



# ShUT – A Tribute to People Power

ShUT (Shoalhaven's Unwanted Tip) was formed at a public meeting in Tomerong on Saturday September 12th 2009. The meeting was attended by 150 residents who had gathered to express their concern about a development application before Shoalhaven City Council (SCC).

Ev Pettigrew

THE proposal is for a very large (100,000 tonne per annum) privately operated, regional waste facility to be established in the shale quarry between Tomerong and Jervis Bay Road.

Since the inaugural meeting, ShUT members have worked tirelessly to let the public know about this proposal (SCC only sent notifications to residents within 1.5 km). They set up a steering committee and 4 working teams – EIS team,

Media team, Public Awareness team and Research team. They have sought incorporation, established a formal membership register, produced and distributed hundreds of flyers, as well as banners and signs, have participated in numerous radio and TV interviews, held two rallies, held stalls at local markets and had T Shirts printed as a fundraiser. ShUT lobbying has been successful in getting a three week extension of the closing date for submissions – now 16th October.

This proposal is completely



misconceived and has repercussions for the whole South Coast - The huge carbon footprint of trucks carting waste over hundreds of kilometres, the potential for environmental

disaster from toxic leachates affecting St Georges Basin and Jervis Bay and a proposal that is completely at odds with our clean, green tourism image. It is not unlike putting Lucas

Heights/Menai waste facility in Bondi!

For more information go to the Council DA tracking site and ShUT's website: [www.shutip.com](http://www.shutip.com).

## EDITORIAL

# The Tomerong Tip Proposal

THE proposal for a mega tip to dump 100,000 tonnes of building waste material at a quarry site near Tomerong has come as a shock and raises more questions than it answers. Is it a *Nimby* case of "not in my backyard" or are the over 1000 submissions that outraged residents have lodged objecting to the proposal justified?

Building waste material is potentially toxic and should be dealt with as close to source as possible. Local councils should work with all levels of government to minimise waste. Every community should deal with its own waste. It makes environmental sense to keep waste small and close to source.

Reducing transport costs and associated impacts should be a priority in waste management. Additional freight on the inadequate south coast road network is untenable with unacceptable costs to amenity and to society in a general sense. The issue of CO2 emissions from additional

and unnecessarily long haul trucking is unacceptable and is an obligation of all levels of government to reduce at every possible opportunity.

What is the point of having government policies, if when it is not convenient, they are simply ignored?

Development, particularly industrial development, in sensitive environmental areas must be proven to be benign or beneficial to the biodiversity, water and air quality of that area. This is spelled out in detail in the government's environmental legislation and the South Coast Regional Strategy. It is clearly impossible for this proposal to meet those criteria.

Secondly, if councils want to extend the lives of their tips they need to enforce adequate waste reduction measures on their communities and governments need to encourage manufacturers to reduce non-recyclable components in their products. Taxing non-recyclable

waste at source of manufacture would be an obvious step. Leadership in regards to waste reduction is needed. Innovation and new methods of manufacturing to reduce reliance on landfill will provide more benefits through the creation of new jobs, compared to the current process of landfilling.

### Conflict of Interest

The State Government appointed panel, headed by a former Labor Government Minister, Pam Allen, who will determine the outcome of the proposal is not representative of the local community. Of even greater concern is that up to two-thirds of a \$50 a tonne levy for the waste dumped goes straight to Treasury. How can the community accept this, as a fair way to determine what is such a contentious matter?

If convenient holes in the ground are continually sought to dispose of waste, as a source of revenue, there will never be

an incentive to eliminate waste. Building waste should be recycled and waste that is unable to be recycled at a municipal level should be returned to the manufacturer and dealt with at source. The cost to the

community of the Shoalhaven in receiving 100,000 tonnes of building waste from the whole length and breadth of the South Coast to the centre of our city should be enough on its own to reject this proposal out of hand.





