



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Annual Report

2020-2021

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre works with local community organisations, businesses, government, and residents to protect and improve their local areas, and to achieve a sustainable environment in the Sutherland Shire and its bioregions. SSEC is a totally independent, non-government community organisation. It is an incorporated Association guided by a constitution and governed by a Board elected at an Annual General Meeting by members of the Association.



Board Members 2020-21

Dr Tassia Kolesnikow (Chairperson)
Lily Meier (Treasurer)
Melinda Millen (Secretary)
Sarah-Jo Lobwein
Phil Smith
Dr Sally Stockbridge (Secretary)

Executive Officer

Dr Catherine Reynolds (until June 2021), Ms Sally Knight (from May 2021)

Project Officer

Kaye Osborn

Box 589 PO, Sutherland NSW 2232 ph: 0403 630 630 e: office@ssec.org.au w: ssec.org.au

Statement of Purpose

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.

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.

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this Land, the Dharawal and Gandangara peoples, who have cared and continue to care for country. We recognise that Aboriginal Sovereignty has never been ceded. It is our goal to build restorative relations between peoples, and we pay our respect to their elders – past, present, and emerging.

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Chairperson's Report

Tassia Kolesnikow

As we advance through our second difficult year of the pandemic, I commend our staff, board, members and volunteers for their continued efforts to advocate for the environment amidst the challenge of a constantly changing landscape of rules and restrictions, through a time when COVID-related concerns have dominated the media.

Opportunities for events and activities were embraced during times when it was safe, while technology was used to facilitate meetings and discussions at other times. Over the past year, the Board has made headway with important decisions on governance issues including insurance, finances, and planning for the future. I thank everyone involved, including staff and volunteers for the significant amount of time and research they put towards completing this work which is vitally important for our operation as an independent, environmental charity organisation.

An important endeavour this year has been the revision of our Constitution. Our Board and staff put a considerable amount of thought and discussion into this update. We've been pleased to have taken the opportunity to finesse our acknowledgement and recognition of the Traditional Custodians of this Land, the Dharawal and Gandangara peoples, and to state clearly our wish to build restorative relations between peoples. The objects of our Constitution are enduring and continue to highlight the reason why our Centre was founded 30 years ago, to strengthen our advocacy and work collaboratively with members, local groups and community to support their efforts to protect our natural environment.

We've made remarkable progress this year. Our Annual Report highlights just how much our relatively small organisation has achieved, despite the extra demands introduced by the pandemic. Of course, the progress made on campaigns and projects, detailed in this Annual Report would simply not occur were it not for the dedication, talent and passion of our member groups and volunteers, and support of our organisation by our members.

We're also pleased to have been able to strengthen ties with aligned local groups, including Southern Sydney National Parks Association, Friends of the Royal National Park, Georges River Environmental Alliance, and Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society. The knowledge, skills and experience that members of these groups collectively share is substantial and particularly powerful when lobbying government, writing submissions and media releases. Interactions between members of our groups has also been a wonderful source of encouragement and comradery.

To the extent restrictions have made this possible, Environment Centre members have continued to build valuable community networks, engaging with resident and precinct

committees whose members are passionate about issues such as safe active transport, wild-life crossings, and pollution. Sutherland Shire Councillors who make the time to attend these meetings and listen to the views of residents have also proven willing to listen to issues of environmental relevance.

Communication with council staff and councillors has likewise helped to keep us informed and proactive in addressing concerns by members and local residents on a range of issues, including carbon neutrality, removal of mature trees, wild-life crossings and shore-bird preservation.

I am very pleased to introduce Sally Knight, who was hired as our Executive Officer in May this year. In a few short months, Sally has proved herself to be invaluable. Sally brings intelligence, creativity and affability to the role as well as a decade of experience in media and communications, including radio broadcasting and programming for the ABC. Sally replaces Catherine Reynolds, who served in this capacity for nearly 2 years at a particularly critical juncture for the Centre. Following in the footsteps of Jenni Gormley, who had been the Centre's Executive Officer for 15 years was a daunting task. It would be fair to say that Catherine wore a multitude of hats during the past 2 years serving as administrator, web-designer and tech-support, campaign strategist, head of public relations, head of media and communications, event manager and political liaison. We are very pleased that Catherine has continued to work as a volunteer with the Centre, driving the koala and wild-life crossings campaign, to strategise on the issue of mining in the Woronora catchment, and to write submissions on behalf of the Centre. Our advocacy has been improved immeasurably by her efforts.



IMAGE: Tassia Kolesnikow and Catherine Reynolds at the SSEC 2020 end of year Picnic at Audley in the Royal National Park

We've also been delighted to have Sadaf Basamraz recently volunteer to take on the role of Public Officer. Sadaf's expertise in accountancy is a tremendous benefit to the Centre and will ensure that we meet the legislative requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-For Profits Commission (ACNC) and the Registry of Environmental Organisations (REO). Sadaf has been working closely with our Treasurer, Lily Meier, and previous Public Officer, John Nelson. We thank John and acknowledge the central role he has played in the operation of the Centre, serving as Treasurer from the founding of the Centre in 1991 until 2019, when he became our Public Officer. John was awarded Life Membership in 2017 in recognition of his significant contribution.

Special thanks also go to Kaye Osborn for her exceptional work as the Centre's Project Officer. Her brilliant organisational skills and careful cross-checking of the relevant legislation were critical for completing many important tasks including the revision of our Constitution.

While it has been a difficult year, we are so fortunate to be surrounded by outstanding natural beauty. This is what galvanises our advocacy. Our Environment Centre would not exist without the intelligence, care and commitment of our staff and the range of skills our members and volunteers bring. Working together helps to ensure our wondrous natural environment is looked after now and into the future.

Vale Norm Dixon

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre notes the passing of long-term member, Norm Dixon. Norm was a good friend of SSEC founder, Bob Walshe. Norm and his wife, Betty were leaders of environmental conservation in the Shire for decades with a great appreciation of nature and community. Norm demonstrated his passion, tackling issues that threatened to harm people and environment with tenacity and creativity. He was the driving force behind the community movement which stopped the Woronora fire trail being turned into an access road down to Woronora Valley. He lent his assistance to our campaign in 2019 to stop the mining under Woronora Reservoir.



IMAGE: Norm Dixon protesting the Woronora fire trail opening in 2004 (Source – [The Leader](#))

Norm lived in the Woronora Valley for 84 years and was the President of the Woronora Valley Residents' Association resident and President of the Woronora Life Saving & River Patrol Club for many years.

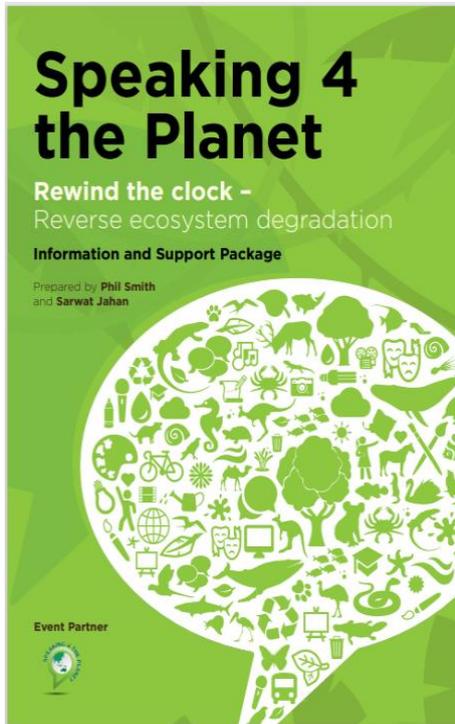
He worked on too many issues over the years to name them all here, but better outcomes for Shire residents were always core. Respected by his adversaries, loved by his community, he was a staunch and tenacious fighter for the environment, and a force to be reckoned with to the end.

He will be missed.

Achieving our purpose in 2020-21

Speaking 4 the Planet

Phil Smith



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre, along with Paddy Pallin, supported the NSW Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) program. Once again, Covid forced the competition online. One Sydney-wide high school competition was held with support from the local councils of Sutherland, Liverpool, Camden, Campbelltown, Mosman, Willoughby and St George.

Given 2021 is the first year of the UN's Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, the focus for S4P was on the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. For 2021, 43 students from across five council areas participated in 5 different categories. Entries came from students in Liverpool, Willoughby, Sutherland Shire, Parramatta and Georges River LGAs. The bulk of the entries were in speaking (20) and art (13). Winners will be announced at the AGM. The 2021 S4P event will be evaluated and another video will be produced.

Lakemba Public School held a very successful Kids 4 the Planet event with a focus on water. Six primary schools in the area participated in a full day competition on 17 June.

Positive feedback on the Lakemba Public School Kids for the Planet was received from staff and students alike.

“The Kids 4 the Planet event was held at Lakemba Public School for the fourth time. It allowed students to express and communicate their ideas in a range of different ways about sustainability with a focus on the theme 'We are made of water so let's keep it clean'. This was a valuable learning experience for students as they were encouraged to think critically and creatively through their participation.”

Rasha Zreika, Kids 4 the Planet coordinator, Lakemba Public School



For the fourth year running, a S4P event was held in Christchurch, New Zealand which drew entries from students aged 11-18 from a variety of schools within the greater Christchurch urban area. Students competed across a range of categories, with visual arts being the most popular.

“All the prepared speeches were powerful which meant the judging panel had a very difficult job selecting the winners. A new category of Impromptu Drama drew three entries and provided the audience with laughs as well as things to ponder; each team took very different angles on the topic of 'convincing an audience to care about a special ecosystem or place.’”

Jocelyn Papprell, Sustainability Education Officer, Otautahi-Christchurch council.



A number of local Christchurch organisations supported the event and plans are being made for the 2022 competition.



The videos of each finalist in the speech category can be viewed on the [S4P NZ youtube channel](#).

More info is on the [Sustainable Ōtautahi Christchurch](#) website.

The organisers, who are keen to grow the competition, expressed their appreciation for the vision of Phil Smith in providing the competition framework and support material.

Speaking 4 the Planet and Kids 4 the Planet support materials, along with materials for Resource Recovery Discovery: Tell the Story of Stuff in 2050, a S4P collaboration with [Netwaste](#) in Regional NSW, can be downloaded on the [Speaking 4 the Planet website](#).

RD Walshe Writing for the Environment Award 2021

Phil Smith

Biodiversity and ecosystem health are not just nice things to have, like an extra pair of socks when you're bushwalking. They are critical for the continued production of clean air, clean water and healthy soils on the planet. These natural 'services' keep us alive. Yet, governments everywhere have squandered species for the sake of economic growth and a [report by the World Economic Forum](#) notes that the [WWF's Living Planet Index 2018](#) says that nature underpins all economic activity, and it is presently worth an estimated US\$125 trillion.

The 2021 Writing for the Environment competition invited writers to submit scripts for plays on the theme of biodiversity loss. The intention was to work with the Cronulla Arts Theatre and perform the winning submissions. Unfortunately, although there were well written pieces received, there were too few eligible entries to make it a competition. Entrants received an explanation of the situation, comments on their submissions and a certificate of participation. The 2022 writing competition will return to calling for pieces of prose. *IMAGE: Katrina, winner of the 2020 RD Walsh Writing for the Environment Award in the under 18s category, with her award certificate. The topic for the 2020 competition was "I am earth". You can read Katrina's beautiful entry [here](#).*



Nature and Learning

Phil Smith

Nature and Learning are sessions run for P&Cs at schools in the Sutherland Shire. The sessions provide information on the benefits of being in nature. Parents enjoy them very much and welcome suggestions about visiting the Royal National Park and taking their children into nature. The 30 min sessions consider the social, physical, mental health, and educational benefits of being in nature, which can include: a reduction in obesity, attention disorders, depression and anxiety; an increased sense of wonder; lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol; and improved concentration and focus.

Nature and Learning sessions incorporate the video produced to support the World Heritage Listing of the Royal Reserves. [Royal National Park, A Place for Belonging](#), reminds people of the beauty and wonder in the backyard of Sutherland Shire.

