



Local democracy: An issue for our times

Graeme Gibson
Huskisson Woollamia
Community Voice

THIS is a story about people, the things they value, their needs, desires, ignorance and apathy. And it's about power, secrecy and the nature of political decision making, particularly in local government, the level closest to people. The story is set in a small coastal village where life has ticked along quietly for years. Most people don't get too excited by things. Progress is good, but only if things don't change too much, is the comfortably ironic stance of many people. Huge numbers of visitors come for summer holidays and some of them have been coming for decades. They pitch their tent or park their van in the same spot in the same camping ground each year.. This could be many places, but it's Huskisson.

Outside of Sydney, the Shoalhaven is the number one tourism destination in NSW and in the Shoalhaven Huskisson is the number one spot. The locals and most of the visitors are attracted to the stunning natural setting and the small scale, low key village atmosphere of the place. But everyone knows that change will happen, in fact must happen. Without change there is no progress and stagnation sets in. There are also larger external pressures with increasing population growth and state government policies encouraging urban consolidation. These pressures suit the aspirations of a small number of people who believe Huskisson should develop at a much greater rate and scale. Port Stephens or Terrigal have been cited as good models for Huskisson's future development.

Full story on page 3



Huskisson Under the Hammer

Graeme Gibson

And then there's *that* view. The Huskisson RSL Club Ltd own a 1,900 sq m block of land in the centre of Huskisson. The land is used as a temporary car park and provides a clear view over Currumbene Creek and Jervis Bay. This view is often described as one of the most stunning in

the world and Huskisson's soul. The RSL have stated repeatedly over some years that if they ever decided to sell the block they would give first offer to Council. However in mid April the land was placed on the open market, for sale by tender, closing 8 June. It is not clear why the RSL did this instead of making the offer to Council.

Since this time Council have proposed conditions on the land which will limit the scale of any development. These are a 12 m setback from Currumbene Street (about one third of the width of the block) and a floor space ratio of 1:1. This means a ground level development can take place over the entire block (minus the 12 m setback) or a two storey develop-

ment over half the block, or a three storey development over one third of the block. The RSL have extended the closing date for tenders to 13 July.

In general terms it's fair to say that the community, and visitors, don't care how it happens, they just want the land preserved for its view. It's that important.

EDITORIAL

When Council turns its back on strong public opinion it is time for us all to take notice. Decisions to increase height limits in Huskisson, so that four to six story buildings are to line its streets is not good planning and it is not what the public wants.

The public have rightly become alarmed at Council's recent high handed actions, decisions taken without proper public consultation, and public concern is not limited to changes in building heights. Council has also been busy lobbying State Government to diminish Huskisson's heritage listed buildings, and having half of them removed from the list, including the Blackett-designed Anglican Church; negotiated in secret the sale of Council's Huskisson car park for a six storey development and has seemingly lost the opportunity to purchase from the RSL vacant land with its vistas over Jervis Bay and Currumbene Creek.

For too long Shoalhaven residents have favoured development minded Councillors who have welcomed to our City the white shoe brigade. Unemployment in the Shoalhaven is amongst the worst in the State. After years of having a free hand, Mayor Watson and his pro development Councillors have failed to fix the problem. Their latest efforts are no more than a bold attempt to reward a few like minded cronies whilst wrecking something of true value.

Huskisson is NSW's number one regional tourist destination and our number one tourist asset. What makes it outstanding is the mix of natural beauty and village character. It is a balance that can easily be upset. There are too many examples of bad developments up and down the coast. The secret to avoid mediocrity and enjoy success is good planning that allows for development while preserving the essential character of Huskisson and its locality.

The City should be encouraging the best heritage architects and planners to compete for a visionary plan. We are not dealing here with any ordinary place. Jervis Bay and its environs are of world significance. Let's have an international competition. The public need to be involved at every step to insure outcomes that meet community expectations. Let's build on our greatest asset. To do anything less will leave us to lament what could have been!



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LETTERS

Compliments

We have seen the Bush Tele, very attractive and informative. We have missed having a BT. Thanks.

Suzi & Peg
Budgong

Matt Brown – How Dare You?

In the pre-election edition of NBT, Matt Brown, Member for Kiama placed an ad promoting his environmental credentials in the Bomaderry/North Nowra locality.

He included a photograph showing himself and others standing behind the entrance sign to Bomaderry Creek Regional Park incorrectly implying that he had had something to do with a State

Government grant for weed control in the Bomaderry area.

That he chose to use this photo to promote himself for the upcoming State elections fair takes one's breath away! He failed to explain that the particular part of the Regional Park in the photo (including the sign itself) was destined for destruction by Shoalhaven City Council's link road proposal.

It's not as if he was unaware of this – he was told at the time the photo was taken (February 2006) that he was standing on the route of the proposed road.

Mr Brown, who is well aware of the destructive implications of the road, has steadfastly given his full support to Council in the pursuit of a route through the Regional

Park and its refusal to look at other alternatives.

It would seem as if political deals count more to Mr Brown than his environmental principles and that he won't let the truth get in the way of a good story!

Kristina Nilsson
Old Erowal Bay

Sour Grapes

My copy of the Bush Tele arrived today – and it looks good and reads well. In truth, though, you should have mentioned in your wine article that some of the results tasted terrible! Congratulations on the paper.

Peter Thompson,
Kangaroo Valley

COMMENT

The heritage mower and the WWOOFer

Dennis Argall

WHAT we need," my wife said, as we looked at our wouldn't-start heritage ride-on mower, "is a wwoofer with mechanical skills."

(And then she went off to afternoon shift and I went to find more important things to do... :-)

Until, a few minutes later, there was a knock at the door. To my amazement it was Toby - Tobias Kohler, wwoofer from Nuremberg. Now a wwoofer is one of the 'willing workers on organic farms' wwoof.com.au - a scheme with which we

are hosts. And Toby had been with us for a few weeks over Christmas - months ago. He had, as do other wwoofers, become a member of the family, in return for which he gave us four to six hours work a day... and being 23 year old Toby, he gave us lots of advice too!

