



Towards An Eco-city

Pat Thompson

IN this issue of the *Bush Tele* we issue an ongoing invitation to our readers to continue giving us their vision for the future of our city. Last year, John Hatton wrote for us his "Shoalhaven Vision", *NBT* #99. As a former independent member of the state seat of the South Coast and one time President of the Shoalhaven Shire Council, John Hatton was well placed to give us a marvellous overview. He wrote: "[The] Shoalhaven is at the crossroads. Hundreds of millions of dollars are driving rapid change along the entire NSW coastline. The bulldozer is at Shoalhaven's door. Do we lie down in front of it and be crushed? Hop on it and try and steer it? Worse still pretend it's not happening?"

Since then the Global Financial Crisis has descended and slowed the juggernaut but it is easy to see that our city continues to be threatened by the bulldozer, alluded to by John Hatton. Both Council and State Government press ahead with development deals for land speculators who often feel obliged to pay large donations into party coffers, as part of the price of doing business. This is in reality the kind of planning that determines our future. It is not limited to the Shoalhaven but in

a sense we are the next cab off the rank.

As the post-war baby boomer generation slide into retirement, those seeking a sea change are attracted to the beauty of our coast and hinterland. It is this migration that the land speculators are counting on buying into their developments. The size of this movement has the potential to swamp our city and place huge pressures on our infrastructure. Being retirees, the disparity that already exists for our having an aging population, is likely to grow.

Poor planning has been the hallmark of much of the Australian experience. Urban sprawl is a characteristic of our cities, which results in traffic chaos and the forced dependence on private ownership of motor vehicles. In these circumstances efficient public transport will simply not work. The Shoalhaven is of course not immune from this problem. Traditional development has often proceeded from reckless land subdivision, and the community is then left to solve the problems left in its wake. Too often sound planning principals are abandoned.

Just because Australia has a history dating right back to the Squatters of allowing development to proceed at the behest of the land speculators, it does not have to be. It may be how



Pavement design Bule Marx, see article page 8

business has always been done, but there are better ways. Right now there are tens of thousands of vacant land holdings either available for purchase or awaiting development approval through out the Shoalhaven. In simple economic terms there is a vast over supply, which in turn can only lead to a downward pressure on prices. Whilst this might not be such a bad thing

for buyers, it will lead to its own economic and social consequences, such as, falling property values and a vast influx of new settlers.

Does it have to be this way, or can we like John Hatton advises take charge of our own destiny?

The short answer is yes, but it does require a change in mindset. What we have done in the past is to dance to the tune of the land speculators in the belief that we are dependant on them for jobs and our future. It is true that new settlers create jobs, in building new homes and providing the services they require, but is it not also a case of putting the cart before the horse? Largely with their arrival, there is little on-going employment opportunity being created. There are no "new" jobs waiting for them. Our local unemployment is amongst the worst in the State. We are in danger of becoming a giant retirement village.

WHAT IS NEEDED

To begin with what needs to be done is to look at our resources and match them carefully with how we would like to

see our future. Most of us have chosen to live in the Shoalhaven because we like what we find here. We enjoy our environment with its mountains and sea, its naturalness, relatively low population densities and for some, its village life. Outsiders see these advantages too and that is why the Shoalhaven is the most popular tourist destination in the State outside of Sydney and why many will make it their first choice for retirement. It is this disproportionate flow of retirees that we need to control.

What we should be seeking is investment that will lead to increased productivity as well as a growth in employment. It is not all bad news in respect of what has happened in the recent past. There have been businesses that have closed such as the Dairy Farmers plant that led to a loss of jobs. But in its place we have seen growth of Shoalhaven Starches, the relocation of the Department of Local Government and the building of the Nowra Detention Centre, which in the case of the latter, some may see as detrimental to

One Tree Bay... What next?

Should Shoalhaven City Council support a project which...

- ☐ Has the potential to become a significant ongoing financial burden for all Shoalhaven ratepayers?
- ☐ Claims to dedicate foreshore land as a public reserve when the foreshore already is a public reserve?
- ☐ Creates 4 storey high rise development on the currently intact forested southern shores of St Georges Basin?
- ☐ Requires use of on-site sewerage treatment for 5,000 people next to a lake with significant existing water quality problems?
- ☐ Will depress local real estate values?
- ☐ Will further stress an already struggling local retail sector?

To find out more about this preposterous development proposal, read the New Bush Telegraph's detailed account of the One Tree bay proposal on page 4 & 5.

EDITORIAL

Sites for new housing need to be thoughtfully located so they have the least impact on the environment and best suit the future residents in terms of access to work, public transport, health and education services. In the case of One Tree Bay, Shoalhaven City Council and the NSW Government seem predisposed to make a decision which favours the interests of the developer. It will leave any future residents in an isolated location with high transport costs and substandard social services while at the same time burdening Shoalhaven ratepayers with significant ongoing costs and servicing issues.

There are sufficient existing estates with spare capacity (such as Taylors Rise), as well as proposals in the pipeline (such as the Lucas Property Group's estate on the edge of Sussex) to readily meet Council's current long term growth projection for an additional 2,000 people in the Sussex Inlet locality by 2036. A new town with an additional 5,000 people on the shores of St Georges Basin is totally unsustainable. The ways and means must be found to ensure that the southern shores of St Georges Basin are fully protected via properly planned development. What we do not need is grandiose over-development of isolated high conservation value land lacking any credible planning justification. The One Tree Bay proposal is in clear conflict with the planning principles embodied in the NSW Government's own 25 year strategic planning document for the area, the South Coast Regional Strategy.



THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor.

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letters

FALLING PROPERTY VALUES?

The One Tree Bay proposal raises a host of significant issues that cannot be neutralised by the donation of some adjoining lands as National Park estate.

If approved, the One Tree Bay proposal would result in unsustainable gross overdevelopment of the Sussex Inlet area, and further depress an already soft local real estate and retail market.

The NSW Department of Lands sales data for Sussex Inlet reveals that median property prices peaked at \$333,750 in 2005, the year that the Taylors Rise subdivision came on the market, and have proceeded to drop significantly thereafter. The median Sussex Inlet property price till the end of June 2009 being \$220,000, a 34% drop on the 2005 peak. The Taylors Rise subdivision has only 196 lots – what will be the impact on Sussex Inlet property values if the minimum 2,000 dwellings projected for the new town at One Tree Bay goes ahead? Furthermore, the addition of an extra 16,000 square metres of retail/commercial space at One Tree Bay will also have significant implications for the commercial precinct at Sussex Inlet, which is already experiencing lean times.

Rob Stevenson
Sussex Inlet

TREES

One thing that is taken for granted in our City of Shoalhaven is our Great trees. We are the beneficiaries of the renaissance, we live in an enlightened age of increasing understanding of the universe through Science, Religion and Cultural awareness as to the complex benefits of biodiversity, ecosystems, the carbon - nitrogen and the hydrological cycles that effect us minute by minute as organisms within the biosphere of earth.

Here in our little want to be City, we lack adequate tree preservation policy and in my opinion it is degrading our society as a whole.

The reality as I see it is that we are the custodians of a relatively in tact vast forest ecosystem that in some places stretches from the beaches and headlands of the wide coastal strip, all the way around and through coastal lakes, rivers, over the foothills, into the valleys, around the peaks and over the ranges to the far western borders of this Great Southern Forest - City of Shoalhaven.

Nestled in amongst the Great Southern Forest are hamlets, villages, towns and rangelands, that when total populations and urban areas are combined is given the title of City or citadel.

Is this arrangement adequate? Does the Governance structure of Local, Territory and State Governments with the responsibility that comes with Planning Powers over such a diverse and finite biota suffice? or should the Greater Southern Forests go the way of the Murray Darling Basin Authority and be subject to Commonwealth Powers?

We may need a Tree symposium here in the Shoalhaven simply to enlighten and educate the ignorant. The 45 degree rule is both archaic and draconian and we should be ashamed of our leaders for allowing such policy to prevail over scientific understanding and the deep cultural knowledge of trees and their important potential to humanize and sustain the urbanized environment through the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Dan McConell
Wreck Bay

MORE CONCERN OVER OTB

The One Tree Bay development will threaten water quality and fishing in St Georges Basin, destroy the existing low key village feel of Sussex Inlet its surroundings, and place further stress on already overstretched services. The projected minimum of 2,000 dwellings with 5,000 people at One Tree Bay represents more than a doubling of the current population of the entire Sussex Inlet locality all crammed into a single headland on St Georges Basin. It must not be allowed to proceed.

