**

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

### *Statement of Functions*

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

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

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

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

## **Chairman's Report**

Each year when I have sat down to write this short report on our activities for the year I have started with a feeling that nothing has happened.

There is so much “bad” around us now, so much attack on our environment, overdevelopment, too many people, too many cars, that it is easy to feel overwhelmed and that we are achieving little.

So it is good to step back, take a broader view, and looking back over the whole year, see that we have done much towards achieving our priorities.

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre exists to support the community in its efforts to protect its local environment and bioregions and to carry out environmental education programs and initiatives. This Annual Report highlights some of the activities we, you, have initiated and been involved with through the year to achieve this purpose. We are fortunate that with prudent management we will continue to have the resources to perform this role for our community.

Scholarships, websites, social media, film festivals, petitions, flyers, posters, protesting, visiting politicians, providing the structures to facilitate groups to receive government and corporate grants, hire venues, engage volunteers. Making submissions to government, liaising and forming coalitions with other environmental groups, we have done and will continue to do it all.

Tonight, I step down after serving as chairperson of SSEC for nine years. It is sadly ironic that I took on the mantle of chairperson in 2008, at the request of our patron and founder Bob Walshe, after he suffered his first stroke.

After his recovery Bob seemed content that I continue to act as his “deputy”. I have missed him very much the past few years as he slowed down in his writing activities. It was a privilege to be asked to introduce him earlier this year, when we held our tribute to him and Bill Ryan at GyMEA Tradies.

The Centre has changed considerably over the past decade. We now have a strong emphasis on global issues and how we can act locally about them; climate change and a desire to reduce emissions, whether from the cessation of coal mining to the installation of solar panels, takes up a lot of our interest. But we also continue to act to protect our local bushland in our campaigns for Spring Gully, Royal National Park and raising community awareness of the need to protect the trees and bushland in our Shire.

In my time as chairperson, I have been fortunate to be supported by a wonderful group of people; not only current and past board members, but

also the general membership. You are a great mix of people, some of whom have been with the organisation since its inception, others who are more recent members. All of you are committed to environmental protection and to how that commitment can be played out in Sutherland Shire.

While I will no longer be chairperson, I will be continuing in my role as Executive Officer and I am looking forward my continued work with you and for you for some time yet.

I commend this Annual Report to you. It is yet another example of how Sutherland Shire Environment Centre functions and how it can continue to support future generations of Sutherland Shire residents to protect and improve their local natural environment.

*Jenni Gormley*

September 2017

## Achieving our Purpose in 2016-17

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

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

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

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### 2. *Establish efficient communication processes with the community*

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

**Facebook/Twitter/Instagram** Our social media accounts have been much more active over 2016-17.

**Eventbrite** has been widely used as a means of inviting members and non-members to our events. This platform provides for easy sharing through email and social media, as well as collecting easily accessible

records and contact details for attendees. Eventbrite also streamlines the collection of payments for event tickets if applicable, or, as in the case of our Shire Rides program, allows for completion of a “sign on” sheet for insurance purposes.

**ActionNetwork** has been utilised for online petitions which have attracted some attention in the community. Petitions were created in regard to

- World Heritage Listing of Royal National Park
- Concern about new tree removal laws proposed by council
- Construction of Sutherland Cronulla Active Transport network

Petitions are not only a way of conveying community concern about an issue to decision makers, they are an efficient way of contacting those concerned citizens who may be interested in further involvement with the campaign.

**Newsletter / eco-news.** Although *Eco-news* is now only once a week following a reduction in publication frequency of St George and Sutherland Shire Leader, the actual number of stories has increased. Eco-news provides a valuable resource for residents of Sutherland Shire who are interested in environmental matters, bringing all relevant news stories into a single searchable database.

Rather than publication of a regular newsletter, items of interest and news of coming events have been shared via email and social media as required.

### 3. Develop and conduct education initiatives

- **University of Wollongong Scholarship.**



The 2016 SSEC UOW Scholarship was awarded to Rob Dixon.