Now, months later, here he was, back at the door, without notice, without expectation, other than Evelyn's little rub on the magic something-or-other as we despaired over the mower: "Oh for a wwoofer with mechanical skills!"

Toby had come back in one of those shamelessly painted campervans that have been shocking us on the highway.

And he had arrived at the door, with this van, via Brisbane, Cairns, Darwin, Coober Pedy and Melbourne. Of course. And here at just the right moment.

We had in fact been pleased to be without family or wwoofers. In five months we had had about 10 days without extras in the house. We have had the pleasure and the stimulation of German, Dutch, Hong Kong and Australian wwoofers this year...where have the Koreans gone, have they deserted us?

All of them are different, all bringing us different challenges.

When you have to explain across barriers of language and culture what this tool does, or

the difference between soil, mulch and compost, or nitrogen fixation by mycorrhizal fungi on the roots of legumes and acacias. or just why you are doing what you are doing... it requires that you actually know what you are doing. We can all use stimulation to achieve that.

It's also great to share ideas and meals with bright young minds.

But.. ah... to get back to the point, to the beginning of the story. No, we were wrong, it was not the starter motor, it was just dirty and loose electrical connections here and there. Toby fixed it, and he cut the grass.

Where Waratahs Grew

The waratahs bloom for the very last time.
I stop to say my goodbye.
For this patch of bush by the crossroads
I fear that the end now is nigh.
Goodbye to epacris and bluebell,
To boronia, hovia, heath.
Goodbye to the tall spiny banksia
And the green orchid peeping beneath,
How lucky indeed the seed should it fall
To the ground on protected land
But it's flimsy the thread when a plant
dares to grow

On a property in private hands
What use the petitions and protests
And hope for what might have been?
In the name of profit and progress
Stockland is moving in.

The driver on the bulldozer,
Blade lowered as onward he rushes,
Doesn't see the uprooted waratah
Doesn't see the orchid he crushes

The cars flood into the car park
In the place where the waratahs grew
The people flock to the grand opening
To sample, first hand something new.

And the people who swarm into
Stockland
Say 'Hey, this one's just the same
As the one that they built just down the road
And aren't we glad that we came?
There's Baker's Delight and Wendy's
Just Jeans and Leonard's and Lowe's
All selling the same kind of foodstuffs
And selling the same kind of clothes
It's a comfort to know everywhere we
go
All of the shops are the same,
Same crowds same echoing noises
And aren't we glad that we came?
We like to see ongoing progress
Keeping up with consumer demand
And we're sure that those greenies
would join us

If only they could understand.'
All the people who snap up the bargains
Say, 'We're glad to be part of this flock
The very same shops from Berlin to Bali,
Botswana, Belfast and Bangkok'
We can travel the world feeling safe and
secure
This globalisation is good
One world united by chain stores



All linked by a Big Brotherhood.'

More cars flood into the car park
In the place where the waratahs grew
Tell me, is this a win for the many
Over a misguided few?

Bev Stewart 25.5.05

Bev's book, *Parodies, Poems and Piffle*, is available for \$10 phone 4443 5584

Local democracy: An issue for our times

Continued from page 1

LIKE most places Huskisson has a history of residents and rate-payers group. In August 2005 the Huskisson Woollamia Community Voice (HWCV) was formed with an aim of providing a means for residents and rate-payers to influence the future of Huskisson, Woollamia and the Jervis Bay area. The HWCV decided to seek recognition from Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) as a Principal Consultative Body, but, although of some importance, this recognition was not essential to the group. Recognition was subsequently granted.

In January 2007 SCC released a Draft Development Control Plan for the central area of Huskisson for a two month exhibition period. This draft plan had occupied Council's planning staff for years and had been the subject of interest to the HWCV for some months as it was known that an increase in height limits was being considered.

At a Development Committee meeting of Council in December 2006 the plan was revealed in a report prepared by planning staff. This referred to a 2005 Councillor briefing and inspection of the area "... with the general consensus from Councillors being 4 storeys on the southern side of Owen Street and 3 storeys on the northern side." Owen Street is Huskisson's main street and this proposal was for an increase from three storeys on the southern side and two storeys on the northern side.

At this particular Development Committee meeting the Mayor, Councillor Watson, moved an amendment that would encourage lot consolidation and allow extra height. Where two or more lots are combined to make a total area of 1,200 sq m or more a height bonus may be allowed. And no limit was placed on the height bonus. That's right, no limit. With little discussion this amendment was adopted.

So there, in a very short space of time and with little debate about the pros and cons, a major amendment was made that totally changed a plan that had been the subject of at least a years work by Council's professional planning staff. While there are differing perspectives about whether an extra storey in Huskisson's main street is a minor change or a major change, no-one can argue that an unlimited height bonus is not a major change. The haste with which this amendment went through, without any consideration for its impact on the broader community, is just one example of how decisions are made in Shoalhaven City Council.

The locals and most of the visitors are attracted to the stunning natural setting and the small scale, low key village atmosphere of the place ...[but] Port Stephens or Terrigal have been cited as good models for Huskisson's future development.



Above: Huskisson's tallest building is 3 storeys. New height limits allow up to 6 storeys

Right: Some of the more than 250 people who participated in the Have a Say Day on 3 March

AND our response, in the next few months the HWCV organised a number of events to encourage the local community to learn about the proposed changes and express an opinion. These events were heavily promoted through the local media, word of mouth and letter boxing the local area.

Around 100 people attended the 12 February meeting of the HWCV where the Development Control Plan (DCP) was a major agenda item. Towards the end of this meeting three people indicated they were supportive of the Draft Plan, the rest opposed.