George and Judy Kent
Grays Point, NSW

ONE TREE BAY SELL OFF?

Thank you for your informative piece on One Tree Bay (*NBT* – Autumn).

There is no guarantee that any of the projected sustainability measures will actually be implemented at One Tree Bay, or that Miltonbrook will not simply sell off the site to one or more unknown third party developer/s after approval has been gained. This is what has occurred at its Tullimbar development. The recent sell-off by Stockland of the commercial precinct of their Part 3A approved Bayswood Estate development at Vincentia less than 24 months after securing approval from the NSW Minister for Planning provides a local example of what could occur. The One Tree Bay proposal is liable to leave Shoalhaven City Council and its ratepayers with massive financial, servicing, environmental and social costs for the foreseeable future.

David Duffy
St Georges Basin

Miltonbrook's Presentation of its One Tree Bay Proposal to the Sussex Inlet Forum

Mike Clear

AT the June 15 meeting of the Sussex Inlet Forum at Thompson St Community Centre the Directors of Miltonbrook Project Management Pty Ltd. Neville Fredricks and his son, Lawson, presented, through a 45 minute power point outline, their proposal for a so called "new sustainable township", followed by questions and some discussion.

Despite a night that was cold and wet, the meeting was well attended by about 60-70 locals. There was also a good attendance from Shoalhaven City Councillors including Crls. Proudfoot, Findley, Miller, Ferguson and Kearney. In addition the Shoalhaven Action Campaign (SAC) who were responsible through their spokesperson, Monica Taylor, for initiating the Miltonbrook presentation were also well represented.

In relation to this latter point of instigating the meeting, it should be noted that there was some strong feeling that Miltonbrook themselves should have initiated this community consultation. It was felt that this was particularly true, given the size of the proposal, 1800 residential lots for approximately 5,000 people and the relatively advanced stage of the application process with "endorsement" by the Shoalhaven City Council for rezoning (currently awaiting Section 62 responses from various agencies), and a Part 3A Major Projects application submitted. The Directors said, that a number of media releases had been made, a community meeting was held back in 2006 and that at some point another meeting with the local community would have occurred. Future consultation was promised.

In summary, the Directors of Miltonbrook presented the One Tree Bay Proposal as little short of a model; a show-case ecologically sustainable development. Neville Fredricks suggested that following talks with others in the planning community, that the proposal could be described as one of the best such proposals in the country. As presented to the meeting their model of 'comprehensive sustainability' (social, environmental, cultural and economic) is built on the model of a traditional grid plan in a 'compact walkable' township that would result in a significantly reduced carbon footprint. The dedication of 881 hectares of coastal land as National Park and on average 100 meters of foreshore as public reserve were also presented as significant conservation benefits.

At the conclusion of the presentation a number of questions were asked. These covered a

range of issues including: the business impact on an already sluggish Sussex economy bearing in mind that sales at other local developments (eg the Taylors Rise sub-division) were so slow; traffic issues at the access point on Sussex Inlet Road; fire threats in such a location; stormwater and sewerage treatment capacity; and finally concern about the lack of a compelling argument for a major development of this kind, that appeared to be merely speculative and in such a sensitive environment.

Interestingly, some at the meeting indicated that they already enjoyed recreational benefits of the One Tree Bay bushland ("informally and illegally", as the Directors suggested!) and were not happy at the prospect of regulation should the proposal be successful and the foreshore be managed as public land by the NPWS. Overall, the questions and answers resulted in some interesting discussion suffice here to mention just a couple of points.

The Miltonbrook Directors presented the proposal by making the idea of a walkable township pivotal to its sustainability credentials. As they put it, this would reduce the need for the car, get people walking for better health and social connections, and ultimately reduce carbon emissions. The ability to leave the car at home and walk to the local town centre is a major plank of the project proposal.

Many at the meeting seemed to imply that this aspect of the proposal was unrealistic and tested the limits of plausibility. They also thought that it highlighted a basic contradiction in the proposal. For example, if as the Directors said in reply to another question, that Sussex Inlet businesses would benefit, not suffer by the development of a One Tree Bay township, how could it, be as claimed, that people would leave their cars at home and at the same time go to Sussex Inlet and indeed to Nowra to conduct business. The Directors said that the new township would only capture about 40 percent of local business and that the remaining increase would be secured by Sussex and Nowra businesses.

Finally, I had wanted to ask a number of questions myself, but given the extended discussion I restricted myself to just a couple. I inquired about the developing legal controversy, as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald (8 June 2009), concerning the so called Environmental Land Offset Scheme in which the Department of Planning had provided development approvals in return for parcels of land, being

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the social fabric. No matter what people think about the gaol, there is no doubt it will create some 200 direct jobs and benefit by way of flow on, many local businesses.

Whilst one gaol and a government department may bring new jobs and new opportunities to the city, they have but limited scope in raising productivity. The "cradle-to-grave" sustainability approach of Shoalhaven Starches is, on the other hand, a sign of the future, where this highly productive business will soon be recycling and turning into productive use all of its previously polluting wastes (a beautiful example of jobs and the environment!) The development and expansion of our university, tafe and training institutions may be considered as other productive building blocks. With these institutions the possibility of attracting other forms of investment begin to emerge. However, people with skills will not stay unless there is work to keep them in the region.

It is a competitive world and increasingly so. Our civic leaders need to look beyond the square and target new fields, whether it is in I.T., medical research, solar and wind technologies, as well as a myriad of other skilled-based light industry and tertiary services. It is simply not good enough to rely on local chambers of commerce, Council or the State Government to create these initiatives. We need to draw from these sources, our other institutions and from the public at large to create a variety of Think Tanks to help develop strategies and means to achieve a cohesive vision for the future.

NOWRA – A CITY OF THE FUTURE

There is a planning instrument in place. It is called the South Coast Regional Strategy. It states that: "No new towns or villages will be supported

.....

Miltonbrook ◀2

restored to public ownership. The parallels with Miltonbrook's proposal seemed obvious. These 'exchange' arrangements had involved celebrated cases of big Labor Party donors such as Bob Rose from Rose Group and Duncan Hardie from Hardie Holdings.

Neville Fredricks said that, there had been one donation of \$1000 to NSW Labor, as he said, 'for a seat at the lunch table'. The 'swap' arrangement as a basis for 'selling' the development proposal and gaining approval was not a problem according to Mr. Fredricks, if it was proposed by the developer at the point of application rather than coming from the department or from the minister.

Without the benefit of a poll, my overwhelming impression was that people were highly sceptical of both the scope of the proposal given the relatively isolated bushland setting and the idealised terms within which it is framed.

unless compelling reasons are presented and they can satisfy the Sustainability Criteria". Unfortunately, the ink was scarcely dry on this important planning document and it was already being abandoned with the Stockland's development of a new town to the west of Vincentia. Since then another new town of 5000 new settlers at One Tree Bay is proposed. Mollymook, Ulladulla and Sussex Inlet are all expanding rapidly. The prospect of a dreary urban sprawl stretching across the landscape from Berry to Lake Tabourie is wearisome and worrisome. Much of this development can not be stopped but it can still be modified.

If we wish to overcome the growing problems of urban gridlock and transport chaos, we need to re-focus on what we are doing. We need strategies that will allow for greater settlement, but do it in such a way that there is employment and balance in our population mix. We need to take account of climate change and a future where energy costs are set to sore. We need to understand that one of our region's most valuable assets is our rich soils and farming potential. We need to plan for infrastructure that is affordable and a public transport system that works to the benefit of the majority.

In the light of the above, we must look to Nowra as the City of our region, a centre for employment, a transport hub, a vibrant and futuristic place to live. Geographically it is well placed for growth. It is blessed with a plethora of advantages. Close to Sydney and the Illawarra, it has abundant water, developing educational institutions, CBD space, access to rail transport, splendid parks and gardens. It is set close to the ocean but far enough removed that it does not impinge on the beaches and rural & coastal villages, which lie close at hand.

To make Nowra a city for the 21st Century, we need to begin by addressing its present problems in terms of its future energy needs, its highway partition, which divides east from west, and its growing traffic problems. Solutions must be realistic, that is they must be affordable. The scope of this article does not allow for a full discussion of all these points. Future energy needs is to be addressed in the next issue.

TRAFFIC AND THE EAST WEST DIVIDE

The motor car is the scourge of the modern city. Traffic jams, already considerable in Nowra, will inevitably become worse unless solutions are found. People are not about to abandon their cars. What can be done is to improve traffic flows and to develop ways and means to make public transport an attractive alternative. It would also be desirable for the Central Business District (CBD) to become a pedestrian friendly zone.