# letters

## FINE ART TERMINATED

I am a student at the Nowra TAFE Campus. I was unable to enroll in Fine Arts – Certificate IV, as it was cancelled. Instead 4 by one-year courses were offered; painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture. I chose to continue in painting. I could not enroll – it was full! I have enrolled in Drawing.

Now four weeks into the second semester, students are being advised that the studios we use be demolished, and not replaced. I would like to know why, especially as the “talk” has been of improved facilities for Fine Arts, since my original enrolment in 2005.

I also believe that our teaching staff was not consulted about these changes, as indeed we, the students were not. This, at best, is shabby treatment by the so-called professional administrators of education and training. Not to consult the community most likely to be effected by change seems to me, to border on arrogance.

The Shoalhaven is a high unemployment area and surely an increase, not a decrease in subject provision, is warranted. Many other questions arise: when was this decision made and by whom? Where will current students complete courses?

Having heard then last week of the plight of plumbing apprentices, and now the Fine Arts and Ceramics courses, my fear is, which department might be next or does it mark the beginning of the end for the Nowra Campus?

**Alwyn Jordan,**  
Sussex Inlet

## NOWRA SWIMMING POOL

SCC seems to be hell-bent on demolishing this pool. OK- the pool leaks, it's outmoded and it will be submerged when the sea level rise occurs. SCC current strategy is to replace this pool sometime in the future with a you beaut Leisure Centre on the

site of the current Bomaderry pool. This is admirable considering the population of the Bomaderry area.

What I have trouble coming to terms with is the lack of concern for the population of Nowra and the assumption that they can all travel to Bomaderry. One has only to be in Nowra on a hot day to see the numbers who walk to and from the Nowra pool.

What is wrong with rebuilding the existing pool a metre or more higher- it isn't rocket science. Perhaps the expectations of developers interested in acquiring the site may well be the real reason for closure- this land was donated to the community and should not be on-sold.

Originally SCC planned a Leisure Centre for the land behind Stockland and collected Section 94 funds from developers for some 10 years. Were these funds reimbursed when these plans were abandoned? . SCC now owns this site and could well develop here. Are developers in Worrigee currently paying section 94 fees for a pool in Bomaderry?

**Patricia Mason,**  
Nowra

## SECRET CAMERAS

Shoalhaven Council's decision to trample the privacy of citizens by placing secret cameras around Nowra CBD is another example of the “police state” mentality that now exists at all levels of government. Why should any man or woman be subjected to videotaping just because they walk the streets of their own suburb!

If the Council is going to act like a petty dictator maybe citizens will have to wear privacy masks to prevent their picture from being taken. Don't for one-minute think that these cameras will reduce crime, as some in Council seem to believe. At the very best all it will achieve is to shift crime. It's like alcohol free zones. They don't reduce drinking; they shift it to other areas.

These petty attempts to address serious issues like crime and alcoholism are an example of the remedy causing more strife. They tar everybody with the same brush. Why should citizens have their rights trampled because of the wrongdoing of a few!

These cameras should immediately be removed. If they aren't citizens must have the right to protect their own privacy. Its ironic isn't it. The crims used to be the ones who wore masks. Now anybody who wants to protect their privacy either stays away from the CBD or hides their identity. And for what? So crime can be shifted around like chairs on the titanic.

**Adam Bonner**  
Merero Meadow

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### THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH

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

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Layout Bungoona Technologies Pty Ltd, Grays Point NSW

Printer: Weston Print, Kiama NSW

Send your letters, comments, pictures or contributions to The Editor, New Bush Telegraph, PO Box 2205, TOMERONG NSW 2540

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# Tomerong Tip

There's a mega tip coming to Tomerong  
A scourge nobody here wants  
And the threat of this mega development  
Has triggered a mega response

Protest letters have swamped the council  
The campaign's been strong and intense  
United the residents have rallied  
While most councilors sit on the fence  
'It's out of our hands', they cry  
'A State panel the ultimate judge'  
So if these three people give the green light  
We'll be left with the rubble and sludge

The trucks will roll in over hundreds of miles  
From the north and the south and the west  
Clogging the roads and spewing out carbon  
To deposit industrial mess  
Pollution poses no threat, we're told  
Property values will not decrease  
And a truck passing every twelve minutes  
Can't possibly disturb our peace

The waste is non-putrescible  
Supposedly clean and not stinking  
But to label all building waste as safe  
Appeals only to the unthinking  
The safeguards so far put into place  
Are fraught with imperfections  
How can we know what's being dumped  
Without an outside inspection?