Then Council held a public meeting in Vincentia on 22 February. Around 180 people attended. Without HWCV's extensive efforts to promote this meeting it is doubtful that anywhere near 180 people would have turned up in response to Council's minimal efforts at promoting this meeting, primarily an obscure three line newspaper notice. The vast majority of people expressed opposition to the DCP at this meeting where Council adopted a defensive attitude and it was clear that changes to the plan were unlikely. When concerns were raised a common



Council response was to "put it in your submission."

HWCV then organised a community *Have A Say Day* consultation in Huskisson on 3 March. More than 250 people attended this event where they were able to learn more about the plan and express a considered opinion. Up until this time the HWCV had deliberately adopted an approach of encouraging people to get involved and learn about the proposed changes, but HWCV did not state an opinion either for or against the plan. While aware of strong feelings against the plan this was not quantifiable and it would be very easy to claim the HWCV is not representative, is scare mongering and gener-

ally trying to lead people. But following the *Have a Say Day* it was crystal clear that the vast majority of people were strongly opposed to Council's plans. This then became the basis of HWCV media statements – the community don't like the proposed changes and are worried that the Council might not be listening. This later changed to - the Council is refusing to listen to the community.

At the end of the two month exhibition period Council had received 80 submissions, 78 of which were opposed to the DCP. HWCV made an extensive community submission based on the *Have a Say Day* (representing the thoughts of more than 250 people) and a separate Executive

Committee submission.

Following analysis of the submissions a staff report to Council recommended that the height bonus provisions be removed. However Councillors voted to put these back in, supporting a common view that professional advice is not well regarded by Councillors.

During late March and early April HWCV held meetings with 11 of the 13 Councillors to express concerns and ask for a deferral of the vote to allow for meaningful community consultation. The community is not anti-development but want to be involved in Council's plans. Several of the Councillors expressed some interest in further consultation but were worried it may be expensive, time consuming and ineffective. HWCV followed this up with a presentation to a Policy and Planning Committee meeting which outlined an approach for a short period of consultation that would be engaging and inexpensive. Councillors rejected this and voted to adopt the plan.

HWCV then organised a rally in Huskisson on 21 April, which was covered by WIN TV. Around 120 people attended the rally, on a wet Saturday morning with short notice. This was just before the final Council vote on the 24 April, where the final motion adopted by Council was:

□ On the northern side of Owen Street a maximum of up to four storeys where the development site consists of two or more lots and has a minimum area of 1200 square metres

□ On the southern side of Owen Street a maximum of up to five storeys where the development site consists of two or more lots and has a minimum areas of 1200 square metres with a maximum of 50% floor space coverage on a sixth level for sites over 3000 square metres.

This meeting was attended by more than 100 people. Many of these people had never attended a Council meeting before, or written a letter to Council. Although deeply disappointed at the final result, these people have now witnessed the quality and standard of a Shoalhaven City Councillors debate.

So, in a nutshell we now have four, five or six storeys for the central area of Huskisson. But does anyone think it will stop there? What will this do to the economic future of a coastal village dependent on tourism? Local media coverage has been extensive and now it has received wider media coverage but Council seem to have decided to tough it out, wait for the media to move on and community outrage to subside. ■

Sustainability

Geoff Mosley

(This is an abridged & edited version of a talk given at Montsalvat on 25th February, 2007)

THE world is an incredibly dynamic place. If we could travel back a few thousand years, say fifteen thousand years, we would be able to walk to Tasmania (Bass Strait did not exist). What is more, on our way there we would experience a very arid environment, in fact something like the Simpson Desert today – high sand ridges hundreds of kilometres long arranged in parallel rows some 200 to 300 metres apart. (The remains of these dunes can be seen at both Wilson's Promontory and North East Tasmania). If we had continued our journey into the heart of Tasmania and visited the Shannon River Cave we would have found people who had already lived in that cave for 15,000 years and were to continue living there for another 14,000 years.

These conditions were caused by natural climate change (sea level had dropped because of the ice age) but humans have also been responsible in the distant past for some big changes in the earth's environment, mainly through forest destruction and burning and they may have caused the destruction of the mega fauna on several continents. But all this is nothing compared with the changes wrought on planetary environment over the last 250 years – the period of the industrial and urban revolutions – changes which are not only continuing but speeding up.

Normally people do not live long enough to see changes of this magnitude, now they are occurring so fast that we can. But, of course, it is a mixed blessing, it may make life more interesting but it must surely also make us feel guilty about all the suffering involved.

I should make it clear that what I am talking about is not just the major physical changes in the earth's environment but in the social environment with the massive increase in human population and the severing of the close link which people once had with the physical environment. A sizeable proportion of us live lives of absolute misery and wars are fought in a more or less endless sequence as different



nations and groups struggle for supremacy and resources. All this is a part of our environment today. War or the threat of it is a central part of our culture – they are our wars.

At this stage I should mention my personal way of viewing these events. My first perspective is that of a geographer – a person trained in understanding the areal differentiation of the earth's environment. My second is that of a conservationist – a person concerned with protecting the future. Since I have a doctorate for research spanning these two disciplines you could perhaps regard me as a 'doctor of future protection' – our future and that of our offspring.

Diagnosis

Our earth is in a bad way. I am not going to spend much time on the symptoms – we hear about them every day. But unless we can relate them to the cause and deal with that, there is not much hope for us. At the moment the symptom receiving most attention is global warming but global warming is not a cause. It is an effect. The cause is our fossil fuel driven commitment to endless economic growth.

Global warming is only one of many effects of our obsession with growth. Unfortunately the attention to climate change, while it should be making us more aware of the overall devastation of the earth that is occurring, is actually making us somewhat less aware of the other symptoms such as continuing deforestation, marine acidification, the spread of cities, the loss of variety in plant and animal life (including, for instance, loss of some of our food sources, such as the loss of 90% of the world's large fish stocks), and so on. Some of these things are the product of climate change some are not. All are related to the basic cause – the unsustainable demands we are making on

a finite world.