To achieve these ends, several measures need to be adopted. Firstly, in the longer term, a

third crossing of the River is needed. Secondly, the space above the existing highway opposite Stockland's Shopping Mall needs to be utilised and incorporated into city life, so there will no longer be a divide between the two shopping centres. Other infrastructure needs to also be built. The East Nowra Sub-arterial Road (ENSAR) to replace the existing Princes Highway and at least two new traffic bridges will need construction over the old Princes Highway to effectively link the city to the new ENSAR highway route. Finally, a free to use, walk on – walk off, "Yellow" Bus service should be instigated with the possibility of further supplementing free public transport with a light rail service added..

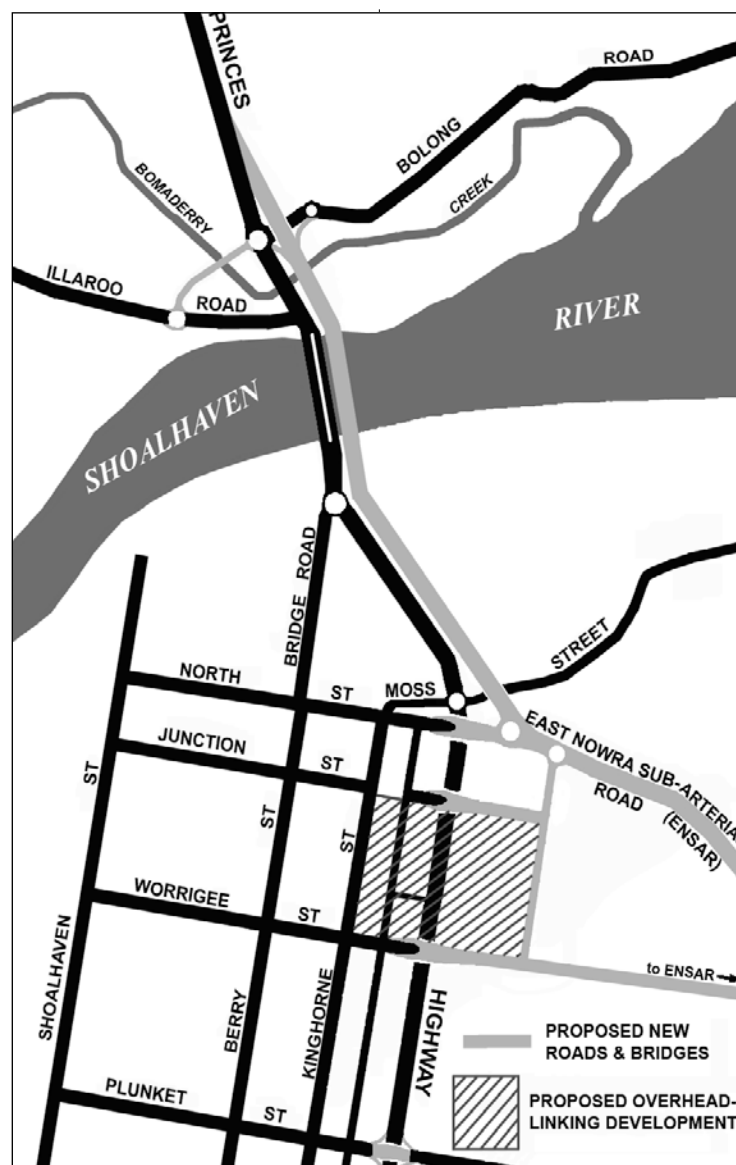
THE THIRD RIVER CROSSING

So important is this issue that it must be addressed now. Building new bridges takes time and the RTA have plans to build some day (whenever) a Princes Highway bypass of Nowra including a third river crossing to the west of the city, which will not serve the best interests of the people of the Shoalhaven. Nowra is not Berry and it should not be bypassed. Nowra's traffic congestion is already serious. Traffic flow on the Princes Highway needs addressing, but the solution lies in addressing the two problems together, not separately.

As a first step the problem of immediate traffic congestion at the Illaroo and Bolong Road lights can be given some immediate relief. From the accompanying map it can be seen that a roundabout could be constructed to replace the traffic lights at Bolong Road. Traffic exiting Illaroo Road would then all turn left and use the new roundabout. The second step would further improve traffic flow and be achieved by building a direct link from Illaroo Road to the new roundabout at Bolong Road. This would then bring about the elimination of traffic lights at Illaroo Road.

From the RTA stand point, traffic flow is the name of the game, and in this much we are in agreement. There are currently major traffic hold ups in morning peak with traffic travelling south and turning into Bridge Road. The solution to this is to progressively eliminate all right hand turns, and hence all traffic lights, by constructing road bridges over the highway. The first priority would be a traffic bridge at North Street, which would remove one set of lights, whilst also reducing traffic turning into Bridge Road, as many commuters would elect to travel further south and exit by the North St bridge.

Finally, we come to the future Princes Highway. Yes, it will be years away before a third crossing can become a reality, but in the mean time the ENSAR can be built. Its route lies to the east of town and follows the Old Southern Road corridor. It will



Traffic flows – Map by Terry Barratt

take through traffic away from the City and South Nowra. This route will also resolve the other major traffic problem of the City, which is the current Princes Highway intersection at Kalandar/Greenwell Point Road.

THE YELLOW BUS

CBD land is too valuable to have its space occupied by the private car. Many European cities have banned the private car. Policies need to be developed to make Nowra a truly pedestrian friendly city. The CBD should be a place where people live as well as visit. Higher densities in housing should be encouraged. We do not need a CBD centre where 50% of the space is given over to car parks and trafficable roads. Medium and longer-term parking should be away from the city centre. Fewer and better planned car parks will also aid traffic flow.

A "Yellow Bus" for shoppers, commuters and residents, delivering them to points around town including car parks, hospital and rail station would

be popular. To work effectively it needs to be free. Its cost can be recovered from the increased rates Council will receive from achieving higher densities. In time a light rail service could possibly be established. Also, policies that encourage bicycle use should be in place. It has been shown that bicycle user-friendly policies alone can account for a more than 20% reduction in the use of cars.

LATE NEWS

Since writing this piece, *The Register* has reported that: "Shoalhaven City Council has called for expressions of interest from consultants able to prepare a masterplan guiding development in the CBD over the next 25 years. The process in preparing the masterplan will include two workshops to hear the views of community members, business operators, councillors and council staff, focussed on what sort of character should shape the CBD, and also provide feedback on plans".

The *Bush Tele* congratulates Council on this initiative.

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Land Bait to Create Shonky Town?

Alex O'Brien

THE previous *NBT* presented an overview of some of the significant issues raised by Miltonbrook Pty Ltd's proposal for a new town of 5,000 people at One Tree Bay, a few kilometres north west of Sussex Inlet. For purposes of comparison, the total population of Sussex Inlet, Badgee, Swanhaven, Cudmirrah, Berrara and surrounding rural areas was 4,365 in the 2006 census, around 700 less than the projected minimum population of One Tree Bay. The recent listing of the concept plan for this project on the Department of Planning website, and a public forum held at Sussex Inlet on the 15th June have highlighted further significant issues and increasing community disquiet over this proposal. The *NBT* provides this in depth analysis of the proposal.

The Proposal in a Nutshell

The One Tree Bay proposal envisages development of a new town on the southern shore of St Georges Basin with a minimum of 2,000 dwellings/5,000 people including a 4 storeys high commercial/retail centre with 16,000 square metres of floor space, which involves the clearing of 163 hectares (around 400 acres) of intact high conservation value forest at One Tree Bay. This loss is to be offset by rezoning 912 hectares of nearby highly constrained, largely undevelopable land as National Park, while about 26 hectares of adjoining foreshore land along St Georges Basin would be sequentially handed over to be managed by Shoalhaven Council.

The proposal will be deter-

mined in a 2 stage process :

1) Creation of a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP) to reclassify the One Tree Bay area from its present rural and environmental protection zoning to allow urban development and expansion of the national park; followed by

2) Application to the Minister for Planning for approval of the new town under the Part 3A development approval process.

The LEP process conducted by Shoalhaven City Council will be the crucial "make or break" phase for this proposal, since once the land is rezoned to initiate the Part 3A process its success is virtually assured. Projects assessed under the controversial Part 3A process introduced by Minister Sartor in 2005 have a reported 94% success rate, and Part 3A decisions cannot be appealed in the Land & Environment Court.