Will poisons leach out over time  
To enter the waterways  
And threaten the pristine habitats  
Of the Basin and the Bay?  
Many tourist dollars could be lost  
To line the pockets of a few  
If the democratic process fails  
To address our point of view

Crucial questions go unanswered  
Safety measures still in doubt  
And the looming devastation  
Has stirred anger hereabouts  
And if our voices are not heard  
By those who wield the power  
Our protest will keep ringing loud  
Long past the eleventh hour

**Bev Stewart 27/10/09**

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# Toxic Legacy – No Thank You!

Rebecca Rudd

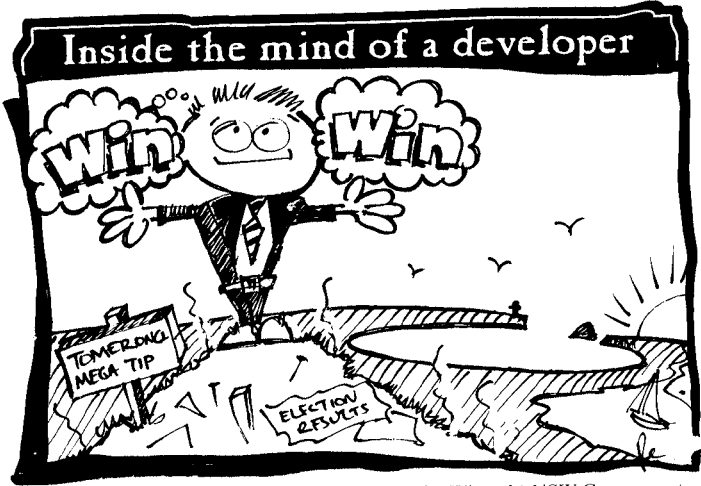
BY now most of you are aware that Shoalhaven City Council is assessing a DA for a non-putrescible waste facility in the Tomerong–St Georges Basin area.

This DA has been lodged by Watkins and Apperley for Tomerong Waste Pty Ltd.

Understandably this has raised a high level of concern across the Shoalhaven. This proposition, in terms of its impact on the community and environment, is on a par with the late-eighties attempt to relocate the armaments depot to Jervis Bay.

The DA proposes to establish a landfill facility to receive 50,000 tonnes of waste per year, growing to 100,000 tonnes per year. There will be serious impacts on community amenity through increased heavy vehicle traffic as well as ground, water, air and noise pollution. In addition, there will be a toxic legacy left to the community for many years to come with potentially serious impacts on both the marine and terrestrial environment. The EIS and associated studies are inadequate and dubious. As a community, we have to fight to stop this proposal going ahead.

The proposed site is the quarry at the end of Gumden Lane, Tomerong. While the quarry is still in operation, a landfill facility will be established to fill the quarry void. The facility will receive waste classified as 'general solid waste (non-putrescible)'. A full list of what this entails is on the Dept. of Environment's website\*. When you consider this list it is difficult to see how it can be described as non-putrescible. Among other things it includes garden waste, wood waste, treated pine, paper, cardboard and household waste from municipal clean-up that does not contain food waste. On the less putrescible side it includes drained oil filters, containers previously containing dangerous goods, building cavity dust, synthetic fibre waste and plastics. The EIS states that 'prohibited' material will not be received but on the other hand if it does enter the site it will be stored on site to wait for appropriate disposal. Does that mean we store asbestos and whatever else until somebody decides what to do with it? A facility like this must have an independent assessment of each load at point of arrival. In the Shoalhaven we have already had one waste facility temporarily closed because of asbestos contamination from building waste. It is obviously in the operator's interest to accept everything that arrives. They will be paid for it. The community will just have to live with it.



mmm... I think we can sell it this way... It's a Win, Win... the NSW Government gets pots and pots of money and the Shoalhaven gets another "tourist" attraction.