Due to restrictions of the pandemic, no sessions have been conducted in the past 12 months. SSEC members who have contacts with Sutherland Shire school P&Cs are invited to contact Phil Smith – E: rephilled@hotmail.com - to arrange future Nature and Learning sessions.

Woronora Reservoir, the Metropolitan Coal Mine, and Peabody Energy

Catherine Reynolds

After the light of media attention on the damage to the Waratah Rivulet and the travesty of the parliamentary debate, the beginnings of a legal investigation has brought an imposed silence and a halt to our campaign on social media.

People have been very angry about the impact of mining on our water supply, on Woronora Reservoir. What do we do with that anger?

The contaminated orange water, the empty streams and ponds, seem a manifest, fundamental wrong. Water is a necessity for life, so the government's complicity in allowing this damage goes against common sense and our gut level human intuition. It also ignores the requirements of the Water NSW Act 'to protect and enhance the quality and quantity of water in declared catchment areas'.^[1]

This is what drove me initially to take action on this issue, to carry out the research and to start the petition. I knew that dealing with a multi-billion dollar company was never going to be easy, but did not anticipate the extent of it. Peabody funds teams of 'experts' who supply highly technical reports, hundreds of pages long, to justify their activities. The company has decades of practice at grinding through activists and others that oppose them.

We would not have got anywhere without the hard work and support of all Environment Centre members and others who put so much time, energy and effort into trying to do something about this issue. Greg and Judy Walker, Beth Buchanan, Charlie Attard, Peter Donley, and Tassia Kolesnikow in particular.

We are now looking to the Nature Conservation Council (NCC) and the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) as they have more resources and the capacity to take legal action. What we are able to say is that experts are reviewing documents obtained via GIPA requests. Unfortunately, it takes time for various experts to look through these documents and determine possible causes of action.

Many people are unaware Sutherland Shire Environment Centre took part in legal action to stop the mining under Woronora Reservoir previously, as part of the Rivers SOS group, in 2009. Rivers SOS was an alliance of over 40 environmental and community groups. Other members included the Total Environment Centre, Colong Foundation, National Parks Association, and the Nature Conservation Council.^[2] The 2009 case did not succeed^[3] - we hope that we have better luck this time around.

Any success depends on demonstrating that Peabody has breached the conditions of consent. The mining in Woronora Reservoir is only supposed to cause 'negligible' damage,

but of course how 'negligible' is defined is altogether fluid. (no pun intended...)

Yet another issue relating to contamination from the current mine operation that we are looking into is whether platypus have become locally extinct in the Waratah Rivulet. Bionet records detail how they were last sighted in 2007, and it is not clear whether any have been seen since. It is not clear whether such local extinctions would provide sufficient cause to stop the mining. We have alerted the NCC to this issue for consideration in any legal action.

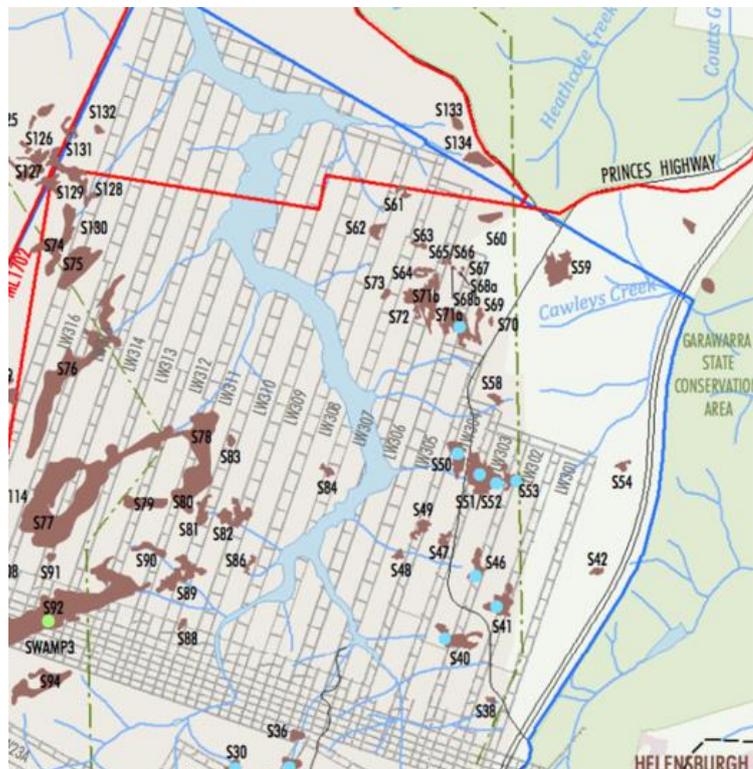
We were very relieved that the mine shut down between January and May this year due to a significant drop in the price of coal, but of course it has now started up again.

At one point late last year it looked as if Peabody would fail to refinance its debt burden which extended to hundreds of millions of dollars. Creditors since agreed to an extension, and the company obtained a new loan, staving off bankruptcy. During this period Bluescope took the opportunity to renegotiate the coal supply contract with Peabody at terms it appeared Peabody was not willing to accept.^[4] This was reportedly one factor in the halt of the mining under our Reservoir. It is ironic that Wollongong Labor MP Paul Scully and Lee Evans, the Liberal MP for Heathcote, united during the 2020 parliamentary debate to claim that Bluescope would collapse without the supply of coal from Peabody and that 3000-4000 jobs would be lost. Clearly this was not the case as employment at Bluescope was unaffected by the shutdown.

Peabody is now back mining longwall 306. Longwall 307, running under a significant portion of the Reservoir, will be next.

In July this year we asked Cate Faerhmann MLC to put questions on notice to the Planning Minister Rob Stokes in State Parliament: this revealed that no extraction plans have yet been submitted for longwall tunnels 308 onwards.

We asked Cate Faerhmann to put questions on notice to the Minister as Planning have not responded to multiple email queries.



We expect this next extraction plan will be submitted within the next few months, if not sooner.

State Liberal MPs continue to send out standard form letters advising that the Woronora Reservoir Impact Strategy Panel is independent, even though this Panel was commissioned and is funded by Peabody. Brendan Pearson, a former Peabody Director and former CEO of the Mineral Council of Australia, is now embedded in Scott Morrison's office, as Senior Adviser for Trade and Investment.^[5]



It is blindingly obvious that what is happening is wrong. Mining directly underneath our water supply is not supported by the general public, yet the LNP government and Labor opposition have shut down off political avenues to stop this, and have in fact done everything they can to ensure the mining continues.

Fortunately, as yet there appears to have been no approval for Peabody's new application to explore for coal under 2042 hectares^[6] around the left arm of Woronora Reservoir.

We are also concerned about who bears responsibility for monitoring and remediation of the old mine tunnels which are located near to the mine surface facilities in Helensburgh and adjacent to the Royal National Park. We highlighted this in our submission to the draft plan of management for the Garawarra State Conservation Area, Heathcote and Royal National Park, identifying it as a risk, a "key threatening process" to Royal National Park waterways that needs to be accounted for and addressed. We are looking into this issue further. As yet we have received no satisfactory answers from the NSW State government.

It is alarming to realise just how easy it is for mining companies to escape their obligations when it comes to remediation.^[7] Even the Department of Planning has admitted that "Aspects of the current regulatory framework for mine rehabilitation do not meet best practice."^[8]

Given the current state of affairs, it is also difficult to avoid feeling cynical about the primary affiliations of the government, which continues to facilitate mining in our water catchments. Meanwhile, Peabody continues to escape tax obligations: their six year income exceeds \$21 billion, and during this time they have paid zero tax.^[9]

Despite the mining at Woronora continuing, there have been a couple of huge positives during the last year. The Independent Planning Commission (IPC) refusal of the Dendrobium mine extension went against all expectations and we were overjoyed about this refusal. The POWA – Protect Our Water Alliance group galvanised opposition and ensured the EDO employed a number of experts who argued convincingly against the expansion. Professor Greg Walker and I put in two opposing submissions on behalf of the Environment Centre.

As I write this report on the last day of August, the IPC has just refused another mine threatening the Great Sydney Catchment, the Hume Coal Project in the NSW Southern Highlands. Reasons for the refusal cited issues relating to subsidence, groundwater drawdown, risks to surface water, including to Sydney's drinking water catchment area, impacts to local biodiversity, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Our water supply is more important than coal, and should be protected. These refusals give hope that a change may still be in the air.

For more information see: <https://www.ssec.org.au/our-campaigns/stop-woronora-mining-petition/>

[1] <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/-/view/act/2014/74/part2/div2/sec7>

[2] <http://riverssos.org.au/mining-in-nsw/waratah-rivulet/>

[3] <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=b4af9894-6672-4fae-a71a-71d21b3e68ce>

[4] <https://www.illawarramercury.com.au/story/7041973/end-of-bluescope-contract-hits-peabody-ahead-of-closure/?cs=12> Also: <https://www.argusmedia.com/en/news/2165971-australian-metropolitan-coal-mine-shutting-for-2-months>. Peabody has now renegotiated its contract with Bluescope

<https://www.peabodyenergy.com/Peabody/media/MediaLibrary/Operations/Australia Mining/New South Wales Mining/Metropolitan Mine/May-2021-Metropolitan-Coal-CCC-Minutes-Final.pdf>

[5] <https://www.michaelwest.com.au/brendan-pearson/>

[6] <https://minview.geoscience.nsw.gov.au/-/?lon=150.9229&lat=-34.15804&z=14&bm=bm1&l=at1:y:100,ad0:y:100>

[7] <https://www.michaelwest.com.au/half-a-dozen-ways-out-of-rehab-for-coal-companies/>

[8] <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Under-review-and-new-Policy-and-Legislation/Mine-Rehabilitation-Discussion-Paper>

[9] <https://www.michaelwest.com.au/revealed-australias-top-40-tax-dodgers-for-2021/>

Sutherland Climate Action Network (SCAN) Judy Walker and Tassia Kolesnikow

The past year has been a mixed bag for SCAN with the pandemic affecting planned actions and key members' time and energy being diverted towards other issues. Despite these disruptions, we managed to keep up an impressive array of activities aimed at increasing action on climate change.



Newsletters were emailed every 4-8 weeks to inform and mobilise action amongst our ~340 subscribers.

The majority of actions were online, but our members managed to attend several rallies during times when it was safe and permitted.

These included Student Strike Rallies on Sept 21, 2020 and May 21, 2021 and a Cronulla event for the Global Day of Action organised by the Australian Religious Response on March 21, 2021.

IMAGE: Student Strike Rally - 21 May 2021 (photo credit – Rob Taggart)

We continued to attend and contribute to monthly online meetings of the Climate and Energy Working Group (CEWG), organised by the Nature Conservation Council (NCC). This connection helps us share plans, resources and information with other climate action groups in NSW.

SCAN member, John McKinnon attended the Local Bushfire Management Committee Meeting on February 11 on the recommendation of Megan Benson, who had established communication with Community Liaison Officer, Scott Deller. The meeting, held by zoom, included representatives from: NCC, NPWS, Army, Transport NSW, Sydney Trains, Police, Ambulance, ANSTO, Crown Land, Council, Education Dept, Rural Fire Service, Port Authority, Ampol and Principals of Primary schools among others. We are hopeful that connections through this committee may facilitate an understanding of the increased risk of bushfires being caused by climate change.

Writing-based actions didn't suffer and may have even been enhanced by the pandemic restrictions. Letters written by our members were published in the Leader.

Our council could win and award too

The Leader does a good job of informing our community about the various developments happening in the Shire. I am sure there are many readers like me, who want to see these new developments are taking into account the changes that are happening now because of Climate Change and those that will occur into the future.