It is notable that the NSW Government's own 25 year strategic planning document for the area, the South Coast Regional Strategy (SCRS), launched in February 2007 unambiguously states that "No new towns or villages will be supported unless compelling reasons are presented and they can satisfy the Sustainability Criteria". This provision clearly troubled the One Tree Bay proponent Miltonbrook to the extent that they paid a Victorian-based consultant to write a submission which (unsuccessfully) sought to have this condition removed from the South Coast Regional Strategy.

The One Tree Bay proposal clearly constitutes a new town, and to date no compelling reasons or rigorous independent assessment against the speci-

fied sustainability criteria have been publicly circulated, which is at odds with the SCRS. It is highly likely that One Tree Bay could gain approval without any clear demonstration of how it meets these requirements in any substantive way, and thereby create a damaging precedent encouraging "open slather" development throughout the entire south coast region, to the benefit of a few and the cost of many.

Tempting for Government and Council

While land donation proposals such as those included with One Tree Bay are obviously attractive to cash-strapped governments and councils with limited and shrinking resources for acquisition of new reserves, they only offer real community benefits if the associated urban development is logically located, conforms to sound planning principles and embodies sustainable development practices. If this is not the case, the handover of development-constrained land could simply be a contrivance to gain approval for a proposal which cannot be justified on its own merits, and which secures a lucrative rezoning for the developer while burdening the broader community with ongoing social, environmental, amenity and economic costs for the foreseeable future.

The merits or otherwise of One Tree Bay as a standalone urban development project can only be established through rigorous land use planning, engineering, social, environmental and economic studies, evaluation against existing legal and policy requirements, and comparisons with other potential options. These need to be

properly assessed at the LEP stage to ensure the proposal measures up before going through the part 3A rubber-stamp.

It is therefore crucial that the One Tree Bay LEP be assessed in a professional and impartial manner. Unfortunately, in the case of One Tree Bay, these studies and assessments will be carried out by the project developer (as indicated in Mayor Green's press release of 4/3/09), under terms of an agreement struck by the previous Shoalhaven City Council, among whose more notable achievements were :

i) "selling" Comberton Grange by loaning the buyer \$4.75 million;

ii) promoting high-rise developments in Huskisson and Ulladulla;

iii) bungling the sale of riverfront land at Nowra which is now the subject of a \$1.9 million damages lawsuit; and

iv) being investigated by the Department of Local Government for flawed planning practices, resulting in 26 recommendations made in a Better Practice Review, including recommendation 9 stating "Council needs to grasp the complexity of its planning responsibilities and provide leadership to the broader community with sound planning direction setting and decision making in the context set by the Government's South Coast Regional Strategy".

The Perils of Part 3A

The Part 3A process raises serious issues for Shoalhaven City Council and its ratepayers, because once Council signs off on the rezoning it loses any say in the next stage of the process, where the specific conditions for

the One Tree Bay development will be determined. All subsequent Part 3A negotiations will be between the proponent and the NSW Minister for Planning, who is not even obliged to follow professional advice from the Department of Planning, having only to give it "consideration", as exemplified in the Sweetwater and Catherine Hill Bay developments outlined in following section.

The infrastructure and service requirements for new urban developments are funded through Section 94 contributions paid by developers to Councils for the building or upgrade of essential community service facilities, such as kerbing, guttering, roads and sewerage etc. However, at the behest of land developers, the NSW Government has recently changed the rules for these contributions, and placed a maximum threshold of \$20,000 per block, even where actual service-provision costs are higher. Councils who want to charge above the threshold must seek specific permission from the State Government and demonstrate why they need to do so. This in effect means that Council ratepayers can end up subsidising land developers. The Local Government & Shires Association has voiced deep concerns over these changes, which have ominous implications for Shoalhaven ratepayers if One Tree Bay were to go ahead. The NSW Minister for Planning and the One Tree Bay developer could negotiate an agreement which has onerous financial implications for Shoalhaven City Council and its ratepayers, who would not only be excluded from the negotiation process but

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One Tree Bay Developer Background

Alex O'Brien

THE One Tree Bay proposal is being put forward by a consortium comprising One Tree Bay Pty Ltd and IMB Property Ltd. One Tree Bay Pty Ltd is wholly owned by Miltonbrook Pty Ltd, developer of the self styled "eco-village" at Tullimbar (west of Albion Park in the Shellharbour LGA), which is repeatedly referenced as the prototype for the One Tree Bay proposal.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Miltonbrook is Mr Neville Fredericks, who has 14 years experience in local government, including seven years as Mayor of Kiama, and has maintained political connections while continuing his development activities. Electoral funding declarations indicate that Mr Fredericks gave 2 donations totalling \$4,700 to the 2007 campaign of Kiama MP Matt Brown, who was later axed from NSW Cabinet following a failure to reveal

full details to the NSW Premier regarding unseemly (near nude) carousing within Parliament House, involving another high profile Labor MP Noreen Hay (Ms Hay came to prominence through her association with the Wollongong Council planning scandal which led to the Council being sacked for corruption). Prior to his sacking from Cabinet, Matt Brown was probably best known as the NSW Housing Minister who simultaneously owned 14 houses, as outlined in press reports in April 2008. More recently, Matt Brown attracted media attention when he hit out at plans for south coast wind farms.

In spite of this dubious track record, self styled eco-developer Miltonbrook have continued to donate to Matt Brown, with declarations lodged on the Department of Planning website disclosing a donation of \$2,500 on the 3rd May 2009. Associated documents indicate that Matt Brown has been kept regu-

larly apprised of the One Tree Bay proposal, even though the project is not located within his electorate. It is notable that when quizzed about political donations at the public forum held at Sussex Inlet on 15th June, Miltonbrook CEO Neville Fredericks did not acknowledge any of these multiple donations to Matt Brown, and instead only mentioned a \$1,000 donation to the NSW ALP to "buy a seat at the table".

The mayor of Wollongong Council when it was sacked for systemic corruption following a widely publicised planning scandal was Alex Darling who, following Wollongong Council's dismissal, was quoted in the press indicating support for aforementioned ALP MP Noreen Hay and controversial NSW Minister Joe Tripodi. Electoral funding information indicates that Miltonbrook subsidiary Tullimbar Pty Ltd donated \$3,000 to Mr Darling's 2004 council election campaign.

In addition to the donations to Matt Brown and Alex Darling, electoral funding declarations disclose that Neville Fredericks also donated \$5,000 to the 2007 State Liberal Party election campaign.

Miltonbrook clearly had concerns over the "no new towns or villages" directive contained in the 2007 South Coast Regional Strategy, and commissioned a Victorian-based consultant to prepare a submission seeking to try and overturn this troublesome NSW Government strategic planning provision. Miltonbrook have subsequently had to (reluctantly) accept this provision, with Neville Fredericks quoted in the press (South Coast Register of 6/3/09) as acknowledging that One Tree Bay constitutes a new town which can be justified by rubbery "sustainability criteria". However, in spite of Mr Fredericks acknowledgement that One Tree Bay is indeed a new town, consultants hired by

Miltonbrook continue to "spin" the proposal in planning documents as being "a new sub-centre within the Sussex Inlet suburb".

The Wollongong connection of the One Tree Bay proponents extends to joint consortium partner IMB, which is a financial company headquartered in Wollongong. A search of the IMB website yields scant details regarding its 100% owned subsidiary IMB Property Pty Ltd. Available public information in the 2001 IMB annual report indicates IMB Property Pty Ltd is a controlled entity associated with a guarantee of \$705,000 for Shellharbour Council in association with unspecified real estate development activities.

A strong financial link existed between IMB and Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) at the time that the One Tree Bay proposal was initiated, with Council records disclosing that SCC had \$17.5 million invested in term deposits with IMB.

Land Bait ◀4

also have to bear the financial burden of the outcome.

The probability that Shoalhaven ratepayers will end up shouldering an unfair burden of the servicing costs for One Tree Bay infrastructure are greatly increased by the associated transfer of development-constrained (i.e. bushfire prone, flood-prone, with many threatened species and endangered ecological communities) land to the National Park estate, because Shoalhaven Council's own Section 94 Information Sheet discloses that dedication of land can be used as part or full payment of a Section 94 contribution. This means that, on the basis of this land transfer, Miltonbrook could seek a major or full offset of its projected Section 94 contributions in its negotiations with the NSW Minister for Planning, and Shoalhaven ratepayers would have to pick up the tab for this arrangement.