Where this waste is coming from is quite unclear. The DA proposes to divert waste from Council's landfills within the Southern Council Group, Illawarra, Shoalhaven and south east regions of NSW. As SCC currently processes about 4,000 tonnes of this waste a year it must be assumed that the rest will come from miles away: 'waste miles' in other words. This flies in the face of current energy efficiency policy.

The EIS submitted to Council only raises questions. It is often vague and difficult for a layperson to understand. It is largely based on assumptions and conservative estimates. Without doubt it will impact on the wellbeing of Shoalhaven residents and the quality of our environment: The site lies in the catchment of both St Georges Basin and Jervis Bay

The EIS concludes that the cumulative negative environmental impact will be relatively low. There is no discussion about the long-term impact. There is brief mention of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Precautionary Principle. Surely if these principles were

responsibly applied, this DA could not be supported by either Shoalhaven City Council or the Southern Regional Planning Panel.

The hydrological study, by its own admission, is based on assumption. In fact it states that they have no water flow data. Without real data the study can only be speculative. Is this good enough when you consider the potential toxicity of the leachate, the proximity of Tomerong and Duck Creeks and the seepage through the site? The closeness of the quarry to the landfill is also alarming when you consider that one will be blasting while the other is attempting to contain toxic material. We are also told in the EIS that the bridge will cause flooding in times of high flow.

Leachates will be produced and while the EIS does attempt to address this issue it is likely that toxic chemicals will be leaching into ground water long after the plastic liners and clay topping have disintegrated. This will affect many generations into the future.

Once the company has filled its hole and made its money it will walk away and the landowners

will be held accountable for any pollution management issues. There is no indication of any provision for managing leachate into our waterways in, say, a hundred years time when inevitably the liners will fail or we have a 100-year flood that the proposed dams and bridge will not be able to cope with. The community and the landowners have a toxic legacy to manage and no resources to do it with.

The company operating the quarry has already been fined for clearing *Melaleuca biconvexa* which is a state and nationally listed species. Their EIS states that the impact on *Melaleuca biconvexa* will be less than one percent and not significant. That is, less than one percent of what is left after the previous clearing. The EIS does not present any accurate or independent mapping of this species. Surely the only acceptable answer is no further reduction in range of *biconvexa*.

They intend to create a hill 'feature' to complement the 'natural undulating topography' of the site. Contemporary best practice in mining is to return the landscape to its original contour. How could it be considered appropriate to construct a hill made of garbage in the catchment of significant coastal assets?

There is nothing in the DA to indicate that there is any economic benefit to the community. This is a company that intends to make a substantial amount of money by collecting waste and holding it in the middle of a State significant tourist destination. The EIS states that it will create only 4 or 5 jobs. How many tourism based jobs will it jeopardise?

The traffic generated by the waste facility and quarry will escalate to over 30,000 truck movements per year. Given a six-day week and a ten-hour

day this means a truck going by every four minutes. This affects the whole of the Shoalhaven where we have several major traffic issues already. Trucks will be travelling through our villages such as Berry, Kangaroo Valley and Milton. There will be a significant impact on the Princes Highway–Island Point Rd intersection, which is already dangerous, and where there can often be a build-up of traffic between the roundabouts. It is unacceptable to subject residents to this volume of traffic in a rural residential zone. As for Gumden Lane having the capacity to take 30,000 trucks, this can only be described as ludicrous.

Neither Island Point Rd nor Gumden Lane has safe egress for either pedestrians or bike riders who currently use this passage. The proposed volume of trucks will make it unusable for local residents.

The volume of heavy vehicles will damage roads and increase maintenance costs throughout the Shoalhaven. Who will pay for this? The ratepayers, of course.