The Options

1) The first option is to continue as at present and continue to deal with the symptoms, in effect making the best of things by adapting to the deteriorating situation as it unfolds. I will call this the business as usual approach because at its heart is the ongoing commitment to endless growth. This option involves the central article of faith that we can decouple or delink growth from its environmental effects;

2) The main alternative is to make some radical changes. I will call this making the change to a steady state society.

Business as Usual

This is what is presently being offered by each of the major parties in Australia and the situation is similar in other parts of the western world. The main thrust is to mitigate or ameliorate individual aspects of environmental degradation.

The current sustainability debate focuses on these matters and on what level of technological adjustment is necessary. In this scenario we see Peter Garrett expressing his commitment to 'sustainable growth' and Kevin Rudd talking about 'adapting to climate change'. Well of course we have to adapt and live with it – the next 40 years will be affected by how we lived in the previous 40 years. In all of this business as usual approach growth is a non negotiable element. From Howard to Rudd the key objective is 'growing the economy'. We have recently seen the response to suggestions from the Greens that we phase out coal exports. Terms like 'economic vandalism' have been used by both sides of politics. In other words, we cannot give up on jobs and competitiveness. Even if it kills us, it seems.

Do you really believe that we can continue growing for ever while at the same time reducing

the impact on the environment and that we can solve the problem mainly through addressing soft targets such as reducing per capita consumption?

We have to do much more than this. 'Sustainable growth' is the supreme oxymoron. There is however one statement that defenders of the status quo make concerning those who protest against it that I strongly agree, it is this – 'unless you can suggest a viable alternative your protests are just empty air'. Exactly.

The consequences of this present muddling through option are very serious. I say this because I believe the only real cure will come from a rejection of growth for a steady state society. Without this more fundamental approach what we are doing now will make things worse by taking attention away from the real situation, creating the illusion that the present approach can work..

The alternative is a steady state society based on the certain knowledge that we cannot go on expanding our consumption for ever.

The idea of a creative or steady state society has been around for a long time but it has never been promulgated or taken up by, for instance, the environment movement, in any thorough going way. I should make it clear that it is a concept of a dynamic steady state not a static steady state. In fact, as John Stuart Mill said over 150 years ago, in this

society all kinds of new creativity will be unleashed. Also I need to make it clear that this is not just about survival although that will be the result. It is primarily about a better and sustainable way of life.

What are the main features of the steady state society?

First we will live within the means of the resources available in the place where we live. This means that after some necessary adjustments to ensure that we all have the resources to live sustainably, global international trade will eventually end. This particularly applies to trade in harmful things like energy which are driving growth.

We will reduce our populations dramatically, change the patterns of our settlements reducing the size of our cities and working where we live. We will grow or barter more of the food we eat. This will reduce our dependence on machine driven transport.

We will change our relationship with the environment fundamentally so that there is a sense of belonging and equity – this will apply to our relationship with all aspects of the environment including our fellow living things.

Mainly as a result of this change we will no longer use force as a means of imposing our will. Environmental security will replace military security. In the sustainable world of the future there will be no armed forces and weapons will have been destroyed or converted.

We will have different systems of governance to those of today – ones which give everyone a direct say in major decisions.

You might well say that this scenario is extreme and it IS, in terms of the difference between then and now. But think of this, if you think aspects of our present way of life are untenable in the long term, is it not today's way of life that is crazy and extreme? The conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan give you some idea of what the future will be like if we follow the business as usual option and the world's population is nine billion and rising. It will be a mixture of Baghdad and Mad Max. Do gated wealthy nations and a scramble for resources using military might sound familiar?

If you would like to hear more please contact me at mosenett@optusnet.com.au.

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Global positioning

Country EFP	total	Overweight % Obese F/M	No. of MacDonalds Meat/per yr
Australia 7.58ha	152mil/ha	60/70 23/21	726 235 lbs
Chad 1.06ha	1mil/ha	17/10 1/0.3	0 31 lbs
Ecuador 1.54	20mil/ha	51/40 15/6	10 99 lbs
France 5.26	316mil/ha	33/44 6/7	973 222 lbs
India 0.77	847mil/ha	14/15 1.1/0.9	46 11 lbs
US 9.7	2,842mil/ha	70/72 38/32	13,491 275 lbs

EFP: Ecological Foot-print per person in hectares

Total: million hectares required for country. Note the difference between India (pop. 1.1 billion) and US (pop. 300million). US has 5% of world population but uses 25% of world resources.

Overweight %: percentage of population of female/male overweight

Obese F/M %: percentage of population of female/male grossly overweight (obese) percentage of population of female/male overweight

ENVIROSCENE

The flathead on my hook

Bernie Clarke

There are 40 species of flathead around the coast of Australia, the greatest numbers are found off the NSW coast, around the Victorian coast, along the Great Australian Bight extending to the continental shelf.

Anglers are attracted to three species, dusky, tiger and sand. Most fishermen aspire to catch a big dusky, the largest of the flathead family, it is easily identified by the large dark blotch on the tail. It spends its life in the estuaries and is rarely found in the ocean; they may be driven by flood waters as they seek more saline waters off shore.

Spawning occurs from September to October on the southern grounds and terminates about the end of December on northern grounds. Flathead 20 centimetres long have found to be in roe. A female can produce two and a half million eggs in one season. Flathead are a member of the benthic community of fishes including flounder, sole and stingrays that live on the seabed, lying in wait for passing prey. Its diet consists of 51% small fish, 25% crustaceans, detrital material makes up the balance of the flathead diet.