Shoalhaven City Council is already experiencing problems with section 94 contributions negotiated under current Part 3A arrangements, and one can only imagine what could emerge under the revamped "developer friendly" system. For example, in relation to the Minister for Planning's Part 3A approval of Malbec Properties subdivision of land at Cunjorong Point, Council business papers tactfully state "The Minister's consent for the Malbec proposal did not fully capture Council's request for additional contributions, which has since been a source of on-going disagreement between the Council and the Department of Planning." It should be noted that the Malbec proposal is "only" for a 182 lot extension within an existing settlement – the mind boggles at what the servicing cost implications will be for an entirely new town with a minimum of 2,000 dwellings in a relatively isolated and completely unserviced sensitive site as is proposed for One Tree Bay, and how equitably Shoalhaven ratepayers will be treated in a negotiation process from which they are excluded.

Another major issue with One Tree Bay relates to the so-called "dedication" of foreshore land to Council for public open space, which is proposed to occur in stages linked to the sell-off of adjoining blocks. The NSW Department of Lands has indicated that the shoreward 30.5 metres of 100 metres proposed to be "donated" by Miltonbrook as a public reserve is in fact already a public reserve (parish reserve 755937)! The fact that Mayor Green's press release of the 4/3/09 uncritically echoes details of this "donation" of land which is already a public reserve is clearly indicative of the lack of proper scrutiny given to this proposal by both State and local government politicians to date.

The ostensible reason given for the stage by stage "dedication" of the foreshore public reserve is that it allows the developer "to undertake required works

within these lands and provide flexibility in the design and location of infrastructure within this coastal strip". This raises significant concerns over how much clearing and development would actually occur in foreshore areas which are already declared as a public reserve designed to protect the shores of St Georges Basin, with significant implications for visual amenity and water quality protection, and how these could breach existing foreshore reserve controls. It also raises the question of what would happen to the near-foreshore lands if the One Tree Bay urban area was subsequently sold off to other third party developers after the rezoning was granted (a fairly common occurrence, e.g. Miltonbrook's own development at Tullimbar) – what would be the basis for controls and approvals of activities carried out in these areas by subsequent owners not party to the original agreement negotiated by Miltonbrook?

The assessment process associated with One Tree Bay raises significant potential conflict of interest, impartiality and community benefit/disbenefit issues for a proposal which has to date been negotiated behind closed doors. While the Department of Planning has indicated that the "local community is encouraged to provide feedback when the LEP and any development proposal are made available for public consultation" it is likely that the horse will have well and truly bolted by that stage, and public consultation will be mere window-dressing.

The proposal needs a rigorous and independent review process, including full public access to the developer funded and supervised studies and assessments to be used as the basis for decision-making. Public release of glossy summary documents cherry-picked from a variety of more detailed studies where unresolved, inconvenient, expensive or significant issues are buried away in the fine print is not a meaningful or transparent means of allowing community input and promoting informed decision-making. Shoalhaven City Council needs to facilitate public access to the full range of materials that the proponent provides in connection with the One Tree Bay rezoning application.

Similar developer "gifts"

The approach of developers handing over land for dedication as National Park in return for approval of new urban projects is the basis for the Sweetwater and Catherine Hill Bay proposals (near Newcastle), which recently featured as front page news in the Sydney Morning Herald. Both these proposals, which have been approved by the NSW Planning Minister under the same Part 3A planning processes earmarked for One Tree Bay, involved developers gaining approval for major new urban developments in sensitive areas in return for handing over land for additions to National Park estate. The developers involved,

Hardie Holdings and Rosecorp, had both been major donors to the NSW ALP.

The land exchanges were formalised in controversial MOU agreements, which were signed before the developments were finally approved, and whose validity has now been legally challenged. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that the NSW Government had obtained confidential legal advice indicating a high probability that the legal challenges would succeed, meaning that both development approvals would be invalid, unless special retrospective legislation was rammed through NSW Parliament. It has been reported that as of the 10th June 2009, Hardie Holdings had still not handed over the land near Branxton agreed to be dedicated as National Park, despite the fact that it had obtained approval for the associated urban development at Sweetwater.

The Sweetwater and Catherine Hill Bay proposals are of particular relevance to the One Tree Bay proposal, since both of these projects had undergone independent professional assessment by qualified Department of Planning officials, who had rated the proposals as the 2 lowest ranked options from a field of 91 potential urban development sites in the lower Hunter. The fact that these land gift-propelled projects were subsequently approved after their technical deficiencies and unsuitability were clearly identified by professional assessment provides a worrying precedent for the One Tree Bay proposal.

Where are things now?

The Part 3A preliminary environmental assessment for the One Tree Bay proposal has recently been circulated to NSW Government agencies, who have identified major flaws and unanswered questions with the proposal and called for more detailed investigations, major modifications or further details before the proposal could be adequately assessed, let alone approved to go ahead. For example, the Department of Primary Industries comments noted that some of the water sensitive urban design (WSUD) features require water to flow uphill, while Shoalhaven Water has advised that One Tree Bay cannot rely on the existing sewerage treatment system which is already at capacity. The New Bush Telegraph will provide further details of these agency concerns in the next issue.

However, the fact that NSW agencies have identified significant flaws and gaps in the One Tree Bay proposal is no guarantee that it will not go ahead, as evidenced by the approvals of Catherine Hill Bay and Sweetwater against professional planning advice.

The only people who can really prevent this preposterous proposal from going ahead are concerned residents and ratepayers of the Shoalhaven lobbying the Councillors and Mayor of Shoalhaven City Council during the rezoning phase.

The Tullimbar track record

Alex O'Brien

Miltonbrook's existing development at Tullimbar, near Albion Park, has been profusely referenced in the proposal documents put forward for One Tree Bay, and can be used to gain insight into the development track record of the proponent and the credibility or otherwise of their environmental credentials.

Based on promotional material for One Tree Bay regularly referring to the "experience gained at Tullimbar", a reader could easily gain the impression that Tullimbar is a bustling and diverse fully developed "eco-town" from which to draw urban development insights. In reality, Tullimbar is only in its Stage 1 phase, and consists of 26 dwellings stranded in the middle of a former dairy paddock, with essentially no services provided by the developer. Tullimbar only went ahead after the Land & Environment Court overturned Shellharbour Council's rejection of the proposal, which was based on concerns over excavation activities associated with construction of artificial water-bodies requiring channelisation of a natural creek and filling in a floodplain together with concerns over traffic generation. The 26 Stage 1 houses at Tullimbar are poorly oriented from a passive solar perspective, lack solar heating/power, and feature many 2 and 3 car garages discreetly hidden away in the rear lanes of this "walkable village". The only services provided by Miltonbrook are a series of signs indicating "This is the site for the library/community centre/health centre etc". The first commercial precinct at Tullimbar, a four storey hotel with basement and 63 serviced apartment complex, was rejected in November 2008 by Shellharbour Council, who indicated that it was contrary to the public interest for a range of reasons, including insufficient information to demonstrate compliance with Council's flooding and stormwater requirements, an inadequate Social Impact Assessment, and the proposed building was inconsistent with the floor space allocation detailed in the Tul-

limbar Village Centre Building Design Guidelines. It is possible that this refusal will trigger a further battle in the Land & Environment Court. This track record does little to inspire confidence in the rigour or potential compliance with any development control guidelines negotiated for the One Tree Bay proposal.

Miltonbrook is now in the process of trying to dispose of the remaining balance of the Tullimbar estate to any interested parties. This could entail the sale or lease of the rest of the town, ranging from commercial space in the town centre through to the sale of super-lots for residential subdivision.

It is also incongruous that the self styled Tullimbar "eco-village" has been promoted through glossy brochures produced by both James Hardie and Bluescope Steel, whose recent activities have done little to inspire confidence in their sustainability credentials. James Hardie is now well known for trying to shield itself from full financial responsibilities from asbestosis victims resulting from use of its products, with Justice Ian Gzell recently finding multiple breaches of the company's duty of care obligations by board members, and James Hardie more recently indicating it will not be adding any extra funds to seriously depleted assistance fund for asbestosis sufferers arising from exposure to Hardie's asbestos products. Bluescope Steel has vigorously resisted introduction of greenhouse gas emissions controls. Bluescope Steel struck a sweetheart compensation deal with the NSW Government in 2006 to cover any costs involved with introduction of a greenhouse emissions reduction scheme, and more recently was one of 6 major Australian companies cited to face allegations of false and misleading conduct in respect of its contradictory advice to shareholders, the government and public over projected impacts of a national emissions trading scheme on its business performance.