In his application Rob outlined his research project:

*My honours thesis is focused on mangrove and saltmarsh dynamics in Lake Illawarra. The lake is responding the massive perturbation of entrance training completed in 2007. This has caused the tidal range to increase dramatically within the lake at a rate of 10mm per year. As mangroves are suited to develop*

*where tidal inundation is frequent, the increasing tidal range has led to their expansion upslope and into areas formally occupied by saltmarsh vegetation.*

*Whilst no lakes of similar structure to lake Illawarra exist in the Sutherland Shire, the increasing tidal range is analogous to sea level rise, a known cause of mangrove*



*expansion into saltmarsh. However, the rate of tidal increase is 5 times that of sea level rise. For this reason, my research can be used as a proxy for accelerated mangrove expansion due to sea level rise in the open estuaries of the Sutherland Shire.*

*My research has highlighted that mangroves are expanding at an increasing rate in many areas of the lake, however, not all areas are affected. Other factors such as exposure to waves, presence of seaweed wrack and gradient of the shoreline seem to limit mangrove expansion. Analysis of these factors could help identify areas most and least at risk of mangrove expansion within the estuaries of the Sutherland shire for monitoring purposes.*

*In my discussion I am hoping to review the success of removing mangroves from saltmarsh high conservation, particularly those with endangered species and nesting migratory birds.*

Despite extending our scholarship to students in all UOW faculties , we continue to be disappointed with the low number of applications.

Over the coming 12 months, the scholarship sub-committee will consider how our resources can best be used, both to assist local students in their study of environmental matters and also to promote SSEC to the community.

- **Speaking 4 the Planet.**



This year, Speaking 4 the Planet was held in four local government areas. Speaking 4 the Planet is a public speaking, drama and art competition for high school students. The focus of the competition is the UN's World Environment Day theme. For 2017, the theme was Connecting People to Nature.

On 19 May, students came together at Chevalier College to speak and perform on the importance of connecting with nature. Good for individuals, good for communities, good for the planet!



On World Environment Day, 5 June, students from 7 high schools competed in the council chambers at The Hills Shire Council. Students enjoy speaking and performing in a space that is so important for local decision making. The quality of the speeches and performances would easily convince an audience that, one day, some of them may be councillors!



For five years, S4P has been held in the Sutherland Shire. This year, it was at Kirrawee High School and impromptu art was an extra component of the competition.



In the middle of June, Casual Powerhouse Arts Centre was the venue for the Liverpool Speaking 4 the Planet competition. This event had music, poetry, drama, art, public speaking and a video made by a student on the local environment. Mahnoor Laiq, a student at Malek Fahd Hoxton Park, won the prepared speech section of the competition. She delivered her talk to the full council and a round of applause from the gallery!



SSEC also supported a pilot program for primary schools. The inaugural Kids 4 the Planet was held at Lakemba Public School. Insights, passion and humour filled the speeches and drama. And the artworks were of such a high standard that they would fetch good money in the community!





In late October this year, another Speaking 4 the Planet competition in Armidale.

Here's what Paul from Paddy Pallin (one of our long-term sponsors) said about the event:

*We love S4P because of the way that it fosters community engagement. The competition focuses the minds and actions of students, schools, local councils and community organisations on real world issues – environmental, social, political – that will affect students' and societies' choices in the future. Through S4P students are given a voice in the debate about what is needed to support a healthy planet, they are able to make a local contribution to some truly important global issues.*

Finally, while he was in Vancouver, SSEC helped Phil to attend the World Environmental Education Congress to promote Speaking 4 the Planet. He gave a short presentation and spoke to many people from around the world. He also handed out fliers and a specially designed card.





An Arts-based competition for primary and high school students, helping to strengthen skills in advocating for healthy communities and a healthy planet.

[www.speaking4thepanel.org.au](http://www.speaking4thepanel.org.au)




Speaking 4 the Planet ignited in me a passion for the cause and perhaps a career path. Student, Baulkham Hills High School

Speaking 4 the Planet creates opportunities for young people to ask difficult questions and offer potential solutions which may benefit the planet and all of us now and in the future. Paul Tiffin, Paddy Pallin, Miranda

More information:  
Phil Smith +61 412 338 687  
[info@speaking4thepanel.org.au](mailto:info@speaking4thepanel.org.au)

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

##### **a. Shire Bicycle User Group (Shire BUG)**

*report by Tassia Kolesnikow*

After a long wait, it's been two years after the public submission period closed on the draft plans for Sutherland Cronulla Active Transport Link (SCATL), the State Government presented its recommendations to Sutherland council on July 17. SSEC was credited by council staff for helping gain 'in principal support' for the project by council with an online petition entitled "Get Moving" with close to 500 signatures in 6 days asking councillors to support this critical infrastructure.

