



# STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978. No.93 November 1998

## MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR

Even though it is only November, since this is the last Newsletter for this year, the Committee and Editor wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

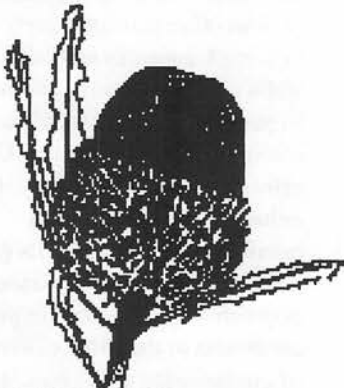
If at all possible, we would like to see you all at the

**CHRISTMAS BARBECUE** on Sunday 13th December at 4.30 pm or thereabouts at the back of Leuna Ave., Wahroonga, accessible from the end of The Broadway.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

About 30 people attended the AGM, held on Wednesday, 14th October. The formal business of presenting the President's and the Treasurer's reports and election of office bearers was conducted expeditiously to allow our guest speakers for the evening, Dr. Lynne McLoughlin, from the Macquarie University Department of the Environment, and Terry Wilson, from NPWS, to address the meeting. All members of the Committee were reelected.

The President's report is reproduced below.



### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is a privilege to present my first Annual Report to you as President. We have had a busy and productive year as usual, with both some hard work and some fun. I'll briefly summarise the activities of STEP over the last 12 months.

This year we celebrated our **20TH BIRTHDAY** with a wonderful

celebration at Jenkins Hall in Lane Cove National Park. Many past and present members attended as well as others who had helped STEP in various ways in the past, plus several politicians including John Watkins (Member for Gladesville), Barry O'Farrell (Member for Northcott) and Elaine Malicki (Councillor for Comenarra Ward of Ku-ring-gai Council). We enjoyed cocktail food and drinks and were entertained with a delightful talk by well-known naturalist and author Densley Clyne.

We produced a position paper on "Extending Lane Cove National Park - to ensure the best possible protection of the Lane Cove River catchment and its urban bushland values" which was widely distributed. The issue of a single management authority for the Lane Cove Valley bushland and secure longterm protection has been a key interest of STEP. We continued to lobby on this issue with mixed success. The talks hosted tonight, we hope, will promote community interest and discussion on this important issue.

This year was the first year we supported student projects on issues related to urban bushland, through the **Pam Morse Bequest Fund**. We supported 3 students, Emilie Warner (University of Sydney), Liz Watson (UNSW) and Paul Rymer (UWS, Hawkesbury). We wish them well and look forward to their reports

on the completion of their projects. The Pam Morse Bequest was also used to fund a Bushcare sign for the Granny Springs Reserve behind Turramurra Plaza, which was unveiled on September 12th. Rosanna Luca and the team of bushcare workers there have done a marvellous job regenerating this important Blue Gum High Forest site.

We continue to sell copies of our second print run of the **Field Guide** at a steady pace. The **STEP map** has now sold out completely and we are currently working towards producing a revised and expanded version, under the direction of John Martyn. We hope to produce this by the end of 1999.

Our membership remains strong at just over 350 members.

Unfortunately one of Ku-ring-gai's other local environmental groups, KUBES, has now dissolved. Subsequently, the KUBES membership will be transferred to STEP and we welcome all our new members.





### ACTIVITIES

We organised 2 bushwalks this year: thanks go to Neroli Lock who organised both walks. The autumn walk, organised for Davidson Park, was unfortunately rained out. Our Spring bushwalk was on Sunday 20th September on the Cowan Trail within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park where we saw a spectacular wildflower display.

We also held talks by Noel Tait on the invertebrates in our bush and gardens, Jim Kohen on the aboriginal use of plants, and Damian Gore on Science, Tourism and Environmental Crises in the Australian Antarctic Territory.



We supported the Clean-Up Australia Day, organising a STEP site at South Turramurra, and set up our display stand at both the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Festival and the Ku-ring-gai Community Fair.

### NEWSLETTERS

We published 6 Newsletters (nos. 87 to 92), which is our major way of communicating with our members,

advertising our activities and providing news and information on both the activities of the committee and general environmental issues of interest. Thanks to Bruno Krockenberger who produces the newsletter, as well as a monthly contribution from STEP to the Ku-ring-gai Observer.

### COMMITTEE

The committee met monthly, with the exception of January, to deal with the business at hand. All current committee members have indicated their willingness to remain for 1998/99, and Bill Jones, from the committee of the now-dissolved KUBES, will be joining us. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committee members of 1997/98 for their hard work and enthusiasm - it has been a pleasure to work with them all.