The noise data in the EIS is flawed and the interpretation highly questionable. The figures have been conveniently interpreted to bring the noise impact below the level where any noise attenuation would be required. Once again there is no independence in the assessment and it is the residents who will pay the price of having their amenity compromised by a company that indicates it has no responsibility to minimise the noise. The air quality data is also similarly flawed.

It is a shame that this is the option proposed for the site considering the other options available to it. As a solution to waste management it is flawed and relies on technological wishful thinking. It is simply unsustainable. ■

## Application for Membership of SHOALHAVEN'S UNWANTED TIP (ShUT) Campaign

The 100,000 tonne per annum waste facility proposed between Tomerong and Jervis Bay will impact on all of the Shoalhaven. Support ShUT. Become a member and receive regular updates, notification of meetings and other events. Please go to: [www.shutip.com](http://www.shutip.com) for more information.



I \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
(full name of applicant) (address)

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(Signature) (Date)

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Please make cheques payable to *ShUT Campaign* and address to: The Treasurer, ShUT Campaign PO Box 2205, Tomerong NSW 2540. **ShUT is currently applying for Incorporation.**

\* See [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste/envguidlns](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste/envguidlns).



# How One Tree Bay contravenes and undermines the South Coast Regional Strategy

Alex O'Brien

**T**HE South Coast Regional Strategy (SCRS), released in February 2007 by NSW Planning Minister Sartor, sets out to provide the long term template and direction for planning and development of the NSW South Coast through to 2031. It is intended to provide a clear and certain land use plan for the NSW South Coast, which balances the demand for future growth with the need to protect and enhance environmental values. The SCRS represents an agreed NSW Government position on the South Coast, and is the pre-eminent planning document for the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley local government areas.

The SCRS is also intended to inform infrastructure investment priorities on the south coast, with infrastructure planning being required to take into account the broad planning framework identified in the strategy, to ensure that future population growth is supported by services and associated infrastructure.

The proposed new town at One Tree Bay on the shores of St Georges Basin near Sussex Inlet is the antithesis of the sound planning principles embodied in the SCRS, being an entire new town of 5,000 people sited away from existing urban development and lacking any existing servicing or infrastructure, which requires the razing of an entire headland of high conservation value native vegetation located in the middle of a fragile and scenic coastal lake already under significant environmental stress from existing urban development. Approval of the One Tree Bay proposal would seriously undermine the authority of the SCRS, and thereby create a damaging precedent encouraging "open slather" development throughout the entire south coast region, to the benefit of a few developers at enormous cost to NSW ratepayers/taxpayers, the broader community and the fragile coastal environment.

Any impartial application of the SCRS should lead to the rejection of the One Tree Bay proposal. The SCRS clearly indicates that "future urban development will be prioritised to support infill housing as well as new residential subdivisions located adjacent to existing well serviced centres and towns and away from isolated and sensitive locations."

Furthermore, the first listed objective of the SCRS is to :

Protect high value environments, including pristine coastal lakes, estuaries, aquifers, threatened species, vegetation communities and habitat corridors, by ensuring that no new urban development occurs in these important areas and their catchments.

These elements of the SCRS were clearly intended to forestall development proposals such as One Tree Bay. The SCRS does enable additional development proposals to be considered if they meet sustainability criteria outlined Appendix 1 of the SCRS. However, the SCRS notes that "the isolated nature of many settlements, as well as the extensive environmental values of numerous coastal lakes and estuaries, will all be significant factors in considering whether the sustainability criteria thresholds relating to infrastructure provision, transport accessibility and environment protection can be met". These factors are clearly relevant to One Tree Bay.

The SCRS was obviously of key strategic concern for Miltonbrook, the One Tree Bay proponents, and the following sections outline how they have dealt with key issues arising from this planning document.

1) No new towns or villages outside existing urban areas would be considered, unless there were compelling reasons and they could satisfy 'sustainability criteria' specified in Appendix 1

This was seen as a significant threat to One Tree Bay by Miltonbrook, so they initially hired a Victorian based consultant to write a submission on their behalf to the NSW government seeking to have this provision removed from the draft SCRS when it was circulated for comment.