The route has been improved, with close to half of the 11 K trail now within the rail corridor and the promise of a bridge over Gannon's Road in the near future when the road is widened. According to council, there are still some minor funding details to sort out but there is a chance that building could begin as early as the end of 2018.

**b. Shire Rides**

Early in 2017 a program of monthly rides was implemented, with the goal of increasing awareness of less trafficked routes throughout the Shire and nearby areas.

Most rides have been between Sutherland and Cronulla and usually follow the “SharkBike” route along Karimbla Road and Denman Avenue. This is also seen as a way of promoting awareness of the the SCATL (see above).

Rides are promoted on Facebook and by email using Eventbrite. Participants register through Eventbrite, which obviates the need for paper “sign on” sheets at the start of the ride as well as providing a record of participants’ contact details.

**c. First National Park**

*report by Dr Geoff Mosley*

Our effort to obtain World Heritage listing for the Royal Reserves, launched in 2012, has now reached the five-year mark, so, as you can imagine, we are very keen to see some real progress with this important mission.

On the home front the World Heritage campaign has continued with the preparation of a video (you can view this on our website [firstnationalpark.org.au](http://firstnationalpark.org.au)), circulation of a petition and talks by Bob Crombie. Also very welcome was the passage of new resolutions of support for the World Heritage listing by the Wollongong City Council (in July, 2017) and the Sutherland Shire Council (in August 2017). These also acknowledged the efforts made by SSEC members, with special tribute being paid to our patron and founder, Bob Walshe, for his efforts in commencing the campaign.

Unfortunately, the pace of assessment of the World Heritage nomination at the Government level has been disappointing. The federal Government, that is responsible for Australia’s Tentative World Heritage list and for World Heritage nominations, has left the task of assessment almost entirely to the New South Wales Government that between 2014 and 2016 commissioned four reports by consultant firms. These only became available to us in 2017 as a result of freedom of information requests by Dr Mehreen Faruqui MLC. The main point to emerge from these reports was the claim that the theme most relevant to the Royal Reserves of significance in relation to ‘The Evolution of Conservation Philosophy and Protected Areas’ did not exist in the existing World Heritage system.

Fortunately, at other end of the world, this obstacle was cleared when in July 2017 the World Heritage Committee at its 41st meeting included the English Lake District on the World Heritage List for values that included

its importance in conservation and protected area history. As a result, that theme does indeed exist and the way is now clear for the federal Government to include the Royal Reserves on Australia's Tentative World Heritage List. This would provide at least a year for the two Governments to use all the information gathered over the last five years for the preparation of an actual World Heritage nomination.

#### **d. Sunny Shire**

*report by Jonathan Prendergast*

The first round of Bulk Buys are now closed. [Registrations for Bulk Buy 2 are now open!](#)

#### **Background**

It's been an idea for over a year, but with the help of SSEC, and meeting Jay in April, we finally launched the website and our first project in May.

We have big plans, but it is hard to get buy in from stakeholders when all you have is an idea. So we thought, let's start with a solar bulk buy. Help 10-20 shire residents get solar, then do the next project. And at least we can show some track record and demonstrate the purpose and potential of a Sutherland Shire Community Energy Group.

#### **Bulk Buy Update (June 26, 2017)**

We launched the bulk buy at the Bundeena-Maianbar Solar Group meeting on Wednesday 24 May 2017, and online the next day. Within 72 hours we had 17 registrations, 13 from Bundeena-Maianbar, and interest across the Shire continued to grow. Figures as at the end of June were:

<b>Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Solar Capacity</b>
Total Interest	59	~276 kW
Registered Bulk Buy 1	52	~ 246 kW
Received Quote	40	221 kW
Paid Deposit/Confirmed Proceeding	30	162 kW
Installed	20	102 kW



Bulk Buy 2 now has 52 registrations. This fills the quota for September installs, and most of October. We are aiming to get up to 100 by end of August, with installs from September to December.

Sunny Shire help to walk Shire residents through the solar power maze, with users sharing their knowledge about this relatively new technology with the community.

For more information visit the website [sunnyshire.org.au](http://sunnyshire.org.au) or check out our Facebook page.

What a great community effort. It's great to see more panels on roofs.