### REPRESENTATION

STEP continued to be represented on the following permanent bodies; Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushland Conservation Advisory Committee and Parks & Reserves Committee, The Lane Cove Valley Catchment Management Committee, and The Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists. We also participated in several Ku-ring-gai Council short-term committees including the residential strategy and B2/B3 rezoning committees. We continue our membership of the NSW Nature Conservation Council.

### SUBMISSIONS

STEP made formal submissions to Ku-ring-gai Council on the following; Canoon Road Discussion Paper, Tree Discussion Paper, State of the Environment Report.

### FINANCES

STEP's financial position remains healthy. Details are contained in the Treasurer's Report.



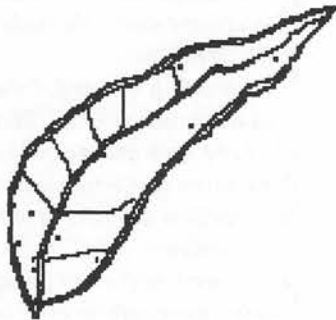
### CHALLENGES FOR THE COMING YEAR

In this year in which we celebrated our 20th birthday, it is worth reflecting on our original aims and our history. From the very local beginnings of the destruction of bushland for a netball court complex STEP has evolved into a much broader-ranging environmental group. Right from the beginning the major important activities for STEP have been to monitor Council, to have representation on and co-operation with other community groups, to produce a newsletter to inform our members, to promote environmental awareness and bush regeneration, as well as other activities such as holding bushwalks and talks, and stalls and fundraising. We continue to perform all these activities (as outlined above) and more. Our priorities now are to lobby for the enhancement of our urban environment rather than its gradual deterioration under the pressures of population growth, and to promote awareness of the value of every parcel of our precious urban bushland to ensure its proper management and protection.

There are several issues that will keep STEP's members busy over the coming year.

The first of these is the subject of our talk tonight - the Lane Cove Valley bushland, finding the best possible way to ensure its long term protection. The NPWS has indicated

that it would like to expand the current boundaries of Lane Cove National Park dramatically to include an extra 600 hectares, largely in the upper part of the catchment. Several councils have agreed to transfer their control of bushland in Lane Cove Valley to the NPWS, while Ku-ring-gai Council has so far voted to reject the NPWS proposal. We will continue to promote community discussion on this important issue.



Another important issue is the rezoning of the land released from the reserved B2/B3 freeway corridor. This contains substantial areas of high quality bushland, including heathland, Blue Gum High Forest and turpentine ironbark forest. We will strive to ensure that this bushland is conserved. In the remaining areas of the corridor we will be promoting housing development which is sympathetic to the natural treed landscape of Ku-ring-gai that we value so highly. STEP will also continue to take an active interest in the future of both the surplus M2 lands and the Mona Vale Road corridor.

Finally we will be striving to maintain or expand our membership to ensure that we remain an effective community voice in Ku-ring-gai. STEP will continue to be active in promoting environmental awareness, and in ensuring the maintenance or enhancement of Ku-

ring-gai's natural landscape, working through an active committee and strong supporting membership.



## VISIONS FOR THE LANE COVE NATIONAL PARK

Whose Visions?

What Visions?

*(From a talk at STEP AGM)*

Dr Lynne McLoughlin, of Macquarie University, outlined the history of the Lane Cove National Park and the vision which created it, and then posed the question whether the current moves to extend the Park over the upper Lane Cove valley were in fact consistent with this vision. The original vision, conceived at the start of this century, was a grandiose plan to include the whole valley, some thousands of acres. However the implementation over the subsequent decades, when land was privately donated, publicly purchased or allocated from subdivision, restricted the extent of the Park to narrow strips on each side of the river, between Fullers and De Burghs bridges.

The Park was a locally focussed vision of a picnic grounds model of recreation, under local control and providing local benefit. At this stage the ownership was spread between Crown and local Councils, until the mid-30s when the situation was reviewed. Agreement was reached to transfer the Council lands to the Crown, not because of a unified management vision, but to obtain unemployment relief funds for construction of facilities. However the overall vision of covering the

whole Lane Cove valley from Figtree to Wahroonga was reaffirmed by the Minister of the day.