Last night I watched a webinar that put an exciting new perspective on this. The Cities Power Partnership gave councils from around Australia Awards for doing just this. There were big city councils, local councils, and regional councils. Craig Reucassel, the MC, congratulated Councils on continuing to lead on climate solutions with projects such as a world-first Hybrid Solar and Battery Off-Grid Stadium and Relief Centre, such as electric vehicle charging strategies, such as work protecting from sea level rise and rehabilitating coastal flood plain land, and such as huge emissions reductions. I look forward to the day when the Leader will be able to proudly boast that Sutherland Shire Council has been the recipient of a Cities Power Partnership Award too.

Judy Walker, Bundeena

Shire tree planting

Congratulations to the Sutherland Shire Council for planting thousands of trees at Sylvania, Cronulla and Jannali. Tree planting will help reduce ground temperatures while simultaneously providing shade. These trees will be a carbon sink and thus help the fight against climate change. The visual effect of trees softens the look of ever-increasing development throughout the shire. The tree canopy also provides shelter and food for wildlife. Well done, council!

Vicki Cattell, CRONULLA

Mismanagement of the Miranda environment

This busy area in Miranda at the intersection of Port Hacking RD and the Boulevard has been hard hit environmentally in so many ways. Recently the council removed all the garden beds of both large garden spaces at the most prominent intersection in Miranda. In an area under huge stress from traffic and development. Now recently, in this same area, I have seen three mature trees removed and a very large/mature gum virtually decimated. Good environmental management it is not. Good environmental management takes in many aspects and considerations, including tree canopy and tree maturity issues for that specific area. Not to mention habitat and liveability for residents.

**Ann Mckay,
Miranda**

Numerous submissions were sent to the State and Federal governments on behalf of the SCAN and SSEC. These are available on the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre website and include submissions to:

Support

- the [Climate Change \(National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation\) Bill 2020](#) and [Climate Change \(National Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation\) \(Consequential and Transitional Provisions\) Bill 2020](#)
- the use of \$1 billion [Grid Reliability Fund](#) to increase renewable energy and storage grid reliability

Oppose

- [Hunter power project](#) – building a new power station that will run on gas and diesel
- construction of a [railway in preparation of a future expansion of the Wongawilli Coal MOD2 mine](#)
- the [Dendrobium Extension Project](#) – two submission were made, one with an [environmental focus](#) and a second which drilled down into [financial reasons](#) why the project should not be approved
- [the Russell Vale Revised Underground Expansion Project](#). Members also presented at the Independent Planning Commission hearing for this project.

Some wins from this work include:

A rejection of the Dendrobium project by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) - a HUGE relief to so many that have invested time and effort into exposing the damage this project would cause. Significant predicted Scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions were one of the reasons stated by the IPC for rejection of the project as well as a recognition of the risk to Sydney's drinking water.

Emails were written and sent to councillors, state and federal politicians on a variety of issues including concerns about changes to active transport routes, preservation of native vegetation, incentivising electric vehicles and the need to transition away from the use of fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

During the past year, we've kept in touch with Council to find out how they plan to meet their resolution for carbon neutrality by 2030. Earlier this year Councillors voted to sign onto the Global Covenant of Mayors, which requires them to complete 3 stages within 3 years, culminating in a detailed plan of action that addresses emissions from council and the community. Council has recently advertised for a Sustainability Support Officer to help them meet their targets.

We continue to support and share campaigns by aligned groups, including Lock-the-Gate, Stop Adani, Solar Citizens, Market Forces, Sunny Shire, Solar Bundeena Maianbar, ARRCC, Citizens Climate Lobby, Student Strikers, AYCC and POWA.

Several of our members have joined the Climate for Change movement that has recently been started in the Shire. SCAN has been particularly pleased to join Greenpeace to assist with their REenergise campaign which is aimed at motivating large companies to commit to 100% renewable electricity by 2025.

Social get-togethers were few, but perhaps all the more precious for their rarity. SCAN members attended the SSEC Christmas picnic at Reid Flat in the Royal National Park on December 13, Green drinks at the Tradies in Caringbah on March 25 and a lovely lunch followed by a screening of the koala film trailer at Hazelhurst gallery on May 16.



IMAGE: Tassia Kolesnikow mailing a letter to the CEO of Optus as part of the Greenpeace ReEnergise campaign

Judy and Greg Walker hosted a farewell lunch at their house in Bundeena on January 18 for SCAN member Megan Benson who has moved from Bundeena to Gloucester. It was lovely to catch up and share a meal in person.



IMAGE: SCAN members From left to right: Judy and Greg Walker, Megan Benson, Tassia Kolesnikow, Peter and Liz Donley. Photo credit: Catherine Reynolds

Several enthusiastic new members have recently joined us, increasing activity on our SCAN Facebook group and prompting us to think through our plans for the year ahead.

It is clear from the 6th IPCC report, released on August 9 that unprecedented changes to the global climate have been caused by human activity. Current targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are simply not enough to prevent temperatures from rising more than 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels within the next two decades. Signs of climate breakdown are already abundant, from the 2019/20 bushfires here in Australia, to recent floods in Germany and Japan. The International Energy Agency, a conservative institution, released a report in May with an explicit recommendation that no new fossil fuel projects should be approved. Yet, here in Australia our Federal government is set on a gas-led recovery which will open up areas, like the Beetaloo Basin in the Northern Territory to fracking.

Here in NSW, apparent progress to rein in emissions by setting a target of net zero by 2050 and building of renewable energy zones is completely undone by the breathtaking pace of new coal and gas mining approvals. This conflict in targets and mining approvals is explained by the current legislative loophole in which emissions from our exported coal and gas (scope 3) are excluded from our emission tally. The combustion of exported coal and gas produces over four times the emissions of those produced domestically, so this omission is extremely significant.

While we celebrate the 'wins', which include rejections to expand the Dendrobium mine in the Illawarra and Angus mine near Lithgow, now is not the time for complacency. If you are concerned and would like to be part of a local group taking action on climate change, please consider joining us.

For more information see - <https://www.ssec.org.au/our-campaigns/climate-action/>

Bill Ryan Activism Award Tassia Kolesnikow

The Bill Ryan Activism Award was launched last year by the Environment Centre to honour Bill and acknowledge those who share his spirit of non-violent direct action for the benefit of the environment. At a time when the urgency to address climate change couldn't be clearer and many forms of activism have been halted to prevent the spread of COVID, it is more important than ever to celebrate those that have led and participated in courageous actions for the future of our planet.

We are thrilled to announce the winner for this year's award at the 2021 AGM! If you miss the AGM, please check the updated 2021 Annual Report [on the SSEC website](#) to read about this year's impressive winner.

Veronica Hester, who was the recipient of last year's award, decided to divide the \$1,000 prize between two charity organisations. One half was allocated to assist with legal costs to fight the appeal by the NSW Environment Minister, Sussan Ley for the Sharma case. Veronica was one of the original student litigants in the Sharma case, aimed at halting state approvals for the Vickery coal mine. A historic ruling from the court found the Minister to have *a duty of care to avoid causing children harm resulting from the extraction of coal and carbon dioxide emissions into the Earth's atmosphere*. Instead of accepting the court's decision, the Environment Minister decided to initiate a costly legal appeal! Veronica has allocated \$500 to the [crowd-funding campaign](#) being run by chuffed.org to assist with costs to prevent this finding from being overturned.

Veronica also gave \$500 to the charity organisation, [justdiggit](#) which works closely with farmers and others living off the land in Africa to help them implement rainwater harvesting and proven techniques to regreen dry land. Veronica says she wanted to contribute to something that has an actionable impact on carbon emissions.



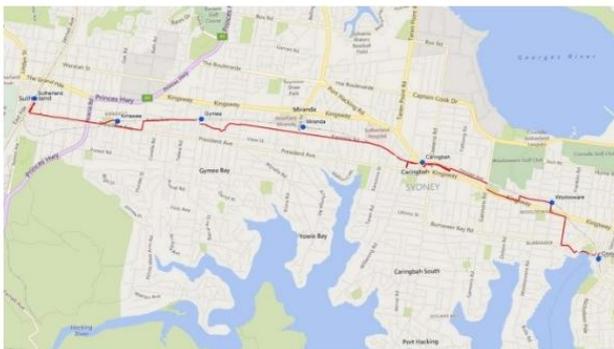
IMAGE: 2020 Bill Ryan Award Winner Veronica Hester & Bill Ryan at the School Strike for Climate

Active Transport Tassia Kolesnikow

Stage 1 of the Sutherland to Cronulla Active Transport Link (SCATL), a 1.3 kilometre section connecting Sutherland to Kirrawee, was completed last year. After 15 years of campaigning, we are pleased that a start has been made on building this critical infrastructure that will help the environment by creating a safe, efficient, and attractive option for people to walk and cycle around the Shire rather than driving their cars.

We have been asking Cronulla MP Mark Speakman to provide information on the start date for Stage 2. This stage is needed to complete the path by connecting Kirrawee to the Cronulla CBD primarily within the rail corridor, which was identified as the preferred path in 3 community consultations. The rail-corridor route reduced the danger and inefficiency of crossing intersections and driveways and provided a much needed “spine” to the Shire’s Active transport network to which less expensive arterial paths could be added to provide additional connectivity. Indeed, the merits of this route were touted by Shire MPs Mark Speakman, Eleni Petinos, Lee Evans and Melanie Gibbons and Transport Minister, Andrew Constance in 2015 when [they announced a decision to build it](#).

The response from Mark Speakman’s office was that announcements on SCATL would be forthcoming. Staff members at Sutherland Council involved in the planning of SCATL were similarly left in the dark for the start date of Stage 2. It was therefore a shock when the [announcement was made on March 31 that the route was being moved](#) out of the rail corridor and alongside busy, congested roads.



The **original SCATL plan** located the main route along the rail corridor.



The **new plan** moves the route away from the rail corridor alongside busy roads.

We are greatly dismayed by this change and so have set out to respond to this ill-conceived backflip by the NSW Government.

Firstly, we gathered information from Transport NSW and Mark Speakman, attending a livestream event held by Transport NSW on April 22, meeting with Speakman and Lewis Haig (the project manager from Transport NSW) via zoom on April 30 and attending a community drop-in session to find out why the preferred route had been discarded. The primary reason

provided by Transport NSW was that the new route 'improved connectivity and visibility to other users and the community'. Cost was not listed as a reason for the new route and both Speakman and Transport NSW were unwilling to release reports showing an estimated cost for the rail corridor option. It was clear that no detailed analysis had been conducted for the new route, though it is likely that widening footpaths and applying green paint will be less expensive than costs involved for building alongside the rail corridor.

Secondly, we put together a formal SSEC Active Transport submission, and encouraged the public to also have their say.

Our main points were that:

- The preferred route is alongside the rail-corridor
- The proposed new route is inferior, indirect and inefficient.
- Hundreds of driveways and many intersections will need to be crossed on this new route, making it unsafe.
- The Sutherland Cronulla Active Transport Link doesn't even reach Cronulla, but stops short of Woolooware.
- Diverting the path to the busy thoroughfare of Kingsway will make it unpleasant for walking or cycling and its hills and traffic signals will make it slow and inefficient.
- One of the least expensive solutions to the traffic congestion that the NSW Government's unfettered approval of high-density housing development in the Shire has created is the provision of a high-quality, safe and efficient active transport route along the rail corridor.
- Smaller, less expensive connectivity to suburbs and services can be added after this crucial 'Spine' is established.
- No convincing rationale for the change in route has been provided.
- The original plan for the 'Spine' of the route along the rail corridor should not be abandoned.

Thirdly, we prompted the Council to state a preference for the rail corridor in their submission. As a result of our communication, Council resolved that its submission to State Government "...should also state that it is Council's preference for the route to be contained within the rail corridor wherever possible, as concluded by Transport for NSW after the public consultation of the Transport for NSW Review of Environmental Factors document (2015)."

We also contacted State MPs for Cronulla and Miranda and the NSW Minister for Transport with our concerns about the new route. Support was requested from Greens Senator, Cate Faehrmann and Labor Shadow Minister for Active Transport, Jo Haylen. A pointed letter was sent by Faehrmann's office to the Minister for Transport, advocating with solid justification for the route to be built alongside the rail corridor.