The swimming characteristics of flathead differ from most other fish due to its large head (hence its name) and tapered body down to its broad tail. Two fifths of a fish's body volume consists of swimming muscle. It is propelled by an undulating body motion along its entire length producing side to side thrust that propels it. Fins have little effect on swimming, fish can move in any direction by changing the angle of the fins, like the tail and wing flaps of an aeroplane. Its tail is used to steer as well

as assist in the undulation of the fish's body in moving forward. Thus the ability of a flathead in being able to see-saw its head across a taut line is derived from the fish's powerful tail as it swishes back and forth, fraying all but heavy gauge monofilament fishing line, with its needle sharp teeth.

Flathead teeth are for holding rather than cutting, the dozens of fine teeth don't mesh. The bottom jaw protrudes beyond the top jaw. When the fish takes a bait the hook usually becomes embedded in its mouth, gills or gullet, the chance of losing a sizeable fish increases if the hook is lodged beyond its jaws.

An element of skill is required in handling a large fish, ensure there is no loose line between fish and angler, fish have been known to 'throw' a hook if tension is released. With the aid of their fins in an environment where water pressure is 800 times denser than air, fish are able to change direction in a split second.

When netting a flathead be sure to place the net in front of its head, never the tail, allow slack line at the same time, swiftly draw the net over the body; fish are sometimes lost at the net if line is held too tight. When handling the fish take particular care to avoid the pre opercular spines each side of the head.

The bane of anglers occurs when fish go off the bite. Many reasons are proffered; a drop in water temperature, variance in salinity levels, algal blooms which may deoxygenate the water, high winds, tide and current.

Be a sport, tell your neighbour of a successful outing and location and remember, fish aren't sedentary.

Secret Deal on Public Land

Graeme Gibson, Huskisson Wollamia Community Voice

FROM late in 2006 Council has been negotiating the sale, to a developer, of a publicly owned car park in Owen Street through a confidential process. Because it is confidential full details are not known.

What is understood, however, is that the Council decided to sell the land without any consultation with, or reference to, the community, even though it was developed through contributions made by the Huskisson business community.

Based on the recent sale of two smaller adjoining blocks (to the same developer) the land is estimated to have a value of around \$3.25 million. The costs to the developer, including a cash payment to Council of \$400,000, along with a roundabout, kerb and guttering, angle parking and streetscaping are believed to total \$1,080,000.

In addition to these costs the developer has to replace the 78 car parking spaces at a cost of around \$2.4 million. However this should be seen as a cost to the developer and not a concern of the community.

And there's the nub. Council seems to believe it is reasonable for the community to bear this

cost to the developer, perhaps as a community subsidy.

Surely, if the land is worth around \$3.25 million, then that is the price the purchaser should pay the Council. And the full details should be publicly available. Selling public land through a confidential process is never likely to win support for Council.

A six storey building is proposed for this land. Council says this will provide a gateway development and a sense of arrival in Huskisson, even though most people feel they have arrived in Huskisson when they see the bay and creek. There does not appear to be any demand for a large building to announce arrival in Huskisson.

The developer of this site, Huscorp Pty Ltd, is set to be a major developer in Huskisson. They are also proposing a four story building on the beach front in Huskisson. This is to be a 15 room guest house on land currently occupied by a two storey guest house.

Huscorp were quoted in the Sydney press last year as saying they have acquired four sites and plan to build up to 100 luxury units in Huskisson and Vincentia for sale at between \$600,000 and one million dollars each. ☹

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Seeds of hope for growing a community

Gerard Proust

MAY we live in interesting times; indeed. We are living in a world that is out of balance; a world of diminishment, in an age of fear, run by little men who are bereft of vision. I am still confident we can change this. Every day we make decisions (knowingly or not) about what futures we are going to have and give to our children. Some of these decisions (challenges) seem to be hard but they are not. To do nothing is not an option.

I have recently returned from the 'cities feeding communities' conference in Melbourne. There were speakers and workshops on school garden & education, seed savers, community gardens, food security, city farms and community gardens. The inspirational speakers included Vandana Shiva, Helena Norberg-Hodge, David Holmgren, Jackie French and Jerry Coleby-William. Their words were profound and their main message simple: **grow it where you live.**

The current food production system is not good for our health, our environment and our children. The problems with our food production system can be summed up by two words: Monsantoisation and MacDonaldisation.

Monsantoisation: the food process which converts pesticides, fertilisers, oil and genetically modified seed into food.

MacDonaldisation: the other end of food supply which

converts the Monsanto product into commercial food (quantity over quality) that contributes to our whole range of health and social disorders.

The age of diminishment

■ Plant and animal biodiversity loss 1,000+ species a day

■ Rainforest covers 6% planet has 80% plants, losing 50mil acres each year

■ 75% of European food diversity lost since 1900

■ 33% of livestock varieties since 1900

■ 30,000 vegetable species since 1900

How long can we let these losses continue? The challenges we face today are complexly simple or simply complex. Either way we have to face them and make decisions accordingly.

These challenges are daunting but we have many solutions, options we can use together on a local basis. Just some of the many solutions are for our food situation:

■ **Re-localise:** bring food production back to near where people live;

■ **Seed Savers:** use your own local seed to grow your own nutritious, tasty and fun food;

■ **Community Gardens:** expand the home garden concept to grow more food on a community scale that has a whole range of environmental, social and educational benefits;

■ **Local organic foods:** use as little chemical as possible for to get organic foods from overseas defeats the purpose with the amount of fuel it takes to get it here;

■ **Community Supported**

Agriculture: people with time and/or money can invest in a local agriculture venture to help the farmer and reap the food or financial reward;

■ **Slow Food Movement:** the preservation of local grown food and local produce.

■ **School gardens:** Studies around the world have shown that outdoor education programs based on the environment and sustainable living have had a dramatic effect on students:

- 71% increase in physical activity
- 64% reduction in bullying
- 28% reduction in vandalism
- 33% improvement in learning

ITS getting hotter and its getting drier and we are having more extreme weather events and we are running out of oil and we have no effective leadership. So we look to our family friend and community to realize our solutions. To what level we take our solutions is up a personal decision.