Here are some photos from the bulk buy installations so far:





### ***e. Save Our Shire***

As in previous years, the “Save Our Shire” Facebook page continues to be a hub for Shire residents concerned about inappropriate development and consequent environmental damage. This forum is a useful means of communication with the wider Shire community and is frequently used to raise awareness of controversial Council activities and intentions, or to encourage residents to contribute to the variety of submissions and plans our governments have exhibited.

### ***f. Gandangara West Menai/Heathcote Ridge Development***

We are continuing to monitor planning decisions in this area.



## **g. Sutherland Climate Action Network**

report by Jonathan Doig. [scan@sutherlandcan.org.au](mailto:scan@sutherlandcan.org.au)

Sutherland CAN had a busy year with newly launched Sunny Shire joining Solar Bundeena Maianbar promoting community solar, ongoing protests against coal and coal seam gas and even a film festival.

Col and Bill Ryan continued the **weekly vigil for 2 hours every Friday at Martin Place** raising awareness of Santos fracking in the Pilliga and more recently opposing Adani's Galilee Basin coal mine.

They and others also attended the **monthly vigil outside AGL HQ near Circular Quay** putting pressure on AGL to close coal seam gas wells at Camden which has made local residents ill from fugitive gas emissions. A new 30,000 home housing development near existing CSG wells at Camden will make the problem worse.



This year we celebrate the birth of Sunny Shire, which joins Solar Bundeena Maianbar in helping promote renewable energy to the community:

- Solar Bundeena Maianbar, led by Judy and Greg Walker
- Sunny Shire, led by Jonathan Prendergast

Both groups promote residential and community solar projects within the Shire.

Solar Bundeena Maianbar arranged a talk on Nov 2, 2016 about the Evergen battery system, letterboxed in March for the Solar Citizen's

successful campaign for a more favourable feed-in tariff, & contacted Sutherland Shire Council to push for solar in the Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Sunny Shire was launched in Bundeena on May 24th with an information meeting for over 50 residents and a second information meeting was held in Sutherland on June 7 to launch a bulk buy PV installation. A hundred homes have booked so far, and we've installed 150kW of solar in 30 shire households. There are still spots in [Bulk Buy 2](#) running to the end of the year.



Sutherland CAN ran four 'Power for Change' events to apply consumer pressure to the three big electricity providers to transition to renewable energy. These included a Sutherland Farmer's market stall on April 29 and 'Complaints night' at Stapleton House on May 18. Members of SCAN from Bundeena had a 'Complaints event' on April 17 and a stall at the Bundeena Markets on May 7.

Around twenty Sutherland CAN members participated in Stop Adani-related actions by attending protests against WestPac and Commonwealth banks and locking on to Downer sites. Members from Bundeena met with MP Craig Kelly for 2 hours to discuss the Adani mine.

Col and Bill Ryan, Peter and Liz Donley and others attended the weekly vigil at AGL headquarters.



In August we held the inaugural the Shire Enviro Film Festival, screening three excellent documentaries *Cultivating Murder*, *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* and *Guarding the Galilee* at Hazelhurst and Cronulla Cinemas.



Judy and Greg made a submission to the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund Draft Strategic Fund 2017–22, and also sent it to Luke Foley through Maryanne Stuart, Labor candidate for Heathcote.

Tassia Kolesnikow presented to View Clubs and the Sutherland Wildflower Society about climate change and renewable energy.

### September 2016:

- Col and Bill Ryan and Murray Scott appeared in Newcastle Court re Breakfree Newcastle action. The case was adjourned to Downing Centre Court where they received Section 10's - no conviction recorded and no fines!
- Members attended a Knitting Nannas action to issue a citizens' arrest of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at his Edgecliff office for "wilful neglect and pandering to mining interests over public health and welfare".
- SSEC Life membership awarded to Bill and Colin Ryan.
- Solidarity protest at Citibank HQ near Town Hall re Citibank funding of US DAPL Pipeline (the Standing Rock campaign).

### March 2017:

- Members joined Greenpeace action at Commbank HQ Darling Harbour to stop Commbank funding Adani Coal mine.
- Cloudcatcher Media filmed Bill and Colin travelling to Martin Place for [Sacrifice Zone](#), a documentary covering the campaign to stop Santos Coal Seam Gas operations in the Pilliga area.
- Members protest at Commbank Martin Place re funding Adani.
- March in March Sydney protesting government ongoing support for fossil fuels.