This progressed to a front page story in the Leader ([published May 11, 2021](#)), with SSEC board member, Melinda Millen and Diane Hallion, long-time SCATL advocate from the North and Central Miranda Precinct Committee.

Home / Comment

HAVE YOUR SAY

MAY 2 2021 - 8:30AM

YOUR SAY: Disappointment with Sutherland to Cronulla active transport link

Comment

f t e A A A



The route of Stage 2 of the Sutherland to Cronulla Active Transport Link (SCATL). Picture: supplied

It was so disheartening to read the new State Government proposal to run the Sutherland to Cronulla active transport link (SCATL) on footpaths and roads along the Kingsway, which will worsen traffic congestion and jeopardise the safety of everyone using it. (Leader March 13, 2021)

The original cycleway (SCATL) plan funded by the State Government and promised after the last election (Leader June 2, 2015) was based on numerous petitions and consultations between Sutherland Council, architects and the residents. It was to provide a safe, flat, convenient and direct off-road shared path in the rail corridor and adjacent land. The aim was to reduce road congestion, not increase it.

Our views appear to have been sought purely for cosmetic reasons, the 'keeping up appearances of genuine consultation. Residents are trying to work, raise families, pay mortgages and, for some, just retire in peace. They should not be expected to spend their limited time and energy engaging in futile, expensive consultations.

We cannot continue increasing housing density in the Sutherland Shire without proper infrastructure planning. (Miranda alone has gained 972 new apartments within five years)

Hopefully, residents of the Sutherland Shire will participate in the public consultations from April 19 until May 9 to add their expertise and insights to try again to get a direct, effective Sutherland to Cronulla shared path option to link major centres away from main roads utilising already allocated State Government funds.

Genuine, sustainable community infrastructure for the future needs to be given priority over short-sighted, profit-driven developments.

Diane Hallion



Stage 2 of SCATL

Shire residents deserve a high-quality active transport network. It is one of the least costly ways to reduce traffic congestion on our roads, currently out of control due to the state government's unrestrained approval of high-density housing. After years of planning and public consultation and assurances that most of the 11 kilometres Sutherland to Cronulla Active Transport Link (SCATL) would be within the rail corridor, the state government has abruptly announced that the 'Spine' of the Shire's Active transport network is to be plucked out and unceremoniously dumped alongside busy Kingsway. No longer will it continue to the Cronulla CBD. Instead, our long-awaited SCATL will stop at Gannons Road - shouldn't it now be named SWATL?

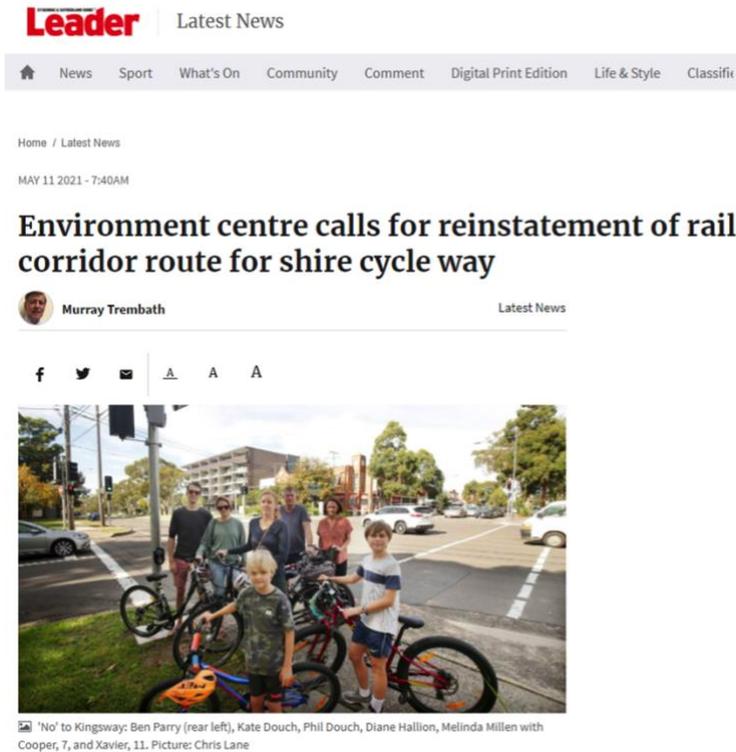
Hundreds of driveways and many intersections will need to be crossed on this new route, making it unsafe. Kingsway is a very busy road making it unpleasant for walking or cycling, and its hills and traffic signals will make it slow and inefficient. Anyone who wishes to reach Cronulla CBD will have to travel first to Captain Cook Drive and make their way from the Northside of Bates Bay (Wanda Beach).

The state government cannot cry poor. As \$710 million was budgeted for active transport over the next four years. Less than \$24 million has been spent for the first year. Shire residents are being short-changed and should speak up and demand that the Spine for our active transport network be placed back in the rail corridor as promised.

Tassia Kolesnikow

Grays Point

IMAGE: Several letters to The Leader were [published on May 2, 2021](#) urging that the route be reverted to the rail corridor.



We also publicised the issue on local radio 2SSR. Tassia Kolesnikow was interviewed about the new route by Joanne Ryan for 2SSR on May 19, 2021.

Bicycle NSW is the premier advocacy group for cyclists in NSW and assisted in the State Government's previous choice of route. Since the Government's back-peddle, they have provided us with valuable advice on how to mount a social media campaign and they [added a story to their webpage](#) highlighting the dangers of the new route. As a result of their pressure, they were invited to meet with James Dobinson, Head of Active Transport at Transport NSW to explain their concerns about the changed route.

Finally, we ran a social media campaign and online petition. On the advice of Bicycle NSW, a short video was made to highlight the inadequacies of the new route. Melinda Millen along with other parents and students from Kirrawee Public School deserve special thanks for navigating the route on bikes with their children and filming their experience. Expert video editing was kindly provided by Sam Bruce. In addition to posting on social media, the video is [featured on the Bicycle NSW website](#) and [on the Active Transport page of the SSEC Website](#). Recommended actions include writing to local State MP's and Transport Minister, Andrew Constance and signing a [change.org petition](#).

The responses we have received thus far from the State Government indicate they are resistant to requests for the route to be placed back in the rail corridor. A large outcry from the public will be needed if we are to have any chance of success.

As noted last year, the disruption of team sports due to COVID has resulted in a huge increase in the number of children with bikes. As a result, the need for safe cycling options has never been greater. We are in need of people that are connected to Shire schools that are willing to alert parents to the issue and encourage them to sign the petition and write letters to the State government.

SO Shire and Plastic Free Sutherland Shire Sarah-Jo Lobwein

It's been another busy and exciting year - SO Shire has continued working to promote sustainable and plastic-free solutions across the Sutherland Shire, celebrating the contribution of local plastic free heroes, people and organisations doing what they can to turn the tide on plastic pollution.

We're delighted that Sarah-Jo Lobwein's important work in our community was recognised and celebrated with the Sutherland Shire Council's Australia Day Environmental Citizen of the Year Award for her work bringing attention to plastic pollution in the local area and the impacts that marine debris can have on our beautiful coastline and ocean ecosystems. In December 2020 Sarah-Jo was also recognised for her dedication and commitment to environmental education in the Shire with a Cook Community Award, presented by Prime Minister and Cook MP Scott Morrison.



IMAGES: Sarah-Jo presented Australia Day Environmental award by Mayor Steve Simpson, Cook Community Award presentation

Plastic cotton-buds and NSW Upper House inquiry into plastic pollution

On 19 February 2021, Sarah-Jo and local volunteers met with NSW Attorney General & Cronulla MP Mark Speakman, presenting him with a comprehensive report of the beach clean-up data they have collected since 2015, for the [Australian Marine Debris Initiative](#). After many years of conducting beach clean-ups, their research has highlighted a major problem with plastic cotton-buds littering the pristine Cronulla and Kurnell coastline. Sarah-Jo and volunteers Dennis Dal Santo, Brett Lobwein and Greg Storr concluded that the plastic cotton-bud problem comes from these items escaping the filtering process at the Cronulla wastewater and sewage treatment system.



The presence of mechanical indentations as well as fats, oils and grease deposits on the cotton bud debris supports their theory that people are flushing their cotton-buds down the toilet and Sydney Water sewerage systems are not advanced, even in 2021, to filter these items. Cotton-bud stems are escaping through overflows but also through the 6mm primary filtration systems, and thus end up in the ocean, and on our beaches. The majority of Sydney sewage is only primary treated, but volunteers have since determined that even at Cronulla's tertiary facility, which includes extra biological and chemical treatments, they still use 6mm physical filters. This results in small plastics (less than 6mm) passing through the system. The solutions are to ban these single use disposable plastic items, educate users to not flush them down the toilet or drain, and to upgrade our sewerage systems away

from ocean outfall technology.

As a result of Sarah-Jo's dedicated research and advocacy, in May 2021 she was invited to give evidence to the Upper House Planning & Environment Committee inquiry into the [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Amendment \(Plastics Reduction\) Bill 2021](#). Since presenting SO SHIRE data and research, the NSW Energy & Environment Minister Matt Kean has released the new [NSW Waste Management](#) and [NSW Plastics Action Plan](#), which promises to introduce legislation banning some plastic items in NSW. You can read SO SHIRE's submission [here](#) and community volunteers report to MP Mark Speakman [here](#).



Mark Speakman, the Member for Cronulla, also spoke in Parliament thanking Sarah-Jo and other volunteers committed to protecting the Shire's spectacular coastal environment. The Government's response to the final report is due in February 2022.

Beach and community clean-ups

Sutherland Shire and Botany Bay beaches continue to be subjected to pollution from plastic and other debris, either washed up on the sand or left by thoughtless visitors. Volunteers continue to contribute hours of their own time to address this. SO SHIRE has organised and participated in a number of beach clean ups over the last 12 months with other organisations such as NPWS, and clean up groups Protect Our One, Gamay Rangers and Conservation Volunteers Australia.

SO SHIRE took part in a mammoth volunteer clean-up facilitated by NSW NPWS over 3 days at Towra Point Nature Reserve for National Volunteer Week. Towra Point Nature Reserve is a Wetland of International Importance and a declared [Ramsar Site](#). It is an important nursery area and breeding ground for many fish and invertebrates, and provides important habitat for migratory seabirds along with many vulnerable and endangered species. This beautiful area is rich in marine biodiversity and is one of the largest and most diverse wetland complexes remaining in the Sydney region.



Across the 3 days, over 300 bags of rubbish and plastics were collected from the Towra Point mangroves. Volunteers collected glass, plastic bottles, plastic lids, polystyrene, hair combs, tyres, beds and plastic packaging from decades ago. Some of which fell apart into loose microplastics when touched. Unfortunately, many of these smaller broken-up pieces of plastic were unable to be removed from the fragile ecosystem. SO SHIRE will continue to look for ways to capture and remove

microplastics from wet and muddy areas without disrupting habitat further with the mass removal of sediment and organisms.



February saw SO SHIRE involved in a Clean Up Australia Day event with the newly established group Save our Bay Georges River Alliance at Brighton Le Sands. Across a 60sqm area of sand near the busy kiosk, a whopping 3,366 cigarette butts were collected over 2 hours. Sarah-Jo worked with volunteers to develop a simpler way of counting and cataloguing cigarette butts while also identifying a problem with plastic ice cream spoons being discarded from nearby shops. A source reduction plan was identified to enable volunteers to create a strategy that would stop these spoons from entering the local environment in the first place.

In April at Airport Beach, SO SHIRE, Georges River Keeper, Defy Design, PluckFastic and Reverse Garbage held a #SeatoSource National Day of Action for Conservation Volunteers Australia which saw 92 people collect just over 230kg of litter!