Some ideas put forth at the conference were:

- Start with kitchen garden and expand out
- Reduce your lawn area
- Buy local produce
- Get rid of air conditioner
- Reduce trips to & items from supermarket
- Use all rainwater that falls on your land
- Go renewable energy
- Walk
- Hide the TV some nights
- Start local carnivals (food celebrations)
- Join seed savers, slow food, food co-ops, local markets. ♡

Why Organic?

Marion Bradley

My first association with the Shoalhaven Food House Inc. (SFH) was to assist my daughter, a working mother with two little girls, who is the treasurer of the SFH Committee and deeply involved in all facets of the group. It wasn't long before I too was deeply involved on my own behalf. I was so impressed with this dedicated group of delightful people, who were willing to share their knowledge of and passion for organic food, that I was soon attending meetings, helping on the monthly food stall and taking my turn at chairing meetings and ordering the goods.

The aim of the group SFH is to promote and help provide affordable, organic food both for the members and for the general public.

To achieve this aim the group buys in bulk and is not for profit. All the workers are volunteers. The membership fee is \$20 per annum and this pays for expenses such as rental, courier and insurance. Members receive a 10% discount.

Much food quality, taste and nutrition is lost due to the use of harmful chemicals, depleted soils and damaging processing practices. In buying local, chemical free vegetables and organic grocery items which are sustainable and ethical in production we help our families, the environment and ourselves.

'And They're Still Falling?'

Recently published by Gininderra Press *And They're Still Falling?* is a collection of twenty three women's accounts of their involvement in the campaign from the 1970s through to the RFA in 1999.

Compiled by Olwyn Broder, Moira Collins, Anabel Macdonald and Venie Holmgren with a foreword by Bob Brown, it contains of a variety of anecdotal accounts from women of the Far South Coast and as well includes authoritative contributions from former Independent Senator Irena Dunn, Economist Judy Clarke and Botanist Heather Meek.

Some of the writers relate the effect the campaign had on their personal lives, others write of the beauty of the forests. Many tell of their arrests, two of the writers were gaoled for refusal to pay fines for trespassing in a forest. The book is indexed and has twelve pages of colour photos and documents.

Olwyn, Moira, Anabel and Venie, whose average age is now 78 years, hope their book will encourage younger women to continue to fight for our precious forests because, as we all know, they are still falling.

Copies of *And They're Still Falling* can be ordered from: Moira Collins 84 Peak Hill Road Bega NSW 2550.

Price: \$27.50 Packing & postage included

Cheques payable to: O.Broder & A.Macdonald

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

EXHIBITIONS

Bundanon's exhibition program highlights works in the Bundanon Collection by Arthur Boyd, Boyd family members and Bundanon artists in residence.

Exhibitions are presented at Bundanon, the Shoalhaven Arts Centre and tour throughout regional galleries nationally.

Bundanon – One Year On
Robert Dixon, Jennifer Robertson, Scott Sheehan, Sue Boyd, Megan Mulligan
Shoalhaven City Arts Centre
22 June to 18 July
Opening: 23 June 12noon – 2pm
This exhibition follows the 2006 Bundanon residency of five Shoalhaven artists and features paintings, drawings, video, artists' book and diaries, mixed media works and photography.
Shoalhaven Arts Centre
4422 0648

The Lady and the Unicorn
Arthur Boyd

Upstairs Gallery, Bundanon
26 August 2007 to 17 February 2008

Opening: 26 August 10.30am – 12noon

This evocative suite of prints reinterprets the sad myth of the unicorn. It is the result of a successful collaboration between the London based, Australian poet Peter Porter and Arthur Boyd, in which Boyd's great talent for illustration and proficiency in etching are confirmed.
www.bundanon.com.au or 4422 2100 for details

PERFORMANCE

Tony Gould

Pianist and composer Tony Gould AM has been at the forefront of Australian jazz and improvisatory music for the past three decades. He has also embraced traditional and contemporary music classics and played a key role in music education.

Performing improvisations on Irish Tunes and Gershwin as well as selected works from the American Popular Song Repertoire of Jerome Kern, Richard Rogers and the Finnish composer Jukka Perko.
30 June, 4pm
Boyd Education Centre, Riversdale
Cost: \$25 Adults, \$20 Concession
Food and refreshments available
www.bundanon.com.au or 4422 2100 for details

Synergy

In an exploration into the nature of sound and silence, members of Synergy (Australia's leading percussion ensemble) will combine the ancient sounds of gongs from China and singing bowls from the Himalayas with loops, samples and treatments using the latest in digital sound technology.
21 July, 5pm
Boyd Education Centre, Riversdale
Cost: \$25 Adults, \$20 Concession
Food and refreshments available
www.bundanon.com.au or 4422 2100 for details

EVENTS

Jazz@Riversdale
Bring a picnic and enjoy one of Australia's most spectacular settings for informal music making. Take the opportunity to visit the Bundanon Homestead and Arthur Boyd's studio at Bundanon before the jazz at the award winning Glenn Murcutt designed Boyd Education Centre at Riversdale.
26 August, 12noon
Jazz @ Riversdale, Boyd Education Centre Riversdale
Cost: By Donation
Food and refreshments available

Bundanon Open Day
every Sunday
Cost: \$12, \$10 concession, \$40 family
Light refreshments available
www.bundanon.com.au or 4422 2100 for details

LITERARY EVENTS

Rawi Hage Literary Lunch
Bundanon Trust in partnership with the Sydney Writers' Festival "Luck is pretty much the only thing worth having in early-'80s war-torn Beirut. Luck and money. For those without the resources to escape, every day is a game of Russian roulette." Montreal Mirror. Beirut born photographer/writer Rawi Hage reads from his first novel 'De Niro's Game'.
17 June 12 noon
Front of Bundanon Homestead, Verandah & Lawn
Cost: \$15 per person – includes entry to Bundanon, simple lunch and glass of wine
www.bundanon.com.au or 4422 2100 for details

Send information about your community event to The Editor, PO Box 2210, TOMERONG NSW 2540 or email to pat@envirobook.com.au

The Bomaderry Zieria

The 'Iconic' Species of the Bomaderry Creek Bushland

Terry Barratt BSc (Hons)
Bomaderry

FOLLOWING a research project through Wollongong University into the reproduction and genetics of the Bomaderry Zieria, an article reporting my conclusions was published in the June/July 1999 edition of the New Bush Telegraph.