Co-Op Quilt to be Raffled

QUILTERS from across the community have finished their pinning and patchwork, and their efforts have been pieced and quilted into the finished Community Food Co-op quilt.

From conception through to the reality of the finished quilt, this project has certainly reinforced the Food co-op's vision: that by unifying we can create an environment and experience that can meet our needs as a community and make a difference to our way of life.

With the contributors having donated fabric, creativity and time in order to support the co-op, we are all rewarded with the outstanding finished quilt. It can be seen at a host of venues (see details below) as local businesses endorse the foundation of the Food Co-op by displaying the quilt and selling raffle tickets.

This community's good will and solidarity is in no doubt as encouragement and assistance has come from all areas of the community. So if you haven't been involved up to this point then now is your chance, simply buy a ticket in the raffle. The

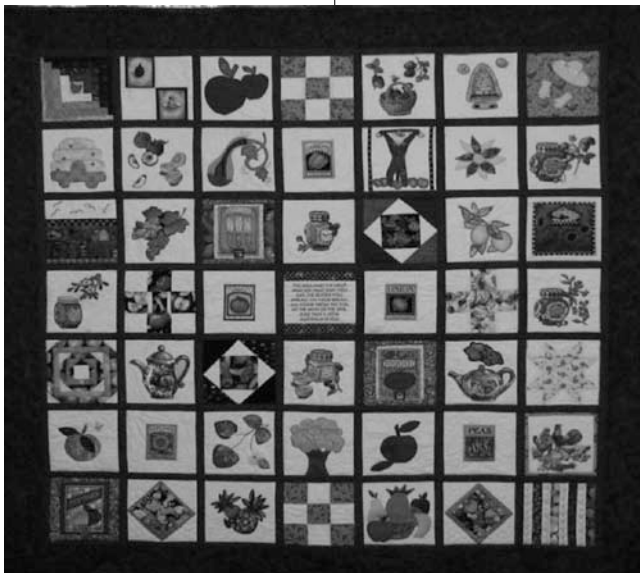
raffle will be drawn just before Christmas on Saturday the 19th of December, a perfect complement to the festive season as family and friends gather.

The quilt is the perfect size to snuggle beneath, adorn a wall or accompany a picnic, so get yourself to any of the listed venues and have a chance to win while also lending your support to the Community Food Co-op.

The quilt will be displayed at: Ulladulla Library from 13th July to 3rd August, Pilgrims from the 3rd to 24th August, Angus and Robertson from the 24th August to 7th September, Ulladulla Picture Frames from the 7th to the 28th September, Splatters from 28th September to 19th October. Further venues will be announced at a later date.

The Co-op's founding members extend their gratitude to all those involved in the creation and exhibition of the quilt and, in anticipation of you buying a ticket, to you, the community.

From: Tory Fuckner & Cathie Griffith for the Community Food Co-Op Project



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BOOK REVIEW

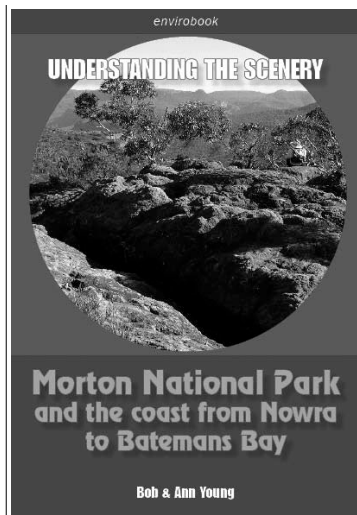
The story of the landscape is in the rocks, you just need to know where to look.

Understanding the Scenery Morton National Park and the Coast from Nowra to Batemans Bay

by Kevin Mills

I remember clearly Bob Young leading a group of university geomorphology students around the sandstone country west of Nowra, his favourite country. That was thirty years ago and I was one of those students. Since then I have continued to explore the Ettrema, Shoalhaven and Budawang sections of Morton National Park, ever-mindful of Bob's words explaining the landscape I was traversing. Ann's work helped me to understand the swamps of the same areas.

At last Bob and Ann have distilled the information contained in many academic papers, many of those their own work or their colleagues at The University of Wollongong, where they both lectured for many years. The authors have drawn upon their own vast knowledge of the region to bring us a popular work on the evolution of the landscape of Morton



National Park and the adjoining coastal district.

The book is well written and is readily understood by the general reader. It will be of particular interest to bushwalkers and other visitors to Morton National Park and those who live and holiday on the coast. If you have ever wondered about the nature of waterfalls, why Pigeonhouse Mountain looks like it does or how it is that some beaches are sandy while others are pebbles, then this book is for you. The

book also provides convincing evidence of the occurrence of tsunami waves many hundreds, if not thousands of years ago; this alone makes the book a fascinating read.

The book is full of excellent colour photographs that well illustrate the text. The book's size (15cm x 21cm) means that it can be permanently left in a day pack for ready access when out and about. The only complaint I have is that it was not available thirty years ago.

Understanding the Scenery Morton National Park and the Coast from Nowra to Batemans Bay
Bob and Ann Young, Envirobook, Sydney 134 pages, \$29.95

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Bomaderry Creek Bushland

Terry Barratt, Bomaderry Creek Landcare/Bushcare Group

THE 250 ha Bomaderry Creek Bushland is a rare and precious place, a miraculous survivor in the midst of suburbia. Within its suburban setting, it has become a necessary breathing space for local people and visitors to Shoalhaven City. It provides a welcome relief from growing urban sprawl, an unparalleled recreation and educational resource, a viable reservoir of native plants and animals and a buffer against pollution of Bomaderry Creek – a tributary of the Shoalhaven River.

A special feature of the Bushland is its role as a refuge for plants and animals that were once common, but have now become rare. The outstanding example of this rarity is the Bomaderry Zieria (*Zieria bauerlenii*) found nowhere else in the world!

Like most areas of urban bushland, it has suffered neglect and abuse, but has nevertheless survived and remains an important community resource for present and future generations.

The Bushland is held in a diverse mix of tenures (see map) under the responsibility of various agencies such as National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Shoalhaven City Council, Dept of Lands and a few small freehold parcels of land. This complicated mix of tenures presents real difficulties for properly protecting the Bushland's values as there is little coordinated approach to management.

The best approach is for the NPWS to take on the responsibility for management of the whole Bushland. This was the advice from a working party of community, government agency and Council representatives

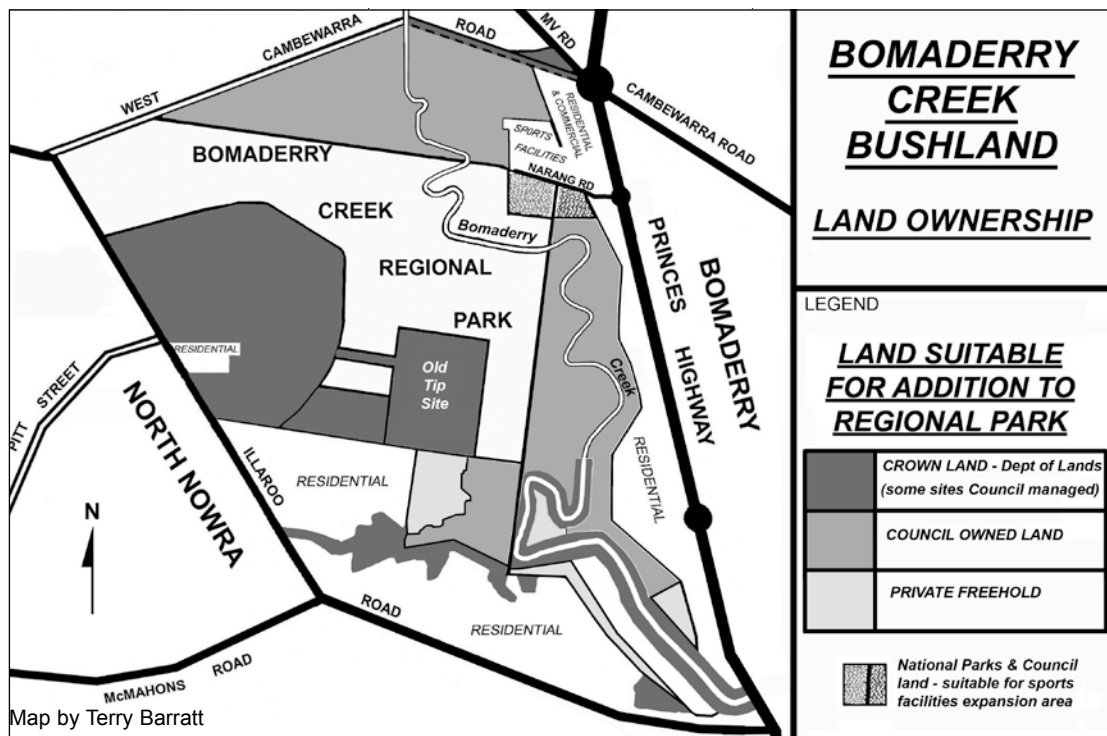
in 2002 which resulted in the establishment of a third of the Bushland as the Bomaderry Creek Regional Park. Given that it is now seven years since the initial dedication, NPWS should be getting on with this task starting with dedication of all immediately available Crown land (except for the old tip – that must remain Council's responsibility). Resolution of an Aboriginal land claim over one piece of Crown land requires consultation by the State Government with the Aboriginal community as a matter of urgency in the interests of all parties.