On 29 May 2021, SO SHIRE collaborated with Protect our One for a Yarra Bay clean-up, and later that day they audited a second site, Frenchman's Beach. 60.8 kilograms of plastics were collected, including 266 cotton buds, broken bud pieces, lollipop sticks, bin plugs and soy fish. At this community event, Sarah-Jo met Federal MP Matt Thistlethwaite where she was able to explain to him the issue of cotton buds washing in from local sewage as a local, state and nation-wide problem.

World Environment Day weekend in June kicked off the Tradies SO SHIRE clean-up program! 25 Tradies staff and their children not only retrieved 65.5 kilograms of debris and litter items from two of SO SHIRE data sites (Cricket Pitch and Monument) but also got stuck into the audit - where they sorted and counted the items to quantify and classify the type of items present. The children were very good tally counters and a wonderful help! Polystyrene was unfortunately by far the largest quantity found, followed by fishing line, soft and hard plastics, bottle lids, broken glass and cigarette butts the main culprits were cotton bud, lollipops, building/construction items such as tiling squares and single use face masks.



IMAGE: Tradies staff auditing litter collected at Kurnell

Plastic free July

Despite COVID preventing many events from taking place for PlasticFreeJuly this year, SO SHIRE and PFSS were very active on social media running [Instagram TV](#) live videos with local Shire businesses to discuss a range of initiatives they take to reduce their plastic use and waste. Local businesses included Ooh la Chai, The Soulful Pantry, The Good Co, Eliza Jade Candles and Little Ones Party Hire/Balloon Library. Important discussions were had around how small businesses can take action to reduce plastic-use in their products, services, packaging and delivery. Many plastic-free alternate products were mentioned like tooth tabs (plastic free toothpaste), reusable 'unpaper' towels and plastic free lip-balm.

Submissions and media

SO Shire has continued its important role as advocate for environmental sustainability making submissions on critical issues. In addition to the Plastics Reduction Bill submissions noted on the previous page, a submission was made to the NSW Government "Our Waterways NSW Metropolitan Sydney Survey" in March 2021. SO SHIRE also responded to the Breen Resource Recovery Facility and Marang Parklands proposal with a submission outlining their concerns on the types of waste to be stored and processed on the site, the delay in providing already approved parklands to the community and the expected outcomes of a wildlife corridor that flows across 80km two lane Lindum Road.

Drawing attention to environmental issues on mainstream media is always important so when offered the opportunity to represent SO SHIRE on behalf of Recycle Smart, Sarah-Jo, was thrilled. Sarah-Jo was interviewed on [Channel 7 News](#) for Recycle Smart's on-demand recycling service, which collects items like soft plastics and polystyrene from your front door.

Ongoing SO Shire advice to Business, Education and Community Outreach

SO SHIRE continues to work with local businesses around the Shire, consulting on how to implement the most effective sustainability practices across their business operations. SO Shire has continued their work with Tradies GyMEA, Westfield Miranda, Caringbah Rotary and they continue to work closely with local students and schools including Como Public School's Environment Committee. SO SHIRE was also a supporter and mentor for the ANSTO National Science Week hackathon for schools on the 2021 theme – FOOD: Different by Design

SO Shire education programs will continue after COVID restrictions ease, but in the meantime, they have been advising local teachers on marine science and sustainability.

Not just plastics and waste

In April 2021, Sarah-Jo was honoured to attend the Meeting of Two Cultures Ceremony at Kurnell. The day brought stakeholders and community members from all parts of "our bay" together to acknowledge the first encounter between James Cook and crew of the HMB Endeavour with the custodians of the world's oldest continuing living culture some 251 years ago on the shores of the Dharawal Nation. This important event saw cultural workshops, performances and stories shared from the living descendants of the families connected to this Aboriginal and European history of this site of first contact.

SO SHIRE joined [Sutherland Shire Reconciliation](#) as a member this year and has been welcomed with open arms at SSR local events. SO SHIRE is honoured to be a member and looks forward to learning and collaborating further in connecting to country and local education.

[Sea Week](#) is Australia's major national public awareness campaign to focus community awareness, provide information and encourage an appreciation of the sea. The 2020 theme was, "The Ocean Supports A Great Diversity of Life and Ecosystems". Sea Week gives us a fantastic opportunity to promote educational issues of relevance to the marine environment. To celebrate SO SHIRE hosted a local poetry [competition](#) for Primary, Secondary and Open categories.

As part of Sarah-Jo's advocacy for healthy oceans and waterways, she was involved in events for this year's Sea Week including our virtual presentation [connectivity between the headwaters of Port Hacking down to the sea](#) thanks to Gary Dunnett, Executive Officer of National Parks Association of NSW. She was thrilled to also be selected as the Sea Week co-ordinator for the Australian Association of Environmental Education.

SO SHIRE, Seaside Scavenge and the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre were fortunate enough to hold a successful and well-attended film screening in June, featuring The Story of Plastic and SANCTUARY to celebrate and raise awareness of World Ocean Day at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Art Centre in Gynea.

You can view Plastic Free Sutherland Shire certified local businesses [here](#).

The SO SHIRE podcast is due to be released in 2022.

Web: <https://www.soshire.org>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgpW4RuU7PfyFjqoRMKOK4Q>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/so_shire/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SOSShire/>

Web: <https://www.soshire.org/plastic-free-sutherland-shire>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/plasticfree_sutherlandshire/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PlasticFreeSutherlandShire/>

First National Park - World Heritage Listing for the Royal Reserves Bob Crombie

The activities of First National Park to gain World Heritage Listing of the Royal Reserves (Royal and Heathcote National Parks and Garawarra State Conservation Area) has taken a break while COVID restrictions prevail and until more favourable political conditions develop.



Although First National Park has been arguing for some time now that World Heritage Listing for Royal Reserves could be gained on their own merits and provided evidence to support this, it is of the opinion that the government is stuck in its original beliefs and arguments that to gain World Heritage Listing there would need to be the establishment of a new theme and a serial listing with other countries notably the USA with Yosemite and Yellowstone. Minister Matt Kean reiterated this in his reply to us on 29th May 2020,

“... NPWS commissioned several reports from World Heritage experts to review the World Heritage values of Royal National Park and Reserves. The reports advised that the Royal National Park and Reserves are unlikely to meet the UNESCO threshold for inscription on the World Heritage List and, therefore, did not recommend it as a standalone nomination. Further advice provided in the expert reports was that the only potential pathway for the inclusion of Royal National Park and Reserves on the Australian World Heritage Tentative List might be as part of a serial nomination which could identify a collection of sites under a new theme – the evolution of protected areas and conservation philosophy.”

“As you note, the process to establish a new theme and pursue a serial nomination would be complex. At this stage, the NSW Government is not proposing to take further steps to progress this, given the significant resources that would be involved in pursuing it.”

Encouraged by the report by Bart J.M. van der Aa (2005) Preserving the heritage of humanity? Obtaining world heritage status and the impacts of listing, and many of its fine arguments, First National Park will continue to develop its arguments and, when conditions are more favourable in the future, represent them. We will continue to use Dr Geoff Mosely’s arguments as the basis of our presentation and will further develop some areas such as the spiritual benefits of the reserve, its role in environmental education, its continuing role as a testing ground for new uses and public perspectives, and the standalone values of the Royal Reserves as distinctly Australian reserves worthy in their own right. We will develop the argument that the voices and concerns of the people are just as important and significant as that of the ‘experts,’ scientists and academics. In this respect, the much-loved Royal Reserves have great public support.



Looking after the Royal National Park and Reserves Catherine Reynolds & Tassia Kolesnikow

The State government may have stalled World Heritage listing, but earlier this year a new draft plan of management (PoM) for the Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park and Garrawarra State Conservation Area was put on display and public submissions invited.

It has been twenty years since the last management plan was released. Catherine Reynolds and I had been anticipating the release of this new draft PoM since mid-2020 and liaising with a number of other environmental groups about points we thought needed to be addressed. We lodged a substantial submission, in three parts, which can be viewed on the submissions page of our website.

We cited published literature to substantiate our arguments including those related to compliance issues flagged by our members, including dogs being walked in the park and the proliferation of illegal mountain bike trails. We highlighted the need to eradicate feral pests and install wildlife crossings. Another significant concern we noted after reviewing the draft PoM in more detail was the urgent need for updated fauna surveys. The last comprehensive analysis of vertebrate fauna in the parks is now over ten years old, and that data used to compile that survey is even older.



Fauna surveys are required to guide management decisions. The dated surveys are a real concern, especially when it comes to issues such as fox predation. We know from scat analysis in the parks that foxes prey on swamp wallabies, and a whole range of mammals including long-nosed bandicoots and threatened eastern pygmy-possums. Ground dwelling birds and various lizards are also under threat. We've already had 25 local extinctions in the parks. Animals now believed locally extinct include Platypus, and an otter-like creature called a Rakali, also known as a water rat, which can grow to the same size as platypus. Rakali were last seen at Audley in 1964. There have been a handful of confirmed Greater Gliders sightings in the last 10 years, however, the remaining population may be too small to survive into the future. The last Vertebrate Fauna survey stated there were another 16 threatened plants and 44 threatened animal species in the parks. There could be more, but without a recent survey, it is impossible to know and to adopt effective plans to prevent further extinctions.



Our submission also argued against the draft plan's proposed classification of areas in the park as "zone two" areas: in essence, handing over portions of the park to mountain bikes, even areas with endangered ecological communities. The Sutherland Shire Council submission on the draft plan expressed concern that swamp wallabies will become extinct around Temptation Creek if mountain bike trails are allowed to continue to proliferate there.

We have asked that this part of the PoM be withdrawn or substantially revised to ensure that the conservation values according to the National Parks and Wildlife (NPW) Act 1974 are met.

All of this is discussed in more detail in our submission so please have a look and let us know if you have any questions. Lockdown restrictions have highlighted to Sutherland Shire residents how very fortunate we are to have the Royal and surrounding National Parks in our backyard to escape to. While we have not yet been able to obtain World Heritage listing, the Royal and Garrawarra are recognised on Australia's National Heritage List as having outstanding significance to the nation. The National Parks and Wildlife Act requires the ecological integrity of the Parks to be protected for future generations. We need to be certain that occurs.

Sutherland Shire Council Community / Verge Gardens Policy

Tassia Kolesnikow

Many councils across the Greater Sydney area have verge garden policies that enable communities to experience the health and biodiversity benefits of footpath planting, whilst also protecting both residents and councils from the obstacles and hazards that they may present. Last year, Wollongong City Council made a splash by announcing a verge garden policy and handed out free plant vouchers to encourage residents to take part in building gardens on verges to enhance neighbourhood connections. As the former chief planner from Wollongong City Council, Andrew Carfield, recently took up the position as Director of Shire Planning at Sutherland Shire Council we are hopeful that his expertise may help to implement a verge garden policy here. Former Sutherland council staff member, David Ackroyd and Sutherland Bewilderer, Bob Crombie worked together for many years, engaging with community members to replace desolate, dying grass verges with colourful, aesthetically pleasing vegetation that provided much needed habitat for insects and larger fauna.

The photo in this report is one of many areas that benefited from their work. Unfortunately, the verge garden policy that they proposed has yet to be accepted by council. Communication with council indicates that while the environmental unit would like to see guidelines released, they anticipate that adoption of a verge garden policy may be done in a gradual manner to placate concerns from council staff working on road and footpath safety. Currently, residents must apply for permission to plant anything other than grass on nature strips, but it is anticipated that council may graduate to publishing a list of acceptable alternatives to grass, which will allow residents to avoid the hassle of lodging an application.

One of several verge gardens in the Shire created by David Ackroyd, Bob Crombie and community members.

On a positive note, Council recently contacted Bob Crombie to ask if he'd like to be involved in installing a verge garden on the corner of President Avenue and Glencoe street in Sutherland as land will be freed up by Council's plans to shift the Glencoe Street playground southward. This offer is a positive sign that the council is still engaged on the issue and aware of Bob Crombie's ability to contribute.