In the article I described the Bomaderry Zieria as a 'rare and curious plant, an enigma'.

Its rarity is acknowledged by its listing as an endangered species in state and national threatened species legislation. Its curious and enigmatic status arises from the fact that it reproduced sexually sometime in the past, but does not do so now. Added to this it appears to have high levels of genetic diversity, in contrast to the low levels of genetic diversity expected to be found in small, isolated populations of rare plants.

My research arose as a result of encouragement from colleagues and academics following a study I carried out in 1997 in support of a case for declaration under the Threatened Species Conservation Act of *Critical Habitat* for the Bomaderry Zieria – a declaration that is still awaiting government action.

In the 1997 study I carried out an exhaustive investigation into the species' distribution, numbers, habitat requirements and those things that posed a threat to its continued existence.

Of greatest concern were threats of human origin including plans for roads and housing, clearing along powerlines and pipelines, rubbish dumping, weeds and rabbits.

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) had long advocated the reservation of the Bushland as a Regional Park to overcome these problems and in 2001 the State Government set this process in train with declaration of about one third of the Bushland as the Bomaderry Creek Regional Park. ACF and the Friends of Bomaderry Creek have continued to press for expansion of the Park to take in the total 250 ha of the Bushland, particularly in the face of renewed attempts by the Shoalhaven City Council with the full support from the Member for Kiama, Matt Brown, to force through a road that would bisect this valuable conservation and recreation resource.

In the meantime the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has a program of upgrading the recreational facilities and protecting the conservation values of the small part of the Bushland in their care.

Given the fact that 10 years have elapsed since the original Bomaderry Zieria study, the NPWS has commissioned the Bomaderry Creek Landcare Group to resurvey all known colonies of the species. The work will be completed this month and a report submitted to the Service in early June.

Prior to the commencement of the current survey it was known that only a few Zieria sites had been affected by fire and that regrowth from underground root systems had been vigorous. Browsing of the young shoots, possibly by rabbits and wallabies, was noted, but the plants appeared to be able to grow beyond this cropping phase. Fortunately, browsing on mature plants has not been evident.

It was noted in 1988, during my university research, that drought was having quite an impact on the Zieria. This impact has also been observed during the current drought.

Other impacts of very great concern have been from rubbish

dumping, fire suppression, weeds and possibly trail maintenance by utility authorities.

Let's hope that the current survey can provide some insights and guidance to a better regime of management for the Bomaderry Zieria.

Unlike that very rare and unique 'iconic' species, the Wollemi Pine, the Bomaderry Zieria has not attracted the wonder of the world. It is not a tall tree, with an ancient lineage, and protected over the millennia by its cryptic location in the depth of a Wilderness Area. The Bomaderry Zieria is a small flowering plant in the citrus family, located in a series of exposed sites with encroaching urban development on all sides,

the vagaries of natural and human processes pressing on it, and a lack of will from the local authorities and local state member of parliament to recognise that it has become a symbol (a natural 'icon') of the fight for the survival of the Bomaderry Creek Bushland.

Given Council's obstinate refusal to consider alternative road routes, and to give no value to the Bushland and its 'iconic' species, it is not surprising to find some concerned citizens who despair over its long term survival prospects.

But don't be surprised to find many more with the faith to believe that it and the Bushland can be saved, and that the Bomaderry Zieria can survive long enough to reveal its secret past, why it has evolved into an enigmatic species, and to justify its arrival as an 'icon' on the scene of the battle for the Bomaderry Creek Bushland. ♣



BOMADERRY ZIERIA
The iconic species of the Bushland

AntPress

ANDREW Antoniou's Antpress Studio began its life as a teaching and access workshop in April 2005. Since then many people have come to Mollymook to learn the fine art of printmaking and others have come to use the beautiful facilities for editioning and processing.

Andrew's decision to move to the area twelve years ago with his partner & artist Marilyn Puschak carried with it both fears and promises - the worry of how to provide a living and maintain contact with peers in the art world yet the chance to have spacious studios with little distraction. Creating AntPress Studio was a way of balancing both sides of the equation.

The main aim of the studio is to introduce students to printmaking and then make the workshop available for access time so they can carry on with the technique.

Andrew is a very experienced teacher with many years of mentoring students at major art universities. He uses humour and art history to bring alive the process of printmaking. Students range from people with no art background to those who



have experience in other media or those wanting to refresh their printmaking skills.

The difference with these weekend printmaking courses is that they include epicurean lunches. The studio is equipped with a spacious kitchen where artist Marilyn Puschak serves creative vegetarian food using ingredients from the garden and a local organic farm. All in all the reports have overwhelming - a great weekend and a great art form!

Situated in Mollymook just minutes from the beach the studio is fully equipped for etching, lino prints, collagraphs and monotypes. A wide variety of courses are available and can be found at www.antpress.com or by calling 02 4454 3371. ♣



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Large Donations Fund Campaign

According to a recent report in the SMH developers and other major companies funded the election campaign of the Shoalhaven Independents Group at the last Council election. Documents show that the 12 candidates standing in the Group received a total of \$91,017.60. Seven of the Group won office.