**April 2017:**

- Celebrated with Knitting Nannas at Martin Place the announcement by Westpac not to fund Adani coal mine.
- Attended Stop CSG stall at Addison Road markets Marrickville.

**May 2017:**

- Supported Greenpeace action placing huge banner on Bridge at Darling Harbour highlighting Commbank's apparent support for Adani mine.
- Joined Nannas delivering thousands of submissions against Santos in the Pilliga to NSW Planning Dept.
- Members in action with Galilee Blockade at Downer EDI HQ Ryde, spent the morning welcoming Downer staff to work with cupcakes and flyers that spell out Downer's plans to build Adani's coal mine. Downer company reacted by closing their Sydney and Brisbane offices for the day.
- Col Ryan participated in a Greenpeace action to shut down the Newcastle coal loader. Sixteen were arrested placing a 75m banner on a coal pile.

**June 2017:**

- Bill Ryan and Bob Walshe were celebrated as environmental heroes in an event at Tradies organised by Senator Lee Rhiannon and SSEC.
- Members held a protest outside Miranda Commbank calling on the bank not to fund the Adani mine. By coincidence Scott Morrison was in a nearby food court so Matt Baker and his 3-year-old son Liam took the opportunity to give him a message: "don't bank on coal", as [reported](#) in *The Leader*.
- Bill Ryan supporting Galilee Blockade placed a lock on gates at Downer EDI facility Silverwater. The action was filmed by SBS The Feed as part of a mini doco [Veteran Activist](#) covering opposition to the Adani mine.

**July 2017:**

- Bill and Col attended SOS Students of Sustainability camp at Newcastle and took part in the related action of occupying Commbank Branches in the area. Commbank closed down 11 of their branches on the day as a result. Action was to stop Commbank plans to fund the Adani mine.
- Joined Stop Adani crew occupying Commbank HQ Sydney. Putting pressure on Commbank again re Adani mine.
- Members supporting Galilee Blockade purchased shares in Downer EDI to attend the AGM raising awareness among shareholders of the damage Adani mine will create.

**August 2017:**

- Members attended the Knitting Nannas four-day conference at Narrabri, witnessing the damage done by CSG in the area, talking to affected farmers and visiting various Santos installation already in place.

**Sep 2017:**

- Sutherland CAN filled a table of ten at the sold-out Stop Adani Summit at Paddington Town Hall where over 350 people came together to plan the next stages of the campaign.



### ***h. Spring Gully Protection Group***

*report by Mark da Silva*

The past year has been a festival for lawyers. The appeals against development refusal by Sutherland Shire Council of the proposed Bundeena Coast Eco-Lodge for the former Scout land and an ancillary application for an asset protection zone (fire break) on the adjoining unmade road reserve remain bogged down in the courts. The appeals have been in Court since May 2015.

Critical to the outcome of the appeals will be the decision by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as to whether they will grant road access to the proposed eco-lodge through the Royal National Park past the opening stretch of the coast track. NPWS received over two thousand objections during public exhibition of the proposal earlier in the year.

At the core of the dispute are the ecological impacts of the developer's plan to clear critically endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia scrub, which is habitat to a significant population of Eastern pygmy possum, including a large area of the dense and ancient bloodwood mallee, as well remove as over four hundred mature native trees, many hollow bearing.

Spring Gully is one of the most biodiverse areas within the Royal National Park. In 2016 The Office of Environment and Heritage wrote that "...Spring

Gully includes an unusually rich mosaic of Endangered Ecological Communities [EECs]...” David Keith, Professor of Botany, UNSW and Eureka Science Award recipient, has identified six EECs that are at risk of impact from the proposal. Dr Martin Schulz has identified seventeen threatened species potentially impacted by the proposal.

Despite the assurances given by the former Minister for the Environment in 2015 that the NSW Government would act swiftly to incorporate the six hectares of unmade roads in Spring Gully into the Royal National Park, and despite the former Minister’s assurance to the NSW Parliament in 2016 that the Government would be adding the land to the Park, no action has been taken to date.