The Covid 19 crisis has no doubt impacted priorities for council but the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre will continue to work on this important issue. We are following the implementation of good policy in other Local Government Areas and developing promotional and educational materials that could be used in the Shire when a user-friendly verge garden policy is introduced. We also hope to participate in relevant local fairs and fetes (when public health orders preventing these kinds of gatherings ease) so that we can get out and speak with the Shire community about verge planting. The Sutherland Shire is well placed to foster biodiversity through verge planting. Footpath gardens can bring people together, adding food, flowers and greenery to land that may otherwise be a barren and underutilised resource. We hope to bring news of more substantial progress in our next Annual Report.

Bewildering Wildlife in your backyard

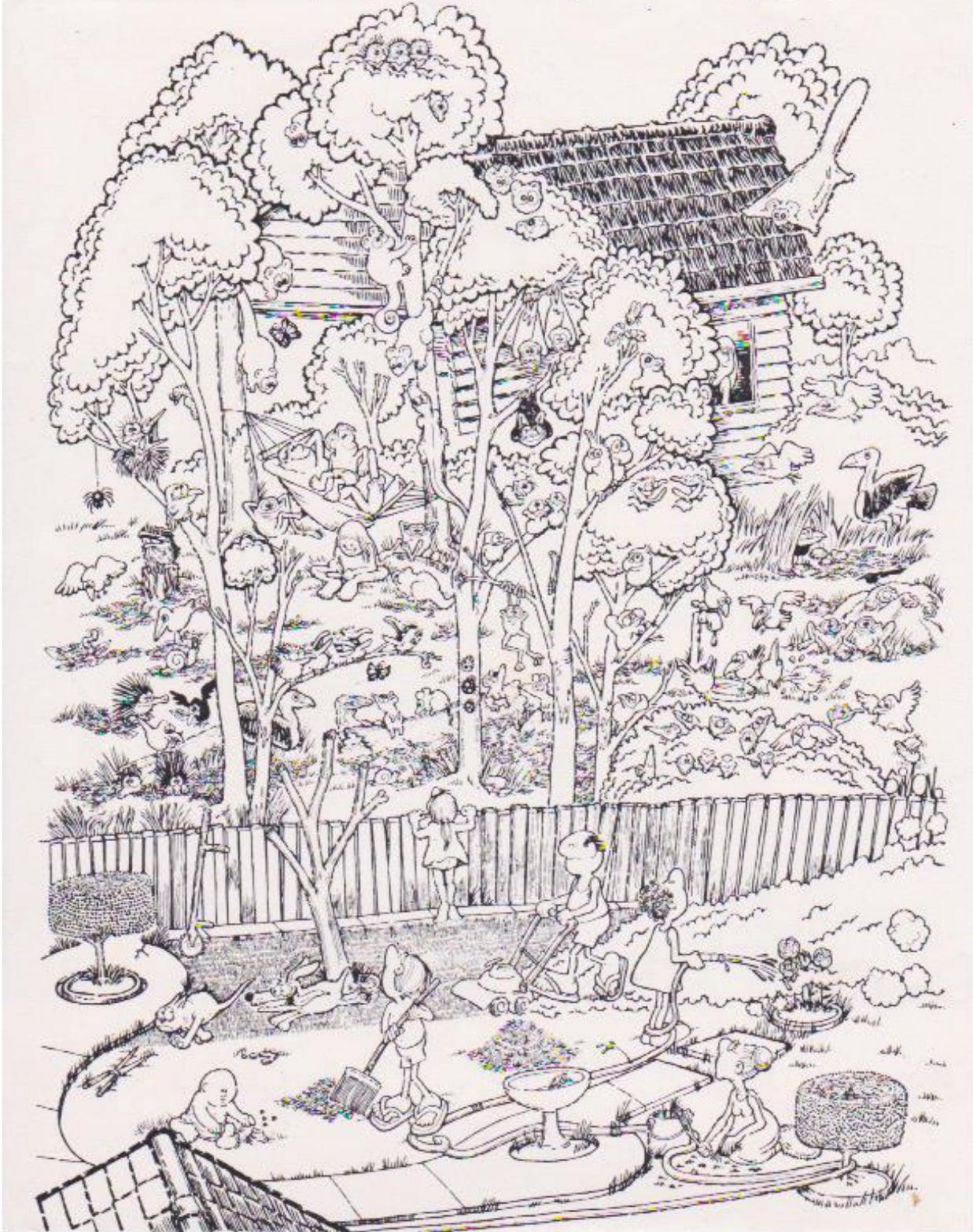


IMAGE: Bob's favourite Bewilder your backyard Qld NPWS poster from the 1970s

Koalas and Resilient Habitat around Sutherland Shire

Catherine Reynolds

It's a great feeling when long term advocacy on an issue achieves results, and there has been good news recently with the campaign for better protection for Sutherland Shire koalas.

We put in a submission to Sutherland and Wollongong councils in July 2020 with recommendations for improving koala habitat and wildlife corridors. This was built on the insights and advocacy of Environment Centre member and former NPWS ranger Bob Crombie, and also Sharyn Cullis from Georges River Environmental Alliance; combining their local knowledge with updated bionet statistics, additional research I carried out on other wildlife overpasses / underpasses, and recommendations from the Senate Inquiry which found koalas would become extinct by 2050 without urgent government intervention.

Sutherland councillors subsequently passed a motion in Oct 2020 stating that Council should write to the State Member for Heathcote, Lee Evans MP, and the Department of Planning Industry and Environment asking them to request Transport NSW put in wildlife corridors to protect native animals along Heathcote Road.

Council Meeting

23 August 2021

MOT013-21 KOALA MANAGEMENT

Pursuant to Notice, Councillor Steinwall submitted the following Motion:

THAT Council:

1. Receive an interim report as part of the 2021/22 Operational Plan on Koala Management measures taken to date to protect the koala population in Council owned or controlled lands, create awareness and stakeholder engagement.
2. Write to Transport of NSW requesting:
 - a. Larger and clearer signs on Heathcote Road at koala crossing hotspots to inform and warn motorists.
 - b. Koala crossings be installed at Lucas Heights and at the Heathcote Bridge over the Woronora River.
 - c. Funding towards a Koala Management Plan.
3. Continue to provide information and education on koala habitats and movement in Council owned or controlled lands, via existing engagement channels.
4. Give consideration to a Koala Management Plan as an enhancement to Council's Biodiversity Strategy as part of the 2022/2024 Delivery Program planning process.

in late August 2021 Councillor Diedree Steinwall put forward a motion requesting Transport NSW to take further action, and calling for Sutherland Council to develop a formal Koala Management Plan. Sutherland Shire councillors voted unanimously to pass this second motion. A Sutherland Shire Koala Management Plan was not on anybody's radar a year ago.

IMAGE: Sutherland Shire Council motion put forward by Councillor Diedree Steinwall 23 August, 2021

Through this process it has been wonderful to work with a number of other local community and environmental groups who signed our initial submission to Council. Together over the course of the year we've liaised with the NSW Koala Strategy team, and met with them

and Transport NSW at the Sandy Point Bridge kill zone. We wrote to local councillors, the NSW Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean MP, and put in a longer submission to TransportNSW regarding the project to widen Heathcote Road Bridge at Woronora River.



IMAGE: At Sandy Point Community Centre - Left to right: Ian Hill, President, *Friends of the Royal* - Gary Schoer, Secretary, *National Parks Association Southern Sydney* - Kim Wagstaff, President, *Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society* - Ross Jeffree, *International Union for Conservation of Nature* - Dr Sharyn Cullis, Secretary, *Georges River Environmental Alliance* - Andrew Joyce, *Sandy Point Residents Association* - Kelly Brown, Wildlife Officer, *Sandy Point Residents Association* - Dr Catherine Reynolds, then Executive Officer, *Sutherland Shire Environment Centre*.

All of these efforts to lobby various arms of government to put in overpasses and underpasses at key sites where they are needed have gone hand in hand with a larger campaign to build community awareness.

It's great that more people are now realising we have koalas in the Shire, and that they are so excited by this.

Koalas and their joeys have been sighted in Heathcote National Park since at least 2016. We've added 8 previously unreported koala sightings in and around Heathcote National park to the Bionet database using information provided by community members. Recording every sighting is critically important for planning hazard reduction burns.

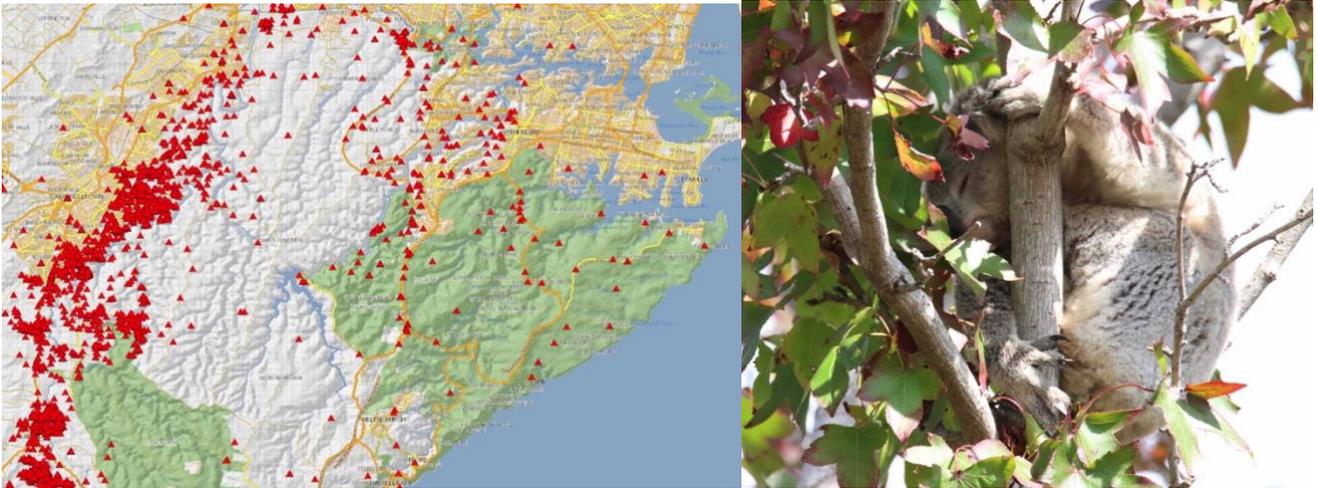


IMAGE: (L) Sleeping Koala at Forbes Creek: Photo credit Sharon Redman, (R) Bionet - Koala sightings around the Shire to 17 August, 2021

The government also uses that data when making decisions about the need for protective measures on roads. With other sightings the National Parks Association has also since written to the Environment Minister suggesting a listing for Heathcote National Park as a site of “Intergenerational significance”, a new category under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Another initiative intended to build public awareness has been providing seed funding to support the production of a film about Sydney’s Campbelltown koala colony. Filmmakers and Sutherland Shire Environment Centre members Greg Miller and Dr Georgia Wallace-Crabbe previously made the highly regarded documentary *Cultivating Murder*, which focused on the death of Environment Officer Glen Turner, and illegal land clearing around Moree.

There’s a grim backstory to their current film with huge housing developments planned in prime koala habitat. Koalas from the Campbelltown colony are healthy and breeding, and believed to be migrating outward, including toward the Shire. Koalas can travel a surprising distance when they want to, but there are also many obstacles to their safe passage. Finding dead koalas on roads is unfortunately one of the most common ways we come to understand which corridors they use, and koalas are regularly killed on Heathcote Road.

We cannot be complacent about this loss with predictions the species could be extinct by 2050. At the present we have a situation where as a result of our advocacy Transport NSW has commissioned a report into potential mitigation measures that might be taken at the Sandy Point kill zone, but this has been delayed, the NSW Koala Strategy team has advised that funds are limited, and there may be other priorities.

Currently Transport NSW does not even seem prepared to erect warning signs about koalas being on the road, despite so many being killed. Pressure from the public is critical in achieving any policy change.