Companies donating to the campaign included the property

developers Stockland and Beechwood Homes. Whilst Lucas Property Development, which Plans to build more than 600 houses adjacent to Sussex Inlet Golf Course donated \$12,000 to the Group.

■■■■■

Community Voice Muzzled

Several of Shoalhaven's Councillors are openly hostile towards Community Consultative Bodies and this has led to Council amending its policy: to disallow recognition of a Community Consultative Body if in Council's opinion they become involved in any political activities against the Federal, State or Local Government of the day, and

Council will be the 'sole arbiter of this issue'

■■■■■

No Place for Trees

Councillors Richard Bates and Rebecca Rudd believe Council succumbed from pressure from the Huskisson RSL to have the management plan for Voyager Park denuded of trees, ostensibly because the Club couldn't bear to see their million dollar view framed by a few shade trees.

In the opinion of the two Greens councillors the decision was to appease the Club and keep them on side with regard to their vacant block (see story page one).

■■■■■

Longer Trading Hours for Husky Pub

Last year the Husky Pub applied for an increase in its trading hours. Many in the community were concerned and the police were opposed so Council asked for a Social Impact Assessment before it made a decision.

The publican refused and threatened to take Council to court if it didn't approve the application.

In the light of legal advice Council has backed down and approved a 12 month trial.

■■■■■

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BOOK REVIEW

Beyond Capricorn

by Pat Thompson

TWO hundred and fifty years before Captain Cook, the Portuguese charted much of the coast of Australia. You will not find mention of this fact in modern Australian history books. No academic or professional historian seems to be willing to visit this subject, preferring to ignore the hard evidence that exists in both primary and secondary sources. In a recently published book, *Beyond Capricorn*, journalist Peter Trickett offers intriguing new incites to this little known subject.

Before reviewing this book I should declare an interest, as I currently have a verbal contract to republish an earlier work, *The Secret Discovery of Australia*, by the late Kenneth Gordon McIntyre. When I learnt of Peter Trickett's new work I was naturally anxious to obtain a copy.

For those that do not know the main story, it will

be sufficient to outline how a Portuguese expedition under the leadership of Cristovao de Mendonca departed Malacca in 1522 and sailed along the northern coast of Australia and then after passing through the Torres Strait worked their way down the eastern and some of the southern coasts of the mainland. That this is fact is based primarily on a series of maps known as the Dieppe Maps which were published from 1536 onwards. Further evidence in the form of various artefacts have also been found and when reviewed would appear to be authentically linked to Portuguese exploration of the period.

If you found the way Australian history was dished up at school pretty boring, this new multicultural twist may come to you as a real eye opener. One wonders whether there is a conspiracy at work here or simply a matter of academics not being willing to learn some

Portuguese. Probably it is a case of both. Like many other chapters of the Australian story there is and always has been a case of denial. Many will be familiar with the history wars being waged in modern times over what was the treatment of Aboriginals following the arrival of European colonists. History is indeed the stuff of politics!

In *Beyond Capricorn* the author takes us on a journey and arrives at some startling conclusions, like that of Mendonca not only exploring the eastern half of Australia but his going on to discover and chart much of New Zealand. He also claims there is some likelihood that prior to the 1522 expedition the same Mendonca was the first to chart the west coast of Australia. This is different to what you learnt at school and he presents some plausible arguments to support his viewpoint.

There are a number of other areas that this book breaks new ground. Firstly it is useful for

those who are already familiar with the subject as it updates a number of matters following recent research. For example, both a lead sinker found off Fraser Island and pottery trawled off the ocean floor south of Eden, have been scientifically dated to the early sixteenth century. Secondly it takes into account the oral stories of both Maori and Aboriginal Australians who would appear to have had demonstrable contact with the Portuguese travellers. Lastly it draws chiefly on the Vallard Map of 1547, a Dieppe Map that has not been available to many previous researches. It is only a copy from the original material stolen from the Portuguese, which all the other Dieppe Maps are also based on, but it has one important difference as it has over 120 Portuguese names describing the coastline, most of which do not appear on the other maps..

There are in my view, however, a number of short comings and serious weaknesses in the book. Firstly, the illustrations are disappointing. There is a copy of the eastern and western coasts of Australia according to the Vallard Map and computer generated ones showing adjustments based on the author's hypotheses, but there is none of the other Dieppe Maps reproduced and no overview of the region such as the Jean Rotz, Circular Chart of 1542. Many of the Dieppe maps are available and would have made a difference to a fuller understanding of the author's story.

The author also in my view is unkind to the earlier work of Kenneth McIntyre saying that it 'unfortunately contained some serious errors which allowed it to be debunked in academic circles'. I would have liked to know what these errors were, as McIntyre has a thorough knowledge of Portuguese history, writes well and has presented cognitive arguments to support less contentious views than Trickett.

'Jean Rotz, Chart of Eastern Hemisphere 1542'



In fact McIntyre warns that it is not wise to fall into the trap of trying to identify each cape and inlet all the way along the Australian coast which Trickett attempts to do. Whilst it is true that Peter Trickett had access to the nomenclature shown on the Vallard which McIntyre did not have, he seems to have drawn a long bow in reaching some of the conclusions he has.

Take for example, Trickett's view that Mendonca reached the start of the Great Australian Bight. In terms of geography it simply does not add up. According to McIntyre the Portuguese turned back no further west than Port Campbell in Victoria. In the McIntyre version the distance travelled fits with reality and the key distances shown on all the Dieppe Maps of the Australian coast are fairly true. Trickett wants us to believe that the Portuguese against prevailing currents and weather battled two to three times further when traversing the southern coasts and only got it wrong on their map because of their problem measuring longitude.

From the accompanying map it is possible to see some likeness to Australia. The two authors have differing views on how to account for the obvious distortions as shown. To consider them both you will need to borrow McIntyre's book from the library but Trickett's book can be purchased for a cost of \$35. ■