



STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978. No.75 Oct. 1995

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of STEP Inc. will be held at 8.00 pm on Thursday, 19th October, 1995, at St. Andrews Church Hall, Vernon St., South Turramurra.

The business for the meeting will be to receive the President's Report and the Treasurer's Report, and to elect the Officers and Committee for 1995/96.

The meeting will be followed by a short commentary by Yvonne Langshaw on her artworks, on display around the hall, and then by a talk by John Martyn.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served during the social part of the evening.

Please join your Committee for a pleasant evening with some very interesting entertainment and stimulating conversation.

DIARY DATES

November Bushwalk - A bushwalk with a difference is being planned for November. In the past we have done our walking in the Lane Cove Valley, or other parts of the Sydney metropolitan bushland, but we have decided it was time to go further afield. Bouddi National Park on the Central Coast is a beautiful natural area for an afternoon's bushwalk, and it's not too far away to reach comfortably. The date will be Sunday, 5th November, 1995.

Detailed arrangements have not yet been made, and there will not be another Newsletter to convey details to members before that date, so it will be necessary to contact your Committee if you are interested to join the walk, to obtain details about meeting place and time etc.

Contact numbers will be Sue Jones 449 4718, Jennifer Schwarz 44 2106, John Martyn 449 7962, Neroli Lock 489 5794, or Bruno 449 1985.

We are also planning a Christmas BBQ on the weekend of either 9th or 16th December.

There will be a Newsletter before then to confirm, and advise time and place.

THE LANE COVE NATIONAL PARK IS UNDER THREAT

The Roads and Transport Authority plans to upgrade the road link from the M2 at North Ryde to Chatswood, including a second bridge or high level crossing over the river.

All options under consideration will cause significant damage to the Lane Cove National Park.

Show your objection to these proposals and your appreciation of the Park - gather a few friends and neighbours and

WALK TO THE WEIR

to join the

RALLY

on SUNDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 1995 at 11 AM until 12.30 PM.

There will be a small panel of speakers addressing these proposals and associated subjects, just enough to inform you, not too many to bore you.

Bring your picnic lunch and stay on to enjoy this part of the Park - If it is raining, bring your umbrella!

**HELP SAVE OUR PARK - REMEMBER
ONCE IT IS GONE IT IS GONE FOREVER.**

Organised by community and conservation groups including -
The Blue Gum Preservation Movement Inc., Bicycle NSW Inc., STEP Inc.,
Willoughby Environmental Protection Assoc. Inc., Chatswood West Ward Progress Assoc.,
Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society Inc., Thornleigh Area Bushland Society.

Pam Morse Bequest

Your Committee has decided to separate the \$5000 bequest made by Pam Morse from other STEP funds, and invest it in a term deposit to obtain the best interest, which will then be used for an annual award, after maintaining the value of the capital against the effects of inflation.

The format of the annual award is still subject to discussion, but is intended to be flexible to allow it to be used for best effect under circumstances, which will change from year to year.

This will ensure that future Committees, or indeed members, can have an influence on its use in the spirit of Pam Morse's bequest as well as in keeping with the prevailing priorities.



STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE STATE OF PLAY

In past Newsletters we have presented summaries of the Carr Government's pre-election promises, and some of the actions taken to date.

Our monitor of Government action (or inaction) reports that there has been a flurry of announcements by the Government.

The one which could be expected to have the most immediate effect on our local scene is:

Planning Minister Craig Knowles has announced that a Strategic Planning and Coordinating Body (yet to be named) will be established within the Premier's Department, which will provide a rigorous analysis of infrastructure proposals coming from Sydney Water, RTA etc., to ensure developments comply with sensible planning principles

and with environmental protection requirements. This will need to encompass the results of the audit, commenced by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, of disused commercial and industrial sites close to major transport nodes, and will no doubt reflect on all suburban municipalities, including Ku-ring-gai, and on the future shape and size of Sydney.