To this end we were glad to be able to host two presentations showing excerpts from Greg

and Georgia's Koala Corridor film at Hazelhurst Gallery at Gymea, and Bundeena Community and Services Club. Both venues waived hire charges for these events. The Leader featured an article on the film. Panel speakers included Chris Gambian from the Nature Conservation Council, Saul Dean from the Total Environment Centre, Ian Hill from Friends of the Royal, Gary Schoer from the National Parks Association, and Bob Crombie, former NPWS ranger. Greg and Georgia still need funding to finish the film. Further information is available at this link: <https://documentaryaustralia.com.au/project/the-koala-corridor-working-title/>



IMAGE: Preview of The Koala Corridor film at Hazelhurst Gallery, Gymea Left to right: Dr Tassia Kolesnikow, Chair, Sutherland Shire Environment Centre - Chris Gambian, Executive Officer, Nature Conservation Council – Saul Deane, Total Environment Centre - Dr Sharyn Cullis, Secretary, Georges River Environmental Alliance - Greg Miller and Dr Georgia Wallace Crabbe, filmmakers, The Koala Corridor

Another positive and exciting initiative is the grant funding we have extended to Dr Chad Beranek, to carry out drone surveys for koalas in the Royal National Park. These types of surveys are a new and innovative way of surveying wildlife populations. Chad is a Sutherland Shire Environment Centre member, has carried out this work previously for the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and has written a number of academic publications about this work. Covid has put a temporary pause to these plans, but the survey will go ahead after restrictions are lifted.

It will be exciting when this survey takes place because there has been a huge buzz over the discovery of koalas in the Royal National Park. "Royal" the koala has become a quasi-celebrity. First named "Forrest" when he was found in Kirrawee, Environment Minister Matt Kean took advantage of a Channel 7 photo op to rename him "Kirrawee" as he was released back into the park: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=387209848925945>



IMAGE: "Royal" the koala, media icon, being released in the Royal National Park: Channel Seven news report

"Kirrawee" the koala has since renamed yet again, and is now known as "Royal". He's been part of a Friends of the Royal National Park and Science for Wildlife tracking program.

It was wonderful and alarming to hear reports of Royal on Bundeena Drive, and

then see him perched in a tree overhanging the road one evening in April this year, looking very healthy. Going by previous sightings we believe there are other koalas in the park, we just don't know how many.

Measures to protect koalas and other wildlife requires connectivity to be restored between our national parks. Fragmented landscapes prevent species repopulating an area after bushfires. If only a small number of animals remain in an area genetic diversity becomes another issue. The Royal National Park is unfortunately a 'habitat island': the Princes Highway and the F6 are 30-40m wide barriers. The South Coast train line adds another 25m to that. Failing to provide crossings over and / or under these barriers means accepting local extinctions.

We've written to a number of politicians about the issue; Bob Crombie contacted Matt Kean, who then advised us to put the Cawleys Road proposal as a submission to the Royal National Park draft plan of management, and this has been done, along with recommendations for other possible overpass and underpass locations along the F6. Millions of dollars are being spent on wildlife crossings at the Northern Beaches linking Ku-ring-gai and Garigal National Parks. The proposals we've put forward will cost a fraction of that amount.

Compared to the obstacles blocking passage to the Royal, Heathcote Road does not form such a wide barrier, but the number and speed of cars and trucks along that road make it a huge risk to koalas trying to cross it. The Transport NSW report detailing koala strike mitigation measures along Heathcote Road should be released shortly.

None of the solutions we are proposing are likely to occur in the short term. But we need action, and no one wants more koalas to die on that road. In the meantime it is possible koala habitat could be threatened by development even in the Shire in future. In June this year we put in a submission opposing a proposed subdivision at Woronora Heights which has the potential to chip away at an important corridor from the Woronora River leading through to Forbes Creek, then Loftus Creek, and the one remaining site in Loftus adjacent to the A1 which would be suitable for a wildlife overpass through to the Royal National Park.

If any members wish to help with any aspects of this campaign we would welcome your assistance.

For more information see the website: <https://www.ssec.org.au/our-campaigns/koalas-and-resilient-habitat-in-the-sutherland-shire/>

Our Heathcote Road Bridge (at Woronora River) widening project submission: <https://www.ssec.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/HeathcoteBridgeSubmission2021.pdf>

The I Spy Koala app to register sightings: <https://koala.nsw.gov.au/i-spy-wide/>

Save Our Shire (SOS)

Neil de Nett

It has been a difficult year for everyone coping with the effects of the COVID. Face to face meetings were, and still are, not permitted and have been replaced with Zoom meetings and Facebook. Not nearly as friendly, particularly if you are not computer literate.

Until recently, development in our suburbs continued unabated, particularly highrise units. These buildings seem to continually increase in height and size, a trend which is most noticeable in areas such as Sutherland, Kirrawee, Caringbah, Woolooware and Cronulla. There has been a temporary pause because of limitations imposed on construction sites due to the virus.

Rather belatedly, council and state planners have awakened to the conclusion that increasing population would require more open space. The virus has exposed their lack of foresight as councils struggle with maintaining separation rules in public places. In August last year the State government offered councils funding for new and improved open spaces providing they fast tracked development applications. What convoluted thinking is that?

There were some concessions from planning rules during the past year for shire residents. In September 2020 following a request from Sutherland Shire Council, the Planning Minister Rob Stokes agreed to exclude the R2 low density residential zone in the Shire from the new system. Well done, Council.

This new code allows dual occupancies, terraces and manor houses to be approved as complying development within 20 days and without neighbour notification if the proposal meets requirements in the code. It is a very heavy-handed way of forcing extra development in a low density zone. It would have been a disaster for our Shire.

There is a trend in Sydney and Sutherland Shire, of developers showing a reluctance to accept the planning controls that apply to their developments. Several major proposed developments in the Shire do not comply with the Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Some examples of this are:

Cronulla Monro Park: The Sammut plans for building opposite Monro Park do not comply with the current LEP and there is intense community opposition to the development on this site. Council supports it.

Woolooware Toyota Site: The quote below from [the Leader's excellent article about this application](#) is from the developer's statement when the purchase was announced in June last year.

"Aliro has a 10-year vision to convert the site into a significant commercial, industrial, educational and recreational business park.

Aliro's proposal - which includes retaining existing buildings - is expected to create a large number of jobs for the local community while delivering an important amenity for the area.

Toyota Australia president and CEO Matthew Callachor said these beneficial aspects of Aliro's proposal had been central to the sale."

Aliro Group acquired the property in 2020 and lodged a Planning Proposal to transform it into "a world class business park". However, this vision was conveniently forgotten when the plans were submitted. Plans now included increasing the permitted maximum building height from 16 metres (five storeys) to 50 metres (15 storeys) and additional uses of a tavern, boutique hotel and shops. Council supported the plans after some minor variations.

Caringbah: A nine-storey development with ground level shops and 48 apartments is proposed for the centre of the Caringbah shopping strip. The proposal exceeds both the building height (by five metres) and floor space ratio limits in the 2015 LEP. The sites were purchased when the current planning rules were in place. The planning rules should not be ignored just because the developer asks for more intensive development.

Council, in 2013, advertised for submissions from residents to determine what residents wanted for their Shire. When the Draft LEP was gazetted in 2015 residents would reasonably have expected that those rules would apply to developments until the next LEP. Why should residents have any confidence in the planning system and the current LEP when they are breached so easily by developers?

Good News Story: There was some very good news early this year - saving the homes of the residents in Jannali from resumption by the State Government for a parking station. Described by the homeowners as the 'worst idea ever', Sutherland Shire residents showed that people power can force a government to abandon a stupid idea. This was a tremendous response from Shire residents, and it was pleasing to see all councillors uniting to support the Jannali homeowners.

Sunny Shire Jonathan Prendergast

Sunny Shire is a community energy campaign in the Sutherland Shire that was established to help the Shire community receive the benefits of renewable energy and energy efficiency such as cost savings, self-reliance, resilience and lower impact on our environment.

The Sunny Shire Team, led by Jonathan Prendergast and Jay Banyer, have been supporting Shire residents to live more sustainably through initiatives including: solar bulk buy discounts; providing information and insights about renewables, energy efficiency; and sharing information about electric vehicles and renewable energy developments.

The Sunny Shire volunteers run the [Sunny Shire Facebook page](#) and also contribute to the open Facebook group, [Sutherland Shire Solar Group](#), with information and advice. A range of renewable energy topics are covered; recent posts addressed the cheapest way to heat your house if you get off gas, getting the most from rooftop solar in the face of declining feed in tariffs and electric vehicle and solar developments in the Shire.

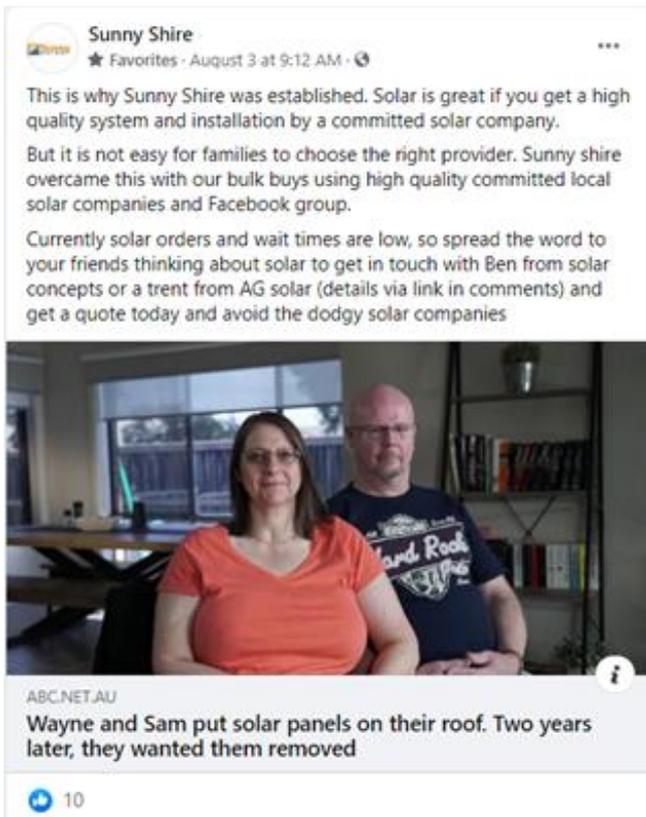


IMAGE: A [recent Facebook post](#) - "This is why Sunny Shire was established." Sunny Shire's free and impartial advice has helped many Shire households avoid dodgy, fly-by-night solar suppliers.

Solar Bulk Buy update

As of September 2020, over 200 households had installed solar via the Sunny Shire initiative. Only high quality committed local solar companies are recommended. With the recommended suppliers reaching capacity, the popular solar bulk buy program has been placed on hold. However, a ["community energy discount"](#) has been arranged with the recommended local solar companies.

Sunny Shire volunteers are still available to answer any questions and provide unbiased advice. Households can also [sign up](#) to hear about the next solar bulk buy.

Sunny Schools

It has been great to be able to contribute to Port Hacking High School's installation of 100kW [KO1] of rooftop solar in 2020. Sunny Shire found that, with the assistance of the NSW Government's Department of Education, getting solar for schools was not only achievable, it resulted in ongoing energy savings. The [Sunny Schools webpage](#) provides more information on the process and potential savings.