Dedication of the Council owned land also needs early resolution. Purchase of freehold land can be considered for the future subject to government and/or private funding.

In the meantime, all interested parties including private property owners should come together to develop a planning strategy for the management and appropriate development of this outstanding natural and recreational resource. The Bomaderry Creek Landcare/Bushcare Group has been pursuing this strategic approach for the past 15 years and now intends to bring this to an early conclusion through a vigorous promotion of the values and management needs of the Bushland.

The Bushland has the potential as a significant recreation/tourist attraction and we believe that its values can be protected while at the same time exploiting its economic potential.

The bulk of the Bushland is in a natural condition providing great opportunities for walking experiences via a network of walking tracks. Located in a handy central position is the old tip. This highly degraded land has received a great deal of remedial attention from Council and now has the potential for upgrading as a botanic garden



and arboretum for propagation and promotion of local native species. There is abundant space for a picnic area, visitor centre and car parking while its central location makes it very handy for taking off on the many walks available through the wonderful wildflower country of the sandstone tops and into the deep rainforest filled gorge carved out by the creek.

A site suitable for expansion of the Nerang Road sporting facilities is identified on the map. This is an old spoil depot and is a much more suitable site for tennis courts rather than Council's plans for extension of these facilities into the undisturbed Bushland.

Local and State agency investment in the development and professional management of this tourist resource can be complemented by community voluntary effort assisted with government grants and private donations. This is, in fact, exactly what has

been going on for much of the past 15 years, but on a generally uncoordinated, small scale basis. With the establishment of the Regional Park in 2002, a greater degree of activity and improvement has taken place thanks to the financial input of the State Government (in excess of \$150,000 investment in picnic area and walking track upgrades over the past few years) and professional management by the NPWS.

The Council has also begun to show a greater interest in weed management and some walking track maintenance. A great deal more resources are needed, particularly from Council and the Dept of Lands as the Bushland under their care is unquestionably the most weed infested and in greatest need of walking track improvements.

Public promotion of the Bushland has traditionally fallen to the community through conservation and bush-

care groups and, although they will undoubtedly continue to be involved, much more is needed by local and state agencies to generate a greater resident and visitor awareness of the attractions of this great Shoalhaven park. This can be achieved through improved signposting, interpretive literature and publicity through Shoalhaven Tourism, National Parks offices and local businesses.

The production of a plan of management is urgently needed to give direction to all of these advocated approaches. It will give guidance for a better management direction and will help with attracting funds and voluntary community effort.

If appropriately upgraded, well managed and widely publicized the Bomaderry Creek Bushland can become a significant attraction for visitors as well as, at long last, providing the local community with a first class recreational facility.

Council Moves Slowly on Climate Change

Mike Clear

GLOBAL climate change as a result of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions has a strong scientific basis and the Synthesis Report, the latest major scientific report on this, suggests that on a number of indicators, we have almost reached a point where it is too late to avoid dangerous climate change (See <http://www.anu.edu.au/climatechange/wpcontent/uploads/2009/06/synthesis-report-web.pdf>)

The Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) initiative was born in 1990 with these growing issues of sustainability and the need for a shift to renewable energy as the context. Its overriding aims are to encourage local governments to adopt practices that limit greenhouse gas emissions in the area of local government responsi-

bility; in short, to foster sustainability in local government. Yet some 15 years on in the 2005-06 financial year, of the 32 Giga Watt hours (GWh) of energy consumed (predominantly electricity) by Shoalhaven Council's fixed assets, none was generated from renewable energy sources

(See <http://shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Energy/Default.htm>).

A brief submission on the Shoalhaven City Council's Draft Management Plan (2009-2012) resulted in a series of exchanges with council that are instructive. In order to begin what I hope will be a systematic and regular reporting on council's activity in relation to energy savings and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions I offer some commentary and analysis. My brief submission of 12 June 2009 reads:

"The concern that I would particularly wish to express relates to what I believe is an insufficiently specific, explicit and targeted response in the Draft Management Plan 2009-2012, to the demands posed by climate change in general and Council's own Energy Saving Action Plan (ESAP) in particular.

Over 130 Councils in Australia actively participate in the Cities for Climate Protection scheme initiated by the ICLEI. The ICLEI was founded in 1990 as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. From 2003 the ICLEI is known as Local Governments for Sustainability. SCC is not a listed participant and has not provided any reports required for active involvement in the scheme.

The stated "proposed action" in SCCs Draft Plan, amongst

others, is to: "Participate in Cities for Climate Protection and complete milestone 2 by the end of 2009/2010. Commence Milestone 3 by the end of 2009/2010."

This is very modest and minimal, and would put Shoalhaven Council somewhere near the bottom of the ladder in aspirations and ranking of commitment and action on sustainability.

The five milestones for each participating council to complete for the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign provide a robust framework for taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These milestones are:

■ **Milestone 1:** Conduct an inventory and forecast for Corporate and Community greenhouse gas emissions;
■ **Milestone 2:** Establish an

emissions reduction goal;

■ **Milestone 3:** Develop and adopt a Local Action Plan;

■ **Milestone 4:** Implement the Local Action Plan;

■ **Milestone 5:** Monitor and report on achievements.

(See http://www.ecosmagazine.com/act=view_file&file_id=EC136p10.pdf)

Although the Shoalhaven City Council is not part of the Cities for Climate Protection program, on the evidence it could clearly benefit from the leadership and collaboration such membership affords. Council's 2009-2012 Draft Management Plan has no clearly defined corporate or community targets for greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, it is now widely recognised that without such targets governments and organisations are

Climate Change ◀7

unlikely to provide leadership for businesses and communities looking for a clear statement of direction. Indeed, without these explicit targets it is much less likely that reductions in emissions will be made at all.

I urge Council to rethink and develop a much more explicit and genuine emissions target for its corporate and community functions."

Shoalhaven City Council adopted its Energy Savings Action Plan (ESAP) in February 2008. There is evidence that it has made some worthwhile changes. It has ascertained its 10 top energy consuming facilities and commenced the process of benchmarking their energy use. In a reply to my submission council says, that it has also completed an "inventory and forecast for key sources of greenhouse emissions for Council operations - buildings, vehicle fleet, street lighting, and waste and the Community - residential, commercial, industrial, transport."

Council's efforts are also demonstrated through its recent purchase of an independent energy reporting service, Planet Footprint Pty Ltd. I applaud these initiatives, but at the same time it must be said, that they are long overdue. To some extent they represent a response to statutory requirements rather than demonstrations of strong leadership in these matters. The State Government's Energy Administration Amendment (Water and Energy Savings) Act 2005, requiring councils to prepare an Energy Savings Action Plan (ESAP) for their top 10 energy consuming facilities is a prime example of the statutory context to which our council is responding.

Council tells us through its Cityplan mission that energy management will have "an increasing focus". Let us hope so, because few doubt the serious implications of climate change due to human actions and the significant impact that industrial economies have had on the climate patterns of our planet. Industry figures since the 1960s show a three-fold increase in the incidence of natural disasters. This has resulted in a 900 percent increase in economic costs (See

Overall, climate change poses serious threats to life on earth, and for local councils and the communities they serve the risks are immense.

CANA, Climate Action Network Australia, 2007, Social Impacts of Climate Change at www.cana.net.au).

That the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) is working with government and the community to give support to emissions trading and to pursue the development of new insurance products because of climate change, we know they are reading the science and taking it very seriously. Karl Sullivan of the ICA recently said in the Journal of Emergency Management:

"For some decades the global industry has been involved in research concerning the impacts of extreme weather events on communities and has keenly followed the results of climate change research as it has been matured by the scientific community.