We continue to gratefully receive the indispensable advice of EDO NSW who have been assisting our campaign for over four years. Whilst the trees and local ecosystem remains we will continue to campaign to save Spring Gully and protect the Royal National Park, buoyed by growing community support. To keep up to date please join our mailing list at [www.springgully.org](http://www.springgully.org)

## **i. Free Trade**

*report by Phil Smith*

SSEC continues to support AFTINET. Perhaps the best summary of where things are up to with the Trans Pacific Partnership is a recent letter from Dr Pat Randal, the AFTINET coordinator.

### ***Sydney TPP revival meeting outcome vindicates community concerns***

*Trade negotiators from 11 of the original 12 TPP countries met in Sydney from August 28-30 for their third set of talks to see if the TPP can be revived without the US, aiming to complete talks by November this year. The 11 countries are Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam.*

*AFTINET only had five days’ notice of the time and place of the talks, but we were able to organise a protest addressed by ACTU President Ged Kearney, and speakers from the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, ActionAid and Greenpeace. See photos here.*

*Before the meeting Trade Minister Steve Ciobo was leading the charge for endorsement of the TPP with minimum changes to the text. This was even though opposition from a broad range of Australian community groups meant an Australian Senate inquiry refused to endorse the TPP, and the Australian Parliament has not passed the implementing legislation.*

*Community groups oppose the TPP because it gives pharmaceutical companies stronger monopolies on costly biologic medicines, delaying*



*the availability of cheaper forms of those medicines. It entrenches copyright monopolies at the expense of consumers. It gives special rights to foreign investors to bypass national courts and sue governments for millions of dollars in unfair international tribunals over changes to domestic laws. It would also restrict future governments from re-regulating essential services like energy or financial services, despite demonstrated market failures, and it would result in more vulnerable temporary migrant workers, without testing if local workers were available. In short, the TPP is a US-driven agenda for greater corporate rights at the expense of people's rights.*

*Many of the 11 other governments only agreed to this agenda because the US demanded it in return for access to US markets. They will not give a free ride to the US without that market access, and nor should Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam said before the meeting that, without the US, the terms of the TPP should be renegotiated.*

*Sixty-seven national and international health and consumer groups, including the Public Health Association of Australia, the World Public Health Association and Médecins Sans Frontières also called for deletion or complete renegotiation of the clauses on medicines and foreign investor rights to sue governments.*

*Community and other TPP governments' concerns have been vindicated by the reported outcomes of the meeting. Nikkei Asian Review quotes the Japanese chief negotiator saying that the 11 TPP countries agreed to suspend some parts of the text that were only reluctantly agreed to get access to the US market. These include the controversial three-year increase in data protection monopolies for biologic medicines, which would delay cheaper versions of these medicines. These clauses would only be resurrected if the US decides in future to re-join the agreement...*

*...It is clear from these reports that some governments recognise that many clauses in the TPP are not in their national interests. Any renegotiation of the TPP will be a long and painful process, which may not produce an outcome.*

*In practice, the Australian government has quietly conceded that a TPP without the US is unlikely by starting separate bilateral negotiations with Peru and Mexico, two of the three TPP countries without FTAs with Australia.*

*If it really believed that the TPP could be revived this year, these negotiations would not be necessary.*

*The current text of the TPP is dead because it requires ratification by the US as the largest economy. Even with the minimal change of deleting the US, it would be a new agreement, and would have to be signed, tabled in Parliament and reviewed by Parliamentary committees before any implementing legislation. If harmful clauses*

*remain, there would still be strong community opposition and the majority in the Senate is likely to reject it again.*

*The Australian government should not waste further time and resources on trying to resurrect the dead TPP, but instead should develop fairer trade policies which will actually deliver benefits to most Australians.*

*Dr Patricia Randal*

In the past 12 months, SSEC has signed petitions and supported letters from AFTINET to MPs and Senate Inquiries.

SSEC's primary concern about world trade deals is the threat of provision that enable foreign investors to bypass local legislation, especially legislation that serves to protect the environment.

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

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

New groups we have worked with this year have included Sunny Shire and Shire Rides.

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

Our information, operation and management systems continue to be streamlined. As our members and the wider community have become more familiar with online communications, we have been able to make more use of Social media and other digital platforms in our communications.

Online payment systems provide an efficient way of collections of membership dues, donations and other income, although most payments are still made by cheque. The board is hoping to move to an online payment system in the coming year.

This year we have been trialling online collaboration platforms as a more efficient means of preparation of submissions, etc. We are also seeking to improve our systems to gather information about the interests, skills and availability of our members.