Others are:

Planned legislation to --

- *protect endangered plants,
- *proclaim 40000 ha of new

National Parks in the South-East,

- *overhaul EPA legislation,
- *increase illegal dumping

penalties,

- *encourage community

involvement in granting of

discharge licences,

- *protect caves,

- *create two new Marine

Parks (Jervis Bay and Solitary Island),

- *protect core habitats of

endangered animal species,

- *develop recovery plans for

endangered species,

- *transfer the final decision

on water use to the EPA, and

increase the amount allocated to

environmental flows within the

State's river systems.

These announcements all sound like good news for the State's environment, but the proof of the pudding is always in the action (if we may mix several metaphors), so keep watching for the action.



APOLOGIES

STEP apologises to Cr. Rae Jones, St. Ives Ward, for listing her name under the "No Response" category in the pre-election Newsletter, when in fact she had sent in her response. Unfortunately she had omitted to add her name. We are happy to report that her response was in our view a very positive one.

STEP also apologises to Cr. Patricia Barnett, whose response to our pre-election questionnaire was unfortunately received on the day after publication of the pre-election Newsletter.

Again we are happy to report that her response was a positive one, together with that of her husband and running partner, David Barnett.



COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

The candidates elected to Ku-ring-gai Council for the various Wards are:

Comenarra-- Elaine Malicki, Bruce Robinson.

St. Ives -- Tony Hall, Rae Jones.

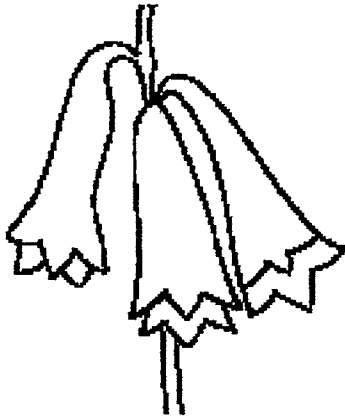
Roseville -- Geoff Swinson, Frances McIver.

Gordon -- David Dobbin, Patricia Barnett.

In Wahroonga Ward Cr. Geddes and Johanne Tobin were unopposed.

We congratulate all Councillors on their election, and trust that they will work together for the preservation and benefit of Ku-ring-gai.

We also thank the other candidates for offering themselves for election.



SPECIAL THANKS go to STEP members Robert Pallin, Janet Fairlie-Cunninghame and Peter Derwent for their dedicated services as Councillors in Ku-ring-gai during the past four years. We wish them well in their future activities, and knowing their public spiritedness we feel sure that they will each in their own way continue to contribute to community affairs.

LIMITS OF SYDNEY

Setting limits to Sydney's growth is currently on the political agenda. According to newspaper reports, a Premier's Department briefing paper issued in May said Sydney would need an extra 520,000 homes if it were to accommodate a population increase from 3.7 to 4.5 million. This represents a town larger than Wagga (NSW's largest inland town) every 2 years over the next 25 years. The briefing paper apparently went on to say that dual occupancy, small-lot subdivision, corridor development, combined with developer levies, revised residential codes and demonstration projects would have only a marginal impact on the problem, at best a slowing of the outward development. The Sydney metropolitan area, as well as many coastal areas are already under tremendous pressure and worsening environmental effects. Premier Carr has stated that it was necessary to limit Sydney's growth, and to provide more housing in

underused or unused inner areas. Growth of air pollution due to car use is of particular concern. Hence the land audit undertaken (referred to in this Newsletter under Govt. action) to identify sites for redevelopment in the middle and inner ring of suburbs, and close to transport nodes.

This approach seems to be in keeping with the views expressed in a paper published by Professor I. Burnley, of the University of NSW. Reportedly, his views are that Sydney's problems are problems of planning and land-use. The significant amount of vacant land in Sydney's industrial belt, railways etc. could be used for housing. Also, street layout, placement of houses and such factors could be used more effectively to increase population density, without resorting to the traditional "medium density" development.