There is agreement in the scientific community that a level of climate change can now be described as 'locked in' or as 'unavoidable'. This is regardless of even the most aggressive mitigation and greenhouse reduction proposals. These 'locked in' changes will arrive on the back of an Australian environment that already has a rich history of weather related natural disasters. On this basis there is a strong need to continue to adapt to the current level of extreme weather events that occur in Australia as well as to the predicted increases in extremes (November 2008).

Overall, climate change poses serious threats to life on earth, and for local councils and the communities they serve the risks are immense. With a significant coastal boundary spanning an estimated 1,000 kilometres when all bays and inlets are taken into account, and with many homes and businesses on relatively low-lying water frontage, the Shoalhaven City Council is likely to experience these impacts from climate change, if it hasn't already, sooner rather than later. If the global insurance industry has been looking at the implications of climate change for its industry "for some decades", it is unfortunate that it hasn't been talking to our local government or perhaps they haven't been listening.

The Australian government funding of the Cities for Climate Protection program ended on 30 June 2009, but the ICLEI has strongly indicated its commitment to continue the program in the form of the new 'CCP Partners Program'. In its reply to my submission council indicated it had joined the old Cities for Climate Protection milestones program. Shoalhaven may have become part this program very late, no doubt this is due to the deplorable obstinacy of the Watson led council, but it is better late than never.

For a very modest subscription the council can gain a range of benefits and continue with its 'Milestone' objectives. I have written and encouraged it to do just that, for the very reasons that my submission on the Draft Management Plan (2009-2012) proposed. Council efforts, like that of many organisations, can obviously benefit from leadership, collaboration and support with a wider community in these critical matters. We all have much to learn and much to do.

Shoalhaven City Council has said through its ESAP that;" it will by example become a community leader in energy management and conservation". This is a wonderful vision for a Council whose record has been demonstrably lacking in community leadership on these things. As part of that community, I think it behoves us to become well informed about our council's obligations and performance in energy management and conservation. It means acknowledging when good decisions are made, too. This article is intended as an introduction to some of the relevant concerns and also as the initiation of a process. With that in mind, in some future issues of the NBT, I hope to report on progress and contribute to the process of monitoring our council's performance in these things.

Finally, the *South Coast Register* (24/06/2009) in "Council's greenhouse gold star" reports that Shoalhaven Council was awarded a gold star for reaching its first milestone in the Cities for Climate Protection program. It should be noted that many councils around Australia have reached milestones 3, 4, 5 and beyond. Based on what we know, this is more like an award for the slow student who the teacher wants to engage in the learning process, not for any excellent achievement. It puts the "gold star award" to Shoalhaven clearly in perspective, but it's still an important event. I congratulate the council on these signs of change and I hope and trust that this positive development will persist.

Pride of Place

Richelieu du Plessis

I have been a resident of Nowra and the northern Shoalhaven for most of the past twenty-five years and, since the year 2000, have operated a business in the Nowra CBD. During this time the atmosphere of Nowra has often confused me. Understanding that the town is the service centre of the district, it offers little more than that - a centre providing for the basic needs of the local population, a town centre stuck in the middle of the 1950s.

At peak periods, such as Easter, while the outlying villages of Berry, the Valley, Huskisson fill with tourists, most of Nowra (other than the supermarkets and a coffee shop or two) closes. It's as though the town does not want to adapt to the 21st century.

It is also obvious to any observer that a significant percentage of the local population seem intent on destroying any work intended to beautify the town, or which makes the CBD more user friendly. The continuing difficulties with the pedestrianised Junction Mall, the tree'd area alongside Woolworths Car Park, the public toilets, unwanted graffiti, provide continued evidence of this destructive attitude. It is obvious that this element of our society has little or no 'pride of place' regarding Nowra.

At a recent meeting of the Shoalhaven Business Chamber, a meeting that I regrettably missed, it was suggested that the Nowra CBD needs revitalization in order to encourage residents and visitors into the town centre at peak periods.

Two outcomes from that meeting were (i) a resolve to beautify the CBD, (ii) to form a committee to work with the SCC Strategic Planning Office. Both are excellent suggestions. However, should an invisible 'Strategic Planning Committee' decide on the methods, materials and design of any beautification behind closed doors, a large segment of our society will still not value such work. Without participation in the decision from the greater community, any 'pride of place' is unlikely to develop.

I recently spent time in Brazil and was very impressed by the artistic, user-friendly urban designs created by Burle Marx, a landscape architect. These designs can be seen on the pavements and in public places in both Rio and at Manaus and involve decorative, artistic, mosaic-like paving symbolising the beach and forest atmosphere of the two cities. I believe that his work was recently shown on Australian television.

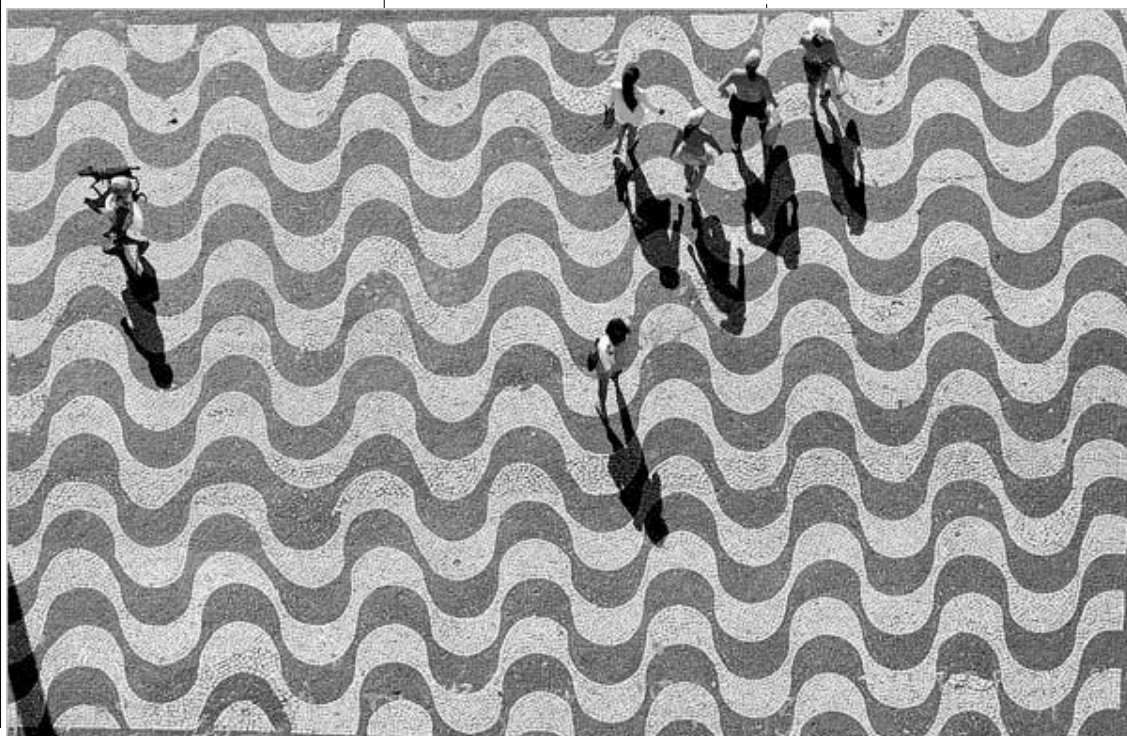
It struck me that this concept, if used in Nowra, could -

- (i) beautify the CBD by creating a unique, mosaic paved landscape on the major traffic arteries of the town,
- (ii) create a CBD unique in all Australia, a tourist attraction,
- (iii) by asking the local Aboriginal community to participate, include large designs inspired by the rich heritage of the traditional owners, interspersed by a basic connecting pattern,

This suggestion could be extended by providing a space, perhaps on the southern wall of the Art Centre, where creative, supervised graffiti is permitted and replaced at intervals.

These suggestions would, I believe, go a long way in providing 'pride of place', the one important ingredient which, in my view, is missing in the CBD.

Below: Pavement design by Burle Marx



'GET TOUGH' CALL ON SNOWY FLOWS

Source ABC News, 29.06.09

There is a call for shareholder Governments to get tough with NSW over the lack of environmental flows in the Snowy River.

The flow for this year has been set at 15 per cent but is running at just four per cent below the Jindabyne Dam.

The high country's river watchdog, Snowy River Alliance, says it is frustrated over trying to get the NSW Government to honour its environment commitments.