Following the failure to have this troublesome provision removed, Miltonbrook have had to reluctantly concede that One Tree Bay is indeed a new town, with Miltonbrook CEO Neville Fredericks quoted in the South Coast Register of 6/3/09 as acknowledging that One Tree Bay constitutes a new town which can be justified by "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 submitted to Shoalhaven City Council and the Department of Planning as being "a new sub-centre within the Sussex Inlet suburb".

Miltonbrook have proceeded

to hire other consultants to develop glossy submissions to show how the OTB proposal satisfies the SCRS "sustainability criteria", with the handover of land to National Parks repeatedly cited as the "compelling reason" to justify the development. This is exactly the same sort of approach that has recently been characterised as a "land bribe" by Justice Lloyd of the NSW Land & Environment Court, in connection with proposed coastal developments at Catherine Hill Bay and Gwandalan.

However, the glossy submissions developed by consultants have not produced any substantive analyses of the proposed urban development at One Tree Bay, with fundamental servicing, drainage and water quality protection issues remaining unresolved and uncoded. The project documentation lodged with Shoalhaven Council and the Department of Planning indicated that the new settlement would be serviced with sewerage and reticulated water at the proponent's expense. Setting aside the burning question of whether the proponent actually has sufficient funds to make good this commitment still leaves the technical feasibility unresolved. The One Tree Bay site is located on an untouched greenfields site several kilometres away from the existing Sussex Inlet sewerage system, making infrastructure and servicing issues of significant importance and cost. The proponent was advised at a May 2009 meeting with Shoalhaven Water that there was no available capacity in the Sussex Inlet sewerage system, with no immediate prospect of any being available - and a further 160 unsold lots on the recently developed Taylors Rise subdivision will also require servicing.

In view of the lack of sewerage capacity, the idea of One Tree Bay being serviced by an on-site sewerage and re-use system has been canvassed. This would require significant design amendments, entailing additional dedicated land, engineering and ongoing maintenance costs, as well as raising significant issues, such as groundwater infiltration, cost-effectiveness, public liability and water quality protection, which have not been considered in any public project documentation prepared to date, and for which no costings have been provided.

To try and allay well-founded concerns over the significant negative water quality impacts

of constructing a new town of 5,000 people on the hitherto undisturbed southern shore of St George Basin, Miltonbrook has relied on vague claims regarding "water sensitive urban design" (often referred to as WSUD), involving the use of gross pollutant traps, wetlands/detention basins, bio-retention swales and contour drains. However, Miltonbrook has not publicly released any detailed studies or costings, being content to provide half a page of soothing assurances lacking any real substance. The rezoning documentation supplied to Council failed to include a preliminary plan for WSUD, despite misleadingly indicating that such a plan was included at Attachment A (which was in fact a general urban design plan). It is not known whether Council has ever requested that this glaring omission be rectified.

Miltonbrook's reluctance to supply the preliminary WSUD plan to Council has turned out to be well justified, since it attracted many comments and requests for clarification from the Departments of Lands, Water & Energy and Primary Industries when it was circulated to NSW Government agencies. Significant issues identified include :

- some of the wetlands/detention basins are located within the existing 30 metre dedicated public reserve/buffer zone, thereby compromising its effectiveness
- at least one section of the bio-retention swale is shown as flowing uphill, and
- at least 3 high flow discharge points (which have the most potential to pollute St Georges Basin with sediments and nutrients) actually bypass detention basins and pollutant traps.

It is evident that Shoalhaven ratepayers and the general public are being kept in the dark regarding critical infrastructure costings, effectiveness and viability for the One Tree Bay proposal. It is simply not acceptable to assert that such fundamental servicing, drainage and water quality protection issues can be resolved through as yet unseen assessments carried out after rezoning occurs - the local community, Shoalhaven ratepayers and NSW taxpayers need to have these uncertainties resolved before any approval is given, to gain a clear idea of the costs, benefits and risks, and compliance with the SCRS.