Within Ku-ring-gai, the debate ranges from the view that the overall environment would suffer due to perimeter expansion if urban consolidation is thwarted in Ku-ring-gai to the view that the size of houses in relation to land size should be limited to avoid destroying the character of Ku-ring-gai. It is proper that this debate should take place to ensure that the community has the opportunity to assess its collective wishes about how it wants to live and relate to its surroundings. The risk, which we perceive, is that the pro development lobby may be too persuasive with its argument that the individual owner should have the maximum opportunity to benefit from his property. This would eventually lead to a permanent change of the character, ambience and amenity of Ku-ring-gai to the detriment of the majority of residents and for the benefit of the few, who take advantage early enough to escape the consequences.

Overarching these considerations in importance is the need to set a planned target for Sydney's population, if the debate is to remain relevant.

FIELD GUIDE NEWS

John Martyn's "A Field Guide to the Bushland of the Upper Lane Cove Valley" has proved to be a great publishing success for STEP.

In less than a year from the early December, 1994, date when the book came off the presses we have sold in excess of 800 copies, and the Committee is currently planning a reprint of another 500 copies. The book has generally been acclaimed as being of the highest standard, well worth the recommended retail price of \$34-95, and has achieved sales well outside the immediate area.

The STEP Committee is extremely gratified, but acknowledges that the credit for its success must go to John's thorough preparation of the material and his dedication in nursing it through three years of hard work in his spare time.

Thanks, John.



STEP COMMITTEE

The STEP Committee needs an infusion of new blood. During the year Judy Meacham resigned from the Secretaryship and Hugh Roberts was appointed to the Committee. All Committee members offer themselves for re-election at the coming Annual General Meeting. However, we need a Secretary and a Treasurer, since these positions have only been filled temporarily. If you know of any member who would be prepared to join the Committee, please let us know as soon as possible before the AGM.

M2 MOTORWAY DEVELOPMENTS

The local press on the North Shore has been carrying some news articles, letters and columnists comments about the latest revelations of the effects of the M2 Tollway.

As we had predicted repeatedly, the RTA has now revealed that all sorts of additional works would be necessary to cope with the effects of increased traffic volumes on the local road system, which adjoins the end of this ill-conceived motorway.

The RTA's strategy has always been to reveal its plans piecemeal, so that a particular development can be sold to the community without the community ever realising the full extent of its plans. When the first step is achieved, usually with the help of some members of the public who have been told that it will solve a particular problem, then the next step is revealed. The tactics are always to put up options for this next step, which will be totally unacceptable to at least a portion of the public, cause divisions and exploit the resulting public confusion and conflict to achieve its real plans.

The proposals relating to the Blue Gum Creek, Fullers Rd., Millwood Ave. etc. routes fit this pattern perfectly. STEP and some other groups have been warning of exactly this scenario, and have been urging the community to stick together to oppose these so-called solutions.

The Rally to be held on 8th October at Lane Cove National Park, advertised in this Newsletter, is an appropriate response to the destructive machinations of the RTA. Please support it to the maximum.

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Financial to July 0
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TAIL ENDERS

1 The Dutch Government has introduced tax benefits for people using bicycles to commute to their workplace in the form of tax deductible travel allowances, reductions in VAT, and employers' expenses of providing their staff with bicycles and appropriate clothing will also be tax deductible. The Australian Government still provides tax advantages to employers to provide cars for their journey to work, and subsidised parking places, for which the general taxpayer picks up the bill, in addition to having to live with the resulting pollution. Which policy is enlightened?

2 The NSW Waste Service has started an experiment together with Queensland University, to accelerate composting by the injection of water and bacterial cultures into solid waste. Munching microbes to mulch the muck.

3 Sydney Water is considering a proposal for using the 50% of organic and paper waste extracted from its treatment plants, which is presently still going to landfill, to produce garden mulch, which in turn would save a lot of water being used on gardens.

Sounds convoluted, but we thought they had been doing this rather than just considering.

TRIVIA There are 2200 known shipwrecks off the NSW coast. The Department of Planning has published a Shipwreck Atlas of NSW, showing their locations.