The post-war years saw implementation frustrated by inadequate finance, changing Council attitudes, planning scheme upheavals and legislative changes, but the whole valley vision was reiterated in 1960 by the National Parks Association, and again in 1981 by a draft Plan of Management. In all of the preceding phases recreation was the major focus, and local influence, which was instrumental in its establishment, was strongly represented in accountability and park management. The rise of conservation groups in the 70s has changed the emphasis somewhat, towards recognition of the intrinsic value of bushland and its conservation as a priority. The recent designation as National Park imposes the priority of conservation and thereby changes the long-standing characteristic, and challenges the original picnic grounds model.



At the same time the current drive to incorporate the upper Lane Cove valley into National Park, rather than Regional Park, is driven by financial considerations, since finance is available to support National Park, but not for Regional Park status. However a Regional Park, managed under a Trust with local involvement, is more closely aligned with the original vision of local influence in management.

Dr. McLoughlin suggested that maybe the debate has locked in on a fixed outcome for the wrong reasons and that the process should start with debate to reach an agreed vision, whether confirming the past vision or arriving at a new vision, and then determining what the best route to achieving this vision might be.

#### STEP'S POSITION

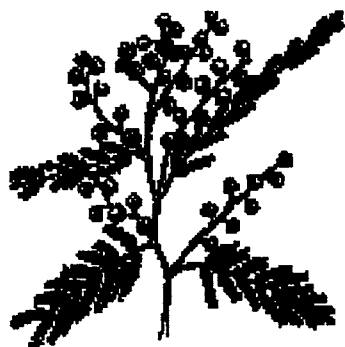
STEP reaffirms its emphasis on the conservation of bushland per se, but recognises that current uses of the bushland and current access by the community are of great benefit. Consequently it is important that the community be given every opportunity to contribute its views and that the final outcome should be supported by the community in its format as well as its continued management.

*It must be remembered, however, that conservation of the bushland is fundamental to ensuring that this magnificent community asset is still there for future generations.*

*In this respect the National Park status confers better security of tenure than Council ownership.*

#### CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

Since October there has been further discussion with Ku-ring-gai Council and it is expected that Council will initiate dialogue with NPWS regarding vital aspects of ownership, finance, and management responsibilities, which need to be defined before progressing further.



#### KU-RING-GAI BUSHLAND AND ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY

##### *A Welcome to STEP for New Members from KUBES*

At the KUBES Special General Meeting on 8th October, 1998, its members unanimously accepted a proposal to dissolve the organisation and transfer individual membership to STEP Inc. KUBES has been an important voice for the Ku-ring-gai environment and has had many significant successes.

STEP recognises the vital role that KUBES has played in bushland conservation and the enormous contribution of many of its members.

I would like to welcome the 55 new members, transferred from KUBES, and hope that your membership of STEP will be a long, fruitful and satisfying one. KUBES members currently active on committees such as the Middle Harbour Catchment Management Committee and the Belrose Waste Management Centre Community Monitoring Committee, will continue their representation, now supported by the STEP Committee..

I am also pleased that Bill Jones from the KUBES Committee has agreed to join the STEP Committee to ensure a smooth transition --

I am sure that he will make an important contribution with his wealth of experience.

I hope that our new members will approach me or any of the committee members if you have any issues that you would like to become involved in or on which you wish to express a view.

With a membership of now over four hundred, STEP will continue to be an effective advocate for the bushland values of Ku-ring-gai which we treasure.

*Michelle Leishman, President.*

#### KUBES

##### *An Appreciation from the Mayor.*

The following letter was received from the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai, dated 12th November, 1998.

*Dear Mrs. Hartnell,  
Thank you for your letter of 2nd November, 1998, received on 9th November, 1998, advising me of the decision of the Special General Meeting to dissolve the Ku-ring-gai Bushland and Environmental Society and merge the membership with STEP Inc.*

*On behalf of Council, I thank you and the members of KUBES for all the hard work and devotion you have given to Ku-ring-gai in the management and care of our environment.*

*I am sure that the two groups joining forces are an even stronger influence in our natural heritage.*

*Yours sincerely,  
David Dobbin  
Mayor.*



#### STEP COMMITTEE

For the information of new members the Committee consists of:

Michelle Leishman 9489 8972  
Hugh Roberts 9144 1353  
Helen Wortham 9144 2104  
Jennifer Schwarz 9144 2703  
John Martyn 9449 7962  
Neroli Lock 9489 5794  
Walter Lennie 9943 2255  
Bill Jones 9498 6052  
Bruno Krockenberger 9449 1985

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