The SCRS sets out 8 broad sustainability criteria which must be fulfilled before any new towns or villages outside

existing urban areas will be considered for development. The first of these criteria relates to infrastructure provision, with one of its stated benchmarks that provision of infrastructure (including utilities) is costed and economically feasible. On this basis alone, One Tree Bay fails at the first hurdle of the NSW government's own sustainability criteria, ignoring for the moment the many other serious concerns with this proposal.

2) The SCRS indicates that it would support developments specified in local or area strategies, such as the Sussex Inlet Settlement Strategy.

The SCRS also indicated that the NSW government would only support urban areas which were included within a designated list of local or area plans, one of which was the Sussex Inlet Settlement Strategy (SISS). This created a problem for the proponents which they sought to resolve by having One Tree Bay included in the final SISS, despite the fact that it was not included in the draft SISS circulated for public comment, which therefore did not contain any consideration of the population, servicing, social or environmental implications of the One Tree Bay proposal.

To undertake a credible integration of the One Tree Bay proposal into the SISS would have required a major revision to the strategy to address these key issues, as One Tree Bay would more than double the existing population of Sussex Inlet, not counting the 50% population increase already projected in the draft SISS via other projected new developments for Sussex Inlet.

Rather than making the effort to have additional detailed One Tree Bay-relevant analyses included in the SISS, which would have required important servicing, social and environmental questions to be publicly explored, the proponents instead chose to lobby the previous Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) to simply amend a few words in sections 2.1.1 and 3.1.2 of the SISS to the effect that Council supported the proposal.

These minimal amendments were endorsed by the previous SCC, allowing the proponent to tick the box for the SISS without having to undergo any type of viability or servicing analysis and scrutiny, or answer any difficult or complex planning and infrastructure questions.

3) The SCRS prohibits new

## One Tree Bay ◀4

urban development in high conservation value areas

The SCRS posed further problems for the OTB proposal arising from its provisions to protect the natural environment. The Strategy indicates that "Urban development, including further subdivision, will be directed away from areas known to be or likely to be important for conservation. Urban development will be located on largely cleared land or areas where only limited clearing of native vegetation with low conservation values is required."

In addition the SCRS explicitly states that "new urban development is to be prohibited by local environmental plans on land assessed as being of high conservation value", and includes a map which clearly designates the headland proposed for clearing to make way for the One Tree Bay township as being of high conservation value. In addition, the Department of Environment and Climate Change has also mapped the headland as being largely composed of high conservation value (HCV) forest.

Miltonbrook has sought to get round this clear-cut breach of the SCRS by simply defining it away. It has hired a consultant to undertake a survey which purportedly indicates that the headland is not of high conservation value. However, this survey is misleading because much of the transects surveyed are unrepresentative of the site as a whole, being either too close to the shore (where larger trees tend not to occur) or near existing roads, where previous clearing has been concentrated. Miltonbrook has also failed to follow official procedures specified where there is a difference of opinion as to whether high conservation value forest is present on private land.

This biased survey therefore fails to deal with the key issue that One Tree Bay clearly breaches the SCRS prohibition of new urban development in high conservation value areas. ■

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A United Nations report estimates there are more than 110 million landmines still in the ground scattered in over 70 countries. A further 100 million are stockpiled. It has been estimated that such mines kill 10,000 civilians & seriously injure 30,000 each year. Over 350 varieties of landmines have been documented, supplied by more than 50 countries.

Afghanistan is one of the most mined countries in the world with an estimated 10 million mines. Approximately, 90% of the 4,235 minefields identified have been found in agricultural and grazing land and near irrigation systems, impacting on the country in terms of economic & agricultural development.

Landmines not only kill & maim, they terrorize entire communities, and they overburden medical systems. Cattle and wildlife get blown up searching for food. One wrong step and an innocent life can be changed forever – blindness & a lost limb from an exploding mine.

