



STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978

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President's Annual Report

Michelle Leishman

It is with pleasure that I present the President's Report for the year to October 2003. This has been a year of major change for STEP with much reorganisation of the tasks of committee members.

Committee

We welcomed a new treasurer (Thérèse Carew) and reassigned several tasks following the resignations of Hugh Roberts (treasurer) and Neryle Sheldon (minutes secretary). Many thanks to Helen Wortham and Phil Helmore for smoothing this transition. Thanks must go particularly to Helen Wortham for taking on the duties of membership secretary, publications and web management, as well as compilation of the newsletter.

We also streamlined some accounting procedures to make life a little simpler for our new treasurer who has done a good job in her first year of this challenging role!

I thank all committee members for their contributions throughout the past year. With all the committee now on email, communication works quickly and well.

However the committee generally have too many tasks and too little time. In order for STEP to function effectively, we need a strong and diverse committee with a regular input of new ideas. I strongly urge any members who have a little spare time to consider joining the committee – it can be a very rewarding experience!

Transport Issues

STEP has continued to work actively on several fronts. We have maintained our work on transport issues arising from the proposed F3 to Sydney Orbital link road.

Our project officer, Kate Read, worked very effectively on this issue until March, when she took up a position elsewhere. However, fortunately for STEP, Kate then joined the committee and has continued to contribute substantially to our transport campaign throughout the year.

This has included many meetings with local groups and politicians, a submission to Auslink, production and distribution of several flyers and the printing and distribution of 20 000 brochures. With the release of the four road options in July there was a new flurry of activity with meetings, press releases and letters, culminating in a large submission to the study consultants.

STEP continues to oppose any road link, as it would offer no real solution to Sydney's transport problems, and instead urges investment in sustainable transport solutions including mass transit and transport demand management. The STEP web site covers this campaign comprehensively.

B2/B3 Corridor

STEP has also worked on the B2/B3 rezoning issue. With the freeway corridor abandoned, Planning NSW has finally submitted a rezoning application for the Comenarra Parkway to Kissing Point Road section to Council. This has taken several frustrating years. While the application proposes zoning several areas of important bushland as Open Space, it also proposes housing on several key pieces of bushland that function as important bushland links. A copy of our submission is posted on our web site. I expect that this issue will continue well into next year.

Other Bushland Issues

Other issues that STEP has worked on this past year include inappropriate clearing of Adventist Hospital land for fire hazard reduction and funding issues for Lane Cove National Park arising from the additions to the northern part of the park. Both of these issues will also no doubt continue next year.

Publications

The reprinted *Field Guide to the Bushland of the Lane Cove Valley* and the map, *Walking Tracks of the Lane Cove Valley*, continue to sell steadily. Both will get a sales boost next year with the release of the new maps of the walking tracks of Middle Harbour.

This project consists of the production of two maps, covering an area from Garigal National Park in the north to the bushland reserves of the northern side of Sydney Harbour. It will also join into the existing Lane Cove map.

Work on the Middle Harbour maps is continuing but nearing completion, and we expect to launch early in 2004.

Many thanks to John Martyn for initiating and leading this exciting project and to Bruno Krockenberger for managing map production.

Environmental Education

STEP has also continued to support environmental education through the Pam Morse Bequest Fund. This year we awarded grants to Warrawee Public School and Ku-ring-gai Creative Arts High School to support their environmental initiatives.

We are also again providing the STEP Environmental Prize at the Intel Young Scientist Awards, which this year went to Andrew Stewart of Karabar Distance Education Centre for his project *Artificial Wetlands: Can Carex appressa Prevent Eutrophication in Australian Waterways?*

Activities

This year's activities program has been very successful. We have hosted well-attended talks by Anne-Marie Poirrier on environmentally-friendly pest management in the home, Stephen Doggett (medical entomology, Westmead Hospital) on everything you wanted to know about ticks, Michael Batley on native bees and tonight by Ian Hutton on the weed eradication program on world-heritage listed Lord Howe Island.

We also ran three bushwalks (Murrumbidgee Track led by Bill Jones in April, Bantry Bay led by Gerald Holder in August and Middle Harbour foreshore led by John Balint in October) that were very popular.

Newsletters

We published five newsletters (numbers 116 to 120) thanks to Bruno Krockenberger and Helen Wortham.

Representation

STEP has been represented on Ku-ring-gai Council's Natural Areas Advisory Committee and the Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists.

The Coming Year

Next year will be busy with the launch of the Middle Harbour maps and celebration of 25 years of STEP scheduled. STEP will continue to participate in the B2/B3 rezoning and F3 to Sydney Orbital link road processes as well as in the rezoning of the UTS campus at Lindfield.

I am sure that the new committee will continue to be an effective advocate for Ku-ring-gai's environment on these and other issues as well as a strong supporter of environmental education and awareness.