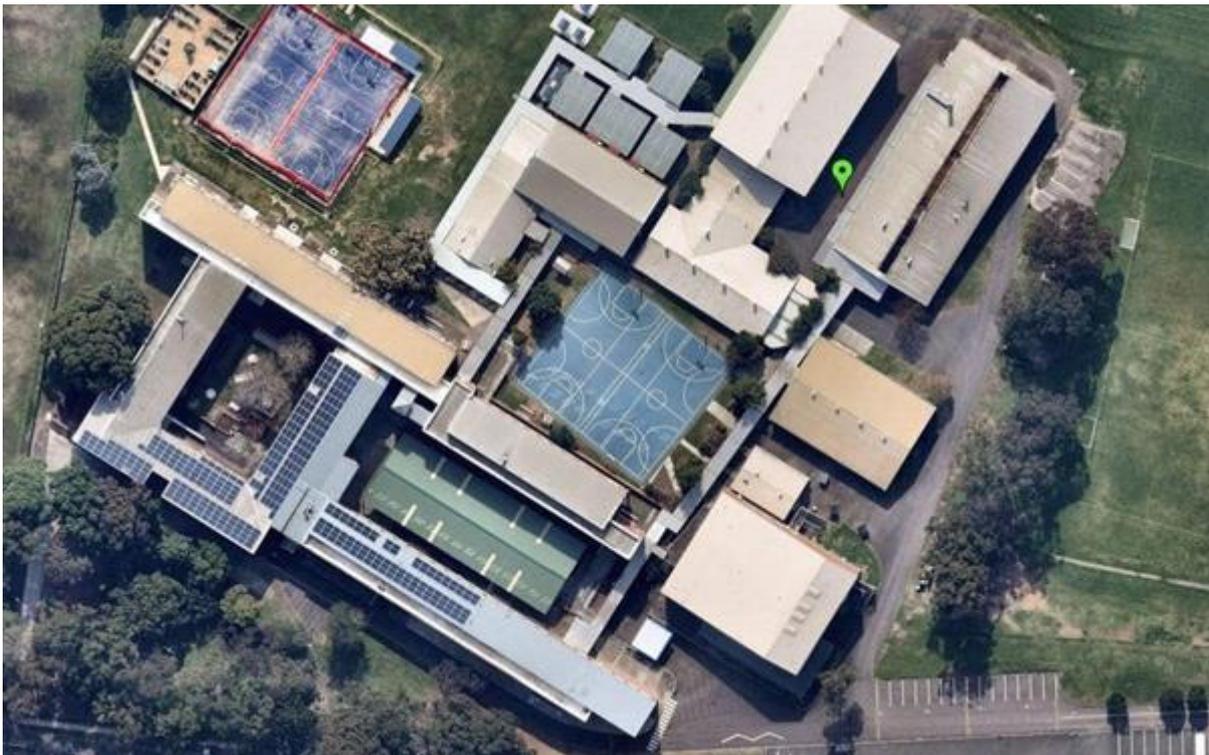


IMAGE: In 2020, Port Hacking High School joined other shire schools like Menai and Caringbah High in having modern high capacity rooftop solar.

Community Battery Project

This last two years, Sunny Shire volunteers have been further investigating potential for a community battery in Bundeena. New technologies such as batteries and solar are becoming more cost effective and advanced. The Bundeena community was an early solar adopter. Furthermore, there are challenges in supply of electricity to Bundeena and Maianbar, due to the area's remoteness from the Sydney grid. For the opportunity to be realised, the project is very reliant on the interest of local grid owner, Ausgrid. We are looking forward to an improvement in battery affordability and are keenly monitoring grant opportunities to help us make this dream a reality.

Sustainability Award Sarah-Jo Lobwein

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre's sponsorship of the Sustainability Award in the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards aims to support, encourage and reward the Shire's sustainable businesses. Sustainable business practices are critical if we are to protect the Sutherland Shire from pollution and environmental degradation. There is tremendous opportunity and scope for improvement in the sustainability of Shire businesses, both large and small.

A strong field of nominees for the 2020 award made judging a difficult task. [The Point Preschool](#), a not-for-profit, community-based preschool that has worked consistently over many years to embed sustainability into the daily practice and curriculum of children and staff, was announced the winner at the September 2020 award ceremony. Past SSEC board member Lyn McLean and Sarah-Jo Lobwein from SO SHIRE attended the ceremony as coordinators and judges of the 2020 category.

We are delighted to have Catherine Lee from The Point Preschool join us at this year's AGM. The Point Preschool is a certified Plastic Free Sutherland Shire school, and you can check out a small video on [SO SHIRE YouTube](#).

[Tradies](#) – The Sutherland District Trade Union Club – was Highly Commended for its amazing environmental initiatives, which include plastic reduction, solar power and promoting cultural change.



IMAGES: Catherine Lee, Director of The Point Preschool, with Sue Vrahas receiving the 2020 Sustainability Award, The Point Preschool was also Highly Commended in the 2019 Awards, Tradies Caringbah's full solar installation, Tradies President, Dennis Mc Hugh receives the Highly Commended Award 2020.

For more details around the sustainability initiatives of the 2020 Local Business Award sustainability winners, please see [our website](#).

This year we have once more had the pleasure of receiving nominations for great businesses that are working hard to make products and operations more sustainable. The winner will be announced at the Local Business Awards later this year when COVID restrictions are eased.

The pandemic has placed unprecedented strain on many local businesses. We encourage our SSEC community to support Shire businesses that are striving for sustainability. We look forward to sharing the 2021 winner with members following the official announcement.

Treasurer's Report

Lily Meier

Income

The 2020/2021 Financial Year saw SSEC return a profit of \$206,541 which is an increase from the \$100,477 profit as reported last year.

This is due to the following:

- The one off settlement of the WALSH Estate \$103,417
- ATO Cash Stimulus \$ 6,458
- Increase in membership subscriptions from \$932 to \$1,514 which is an increase of 62%, which could be due to the current climate situation
- Surplus funds have been invested with Australian Ethical Managed Funds.

On the other hand, Rental income from the Merton Street property decreased from \$72,591 to \$63,633, a decrease of 12%, due to the rent renegotiation because of COVID.

Donations decreased from \$23,903 to \$10,763 due to delayed receipt of the donation from the LEAF Trust.

Interest income decreased from \$203 to \$111 due to the lower interest rates.

Expenses

Overall expenses increased from \$72,123 to \$124, 958 due to the following:

- Increased Insurance costs
- Legal fees relating to Walshe Estate settlement
- Increased wages and associated expenses
- Website upgrade

Balance sheet

Turning to the Balance Sheet, the property purchased in 2002 and our healthy bank balance dominate the Balance Sheet of SSEC.

The loan on the Merton Street property has now been repaid to the Commonwealth bank.

Our Bank balance remains healthy and provides a sound footing for campaign support, works associated with grants and other activities.

Summary

An Audit is in the process of being completed by CHARLIE TRIKILIS from KZC TAX & ACCOUNTING SERVICES PTY LTD. The audit was not able to be completed in time for the AGM as we needed to find an auditor who would do the audit for a reasonable fee, (\$440).

SSEC continues to pursue ways to generate sustainable, long term income from its' operational activities (subscriptions, fundraising and donations) however, there is an element of financial security for SSEC because of the rental income generated from the Merton Street premises and bequest from the Walshe estate.

Conclusion

This was my first year in the role of Treasurer of SSEC and I would like to thank the board members for their support and encouragement. It has been a pleasure working with such a talented group of people willing to commit the time and effort required to support SSEC and advance its' causes, especially during the current challenging times.

The Management Committee would like to thank past and present donors and financial supporters of SSEC whose support and vision have enabled SSEC to be financially independent.

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Profit and Loss Comparison

July 2020 - June 2021

	TOTAL	
	JUL. 2020 - JUN. 2021	JUL. 2019 - JUN. 2020 (PY)
Income		
Donations	130,530.00	0.00
General donations	100.00	50.00
Tax Deductible Donations	10,763.83	23,903.79
Total Donations	141,393.83	23,953.79
Grants	0.00	3,000.00
Membership Subscriptions	1,514.41	932.63
Rental Income	63,633.33	72,591.43
Total Income	A\$206,541.57	A\$100,477.85
GROSS PROFIT	A\$206,541.57	A\$100,477.85
Other Income		
ATO Cash Stimulus	6,458.00	10,000.00
Interest income	111.76	203.15
Total Other Income	A\$6,569.76	A\$10,203.15
Expenses		
Accounting and bookkeeping	239.02	188.12
Advertising and marketing	679.00	435.45
Bank charges and fees	207.63	151.28
Conferences and seminars	0.00	132.74
Contractor Expenses (non salary)	0.00	1,009.09
Depreciation	3,580.00	3,580.00
Environmental projects	0.00	0.00
(Over)development	0.00	38.14
AAEE Conference	0.00	976.68
Climate Action	0.00	2,557.15
Eco-News	1,600.00	1,805.90
Eco-Savvy	0.00	1,500.00
Environmental Education	0.00	3,829.64
Koalas	2,000.00	0.00
Other	4,710.63	1,350.51
Phil Smith Speaking for the Planet	1,010.00	0.00
POWA	479.00	0.00
SO Shire	3,889.23	4,805.27
Total Environmental projects	13,688.86	16,863.29
General Expenses	-18.18	86.59
Gifts and donations	86.36	0.00
Insurance	1,059.51	370.00
Interest expense	0.02	248.11
Legal and professional fees	33,257.13	0.00
Meals and entertainment	284.36	0.00
Meeting Expenses	496.81	69.18
Office expenses	130.00	926.50
Postage & shipping	179.16	335.37

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Profit and Loss Comparison

July 2020 - June 2021

	TOTAL	
	JUL. 2020 - JUN. 2021	JUL. 2019 - JUN. 2020 (PY)
Printing, stationery & supplies	111.09	0.00
Rates & Strata Fees	13,632.77	15,124.08
Staff amenities	75.00	0.00
Storage	596.36	0.00
Subscriptions	100.00	271.82
Superannuation	4,454.06	2,441.55
Telephone & internet expenses	184.48	3,982.41
Travel expenses	0.00	19.09
Wage expenses	49,691.95	25,700.50
Website	2,243.12	0.00
Workcover expenses	0.00	188.37
Total Expenses	A\$124,958.51	A\$72,123.54
Other Expenses		
BAS Roundoff Gain or Loss	1.90	-0.34
Honorarium	0.00	1,350.00
Total Other Expenses	A\$1.90	A\$1,349.66
NET EARNINGS	A\$88,150.92	A\$37,207.80

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Balance Sheet Comparison

As of June 30, 2021

	TOTAL	
	AS OF JUN. 30, 2021	AS OF JUN. 30, 2020 (PY)
Assets		
Current Assets		
BA Community Access	165,656.75	26,550.86
BA Community Access Card a/c	1,041.64	0.00
BA Public Gift Fund	24,148.36	24,109.06
Cash on hand	68.50	68.50
CBA Main Account	-44.97	24,164.33
CBA Public Gift Fund	0.00	12,024.01
PayPal	1,394.62	31.14
Other current assets	0.30	0.30
Prepayments	505.00	10,505.00
Suspense	0.00	0.00
Undeposited funds	0.00	0.00
Total Current Assets	A\$192,770.20	A\$97,453.20
Long-term assets		
Furniture & Fittings - Merton Street	0.00	0.00
Depreciation	-44,348.00	-40,768.00
Original cost	53,168.00	53,168.00
Total Furniture & Fittings - Merton Street	8,820.00	12,400.00
Merton Street at cost	506,353.00	506,353.00
Total long-term assets	515,173.00	518,753.00
Total Assets	A\$707,943.20	A\$616,206.20
Liabilities and shareholder's equity		
Current liabilities:		
Accrued liabilities	0.00	2,194.94
ATO Clearing Account	-194.00	-4,233.00
GST Liabilities Payable	4,260.99	3,157.26
PAYG Withholdings Payable	24.00	720.00
Payroll clearing	0.00	0.00
Superannuation payable	1,334.29	0.00
Total current liabilities	A\$5,425.28	A\$1,839.20
Non-current liabilities:		
CBA business loan	0.00	0.00
Total non-current liabilities	A\$0.00	A\$0.00
Shareholders' equity:		
Net Income	88,150.92	37,207.80
Opening balance equity	564,428.81	564,428.81
Retained Earnings	49,938.19	12,730.39
Total shareholders' equity	A\$702,517.92	A\$614,367.00
Total liabilities and equity	A\$707,943.20	A\$616,206.20