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

- We have continued to work with NPA (Southern Sydney) in regard to the issue of illegal bike riding in Royal National Park.
- SSEC is a member two new campaigns: TEC's "SOS Green Spaces" campaign, and NCC's "Repower NSW".
- We are pleased to have a representative on Nature Conservation Council's Sustainable Population committee.
- We have maintained a good relationship with staff on Sutherland Shire Council, and are hoping to be more proactive in our relationship with council staff and elected members (at all levels of government) over coming months.
- Although council, state and federal elections are still some time in the future, we will be actively, and apolitically, approaching both sitting representatives and those who would replace them with our policy recommendations.
- Submissions were made on many plans and proposed legislations including
  - Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park And Garawarra State Conservation Area : Draft Plans Of Management Discussions Papers
  - Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Reform Opportunities
  - 2017 review of climate change policies Discussion Paper
  - SSC DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLAN
  - SSC Cronulla Town Centre Plan
  - Greater Sydney Commission Draft South District Plan
  - EP&A Amendment Bill 2017
  - Medium Density Housing Code

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

The SSEC website provides for online membership and donation payments using Paypal and/or credit card facilities. Use of Eventbrite streamlines collection of payments for attendance at events.

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

## **Treasurer's Report**

The 2016/2017 Financial Year saw the Centre return a profit of \$6,366 which is significant turnaround from the \$22,280 loss as reported last year. This is seen as a good result which has been achieved through tighter control and management of expenses, supported by the full 12 months of rental income from our tenant in the Merton St premises.

The increase in income to \$87,812 has resulted from the return to normal annual rental income associated with the Merton St property, a major grant for production of the First National Park video and an increase in Fund Raising and Other Income due to income associated with the Healthy House.

Overall expenditure declined to \$81,446 compared to prior year (\$87,734) as the Management Committee have further scrutinised and managed the expenditure of the Centre. Decreases in expenditure are seen across many areas including Bank Charges and Interest associated with the Office Mortgage, Rent (ceased rental of the small office mid last financial year) and Rates & Strata and Repairs & Maintenance associated with our office property at Merton Street. These decreases have been somewhat offset by an increase in expenditure associated with Environmental Projects with further investment and commitment to a broad range of continuing and new projects.

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

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

The movements in the Balance Sheet this year a positive. We have seen a small reduction in the mortgage that the Environment Centre holds and an increase in funds held in bank accounts which helps build towards a more solid and sustainable organisation.

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

### **SUMMARY**

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

In securing a new tenant for the office in Merton Street, the Centres results this year do reflect a greater degree of “financial sustainability” however, the challenge has been and will continue to be, “How do we drive in new members, a steady stream of donations and grants and money from fund raising/campaigns to ensure full self sufficiency of the Centre?” The Management Committee continue to identify and assess all options here. In the meantime, the Committee continues to closely watch and manage the finances of the Centre.

### SPECIAL MENTION

We were advised prior to end June that Bruce Spaul had decided to sell his practice and would no longer be in a position to provide financial guidance or assist in production and audit of the accounts for the Centre. Melina Lidis who works for Bruce and Bruce himself have been involved in assisting the Centre with these services “free of charge” since the inception of the Environment Centre. We have valued their support and commitment and greatly appreciate their time and advice over the years. We truly thank them for their support.

We have engaged a new auditor and will be finalising the audit of the accounts prior to submission of our annual returns to the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO) and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC).

Finally, I would like to make special mention and extend my thanks to Jenni Gormley for her commitment and effort in completing and tracking financial activities on a weekly basis.

### OPERATING SURPLUS

At 30 June 2017 the accounts of the Centre showed an operating surplus (profit) of \$6,366 compared to an operating loss in the previous year of \$22,280.

### INCOME

Total Income for the year was \$87,812, which was a 30% increase when compared to the prior year (65,454).

Items of note within Income of the Centre included increases across all Revenue categories (excl Membership Subscriptions and Donations which fell slightly). Items of note included:

- Gross Profit from Rental Income – which reflects the full years income associated with the rental of our premises (prior year the office was untenanted for a short period).
- Grants – reflecting the receipt of a grant for the production of the First national Park video.

- Fund Raising & Other income – which rose as a result of funds flowing in relating to the advertising and demonstration space associated with the Healthy House.

### EXPENDITURE

Total Expenditure for the year of \$81,446 which was a moderate decrease when compared to the previous financial year of \$87,374.

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

- Environmental Projects expenditure – an increase over prior year
- Interest – decrease due to the average loan amount outstanding over the year being smaller than prior year.
- Rates & Strata Fees – showing a decrease in expenditure over previous year as strata fees reduced due to installation of individual air conditioning facilities for the office
- Rent – decrease as we ceased occupancy of the President Ave office prior year
- Repairs & Maintenance – none incurred this year (vs major works done to ready the office for the new tenant 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 had continued to pay back the loan thereby decreasing the loan amount outstanding to \$35,421.

Our Bank balances (in excess of \$47,000 vs approx. \$41,000 prior year end) remain healthy and provide a sound footing for Campaign support, works associated with grants or other activities.

*John Nelson*

Treasurer  
September 2017

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

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017**

2016 \$	Note	2017 \$
	<b>INCOME</b>	
	<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	
864	Subscriptions	836
17,702	Donations	17,178
909	Grants	5,000
9	Interest Received	5
1,164	Fund Raising Events & Other Income	2,091
44,807	Gross Profit From Rental Operations	62,702
<u>65,454</u>	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>87,812</u>
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
369	Bank Charges	277
31,669	Consultants Fees	32,487
800	Conference	766
3,749	Depreciation	3,690
-	Donations	100
450	Electricity	-
	<b>Environmental Projects</b>	
503	Scan	137
5,968	First National Park Campaign	7,735
148	Stop CSG - Sutherland	283
2,736	Speaking 4 the Planet	5,111
2,500	Environmental Education	-
3,319	Spring Gully Protection	1,947
152	Scatl	-
2,009	Eco News	1,916
1,254	Toastmasters	-
-	ACE Safety	32
-	Eureka	195
-	Healthy House	6,504
-	Kaima Way	32
<u>18,590</u>		<u>23,891</u>
-	General Expenses	157
315	Insurance	300
798	Meeting Expenses	357
478	Postage	91
200	Printing & Stationery	543
19,818	Rates & Strata (Merton Street)	15,585
3,197	Rent	-
2,915	Repairs & Maintenance	-
245	Subscriptions & Licences	155
1,324	Telephone & Internet	517
<u>87,734</u>		<u>81,446</u>
<u>(22,280)</u>	Profit / (Loss) before income tax	<u>6,366</u>
<u>(22,280)</u>	<b>Profit / (Loss) for the year</b>	<u>6,366</u>
	Retained Earnings at the beginning of the financial year	
<u>558,599</u>		<u>536,319</u>
<u>536,319</u>	<b>Retained Earnings at the end of the financial year</b>	<u>542,685</u>

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

**BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2017**

2016 \$	Note	2017 \$
	<b>MEMBER'S FUNDS</b>	
536,319	Retained Earnings	542,685
<u>536,319</u>	<b>TOTAL MEMBER'S FUNDS</b>	<u>542,685</u>
	Represented by:	
	<b>ASSETS</b>	
	<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
393	Cash on Hand	293
19,988	Public Gift Fund	20,262
20,900	Main Account	27,134
-	Trade Debtors	725
1,254	Other Debtors	652
-	Prepayments	-
955	GST on acquisition	1,293
<u>43,490</u>	<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>50,359</u>
	<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
	<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
506,353	Building - at Cost	506,353
53,168	Furniture & Fittings - at Cost	53,168
(26,178)	Less Prov'n Depreciation	(29,868)
<u>533,343</u>	<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<u>529,653</u>
<u>533,343</u>	<b>TOTA NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>529,653</u>
<u>576,834</u>	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>580,013</u>
	<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
-	Accrued Expenses	-
1,844	GST on supplies	1,907
<u>1,844</u>	<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>1,907</u>
	<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
38,671	Loan - Commonwealth Bank	35,421
<u>38,671</u>	<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>35,421</u>
<u>40,515</u>	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>37,328</u>
<u>536,319</u>	<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>542,685</u>



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

<b>NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017</b>
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**1 Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

**Basis of Preparation**

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

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

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

**Income Tax**

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

**Property**

Freehold land and buildings are shown at cost.

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

**Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

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

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

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

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
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<p><b>NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017</b></p>
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**Revenue and Other Income**

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

Interest revenue is recognised when received.

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

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

**Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

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

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