THE SERIOUSNESS &  
TRAGIC REALITY OF  
LANDMINES

Laos, one of the poorest countries in the world, received more bombs than Germany & Japan combined in World War II. The US dropped more than two million tonnes of bombs on this small, impoverished South-East Asian nation in a "secret war" against communism between 1964 & 1973 – 100 bombs every 8 minutes for 9 years. Thirty percent of them did not detonate & lie scattered across rice-paddy & mountains.

People bending over to plant rice shoots in the paddies in Cambodia & Laos have hit landmines with their hands. Rice farmers are forced to cease planting & harvesting because of the mines. Its sheer horror, its endless trail of misery. They will endure this problem for the rest of this century – the inhumanity of it.

Six million landmines are still buried in Cambodia. There are 25,000 amputees among the nations 63,000 victims of landmines & blasts from unexploded ordnance left after 30 years of war. An estimated 80 million orange cluster bombs were dropped, of which, 25 to 30 million remain unexploded. For decades to come they will turn up in schoolyards & under houses.

Consider the depraved mind

that designed & made the Claymore-type bomb that shoots several hundred steel balls in an arc. And the inhumane needle bomb, the explosion turning the human body into a pin-cushion.

## THE HUMAN COST

Landmines impact on society in a way never imagined, threaten life & limb and impose an economic burden.. The urge to rush in and help a victim often results in further casualties. It may take up two weeks to get injured to a hospital, which could be hundreds of kilometres away. For every person who reached hospital one person died out in the field. They succumb to blood loss and infection & often die in atrocious circumstances.

The blast can pick up gravel, fragments of the bone & other debris & force all of this into tissues adjacent to where the leg has been torn off or into other parts of the body. Surgeons are faced with the tedious task of removing dirt & debris and how much to remove and at which level to do the amputation. As a child grows after an amputation the bone may start to stick out of the skin requiring re-amputation. Children also grow out of prostheses very quickly, and then if not changed will cause problems with the vertical column & hip joints.

It costs between \$800 to \$1500 to remove each mine and \$3000 to \$7000 to provide an artificial limb and lifetime care to survivors of mine accidents. An adult must replace his or her prosthesis every three to five years and a child must obtain a new prosthesis every six months. A child at the age of 10 will need about 25 artificial limbs during their lifetime. Average wage in these poor countries is about \$10 a month.

The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that landmines are killing 10,000 civilians & seriously injuring 20,000 a year and that there are more than 250,000 amputees worldwide from unexploded ordnance. They fitted 70,000 amputees with artificial limbs during a 15-year period & are now supplying 12,000 limbs a year to landmine victims. Sheer horror, an endless trail of misery.

## FEAR – ENDLESS FEAR

Up to 1 million landmines remain of those buried along the border with Thailand after invading Vietnamese left in 1989 & 400,000 are planted elsewhere in the country. Somewhere someone sets off a mine every twenty minutes. Around 2000 people a month are injured by mines, around half of whom will die. The innocent civilians, those who can't plant their crops for fear of losing a limb, what did they do to incur the wrath of the enemy.

From the perspective of peace, landmines pose a continuous



threat to peace & reconciliation.

MINE CLEARING –  
DOUBLE DIPPING

Money has no smell. A number of manufacturers of anti-personnel ordnance are now in the business of tendering for multi-million dollar contracts for the clearing of mines whilst continuing in the business of selling the same weaponry they contract remove.

A French company won a \$11million contract to clear mines in Kuwait. The same company was busily selling a range of lethal weapons across the world. A British company won a \$90 million contract to clear mines at the same time as its subsidiary company was selling anti-personnel ordnance. There is a growing list of companies in the double dipping business after a previous incarnation as a manufacturer of anti-personnel weaponry.

The grand slaughter of innocents known as the Gulf War was the zenith for manufacturers of arms to see their products in action. Those same manufacturers saw the chance to make money out of the clean-up of landmines, the world's most cowardly weapons.

WEAPONS TO KILL  
PEOPLE – BIG BUSINESS

The economy of many countries is greatly assisted by the sale of weaponry they manufacture to kill human beings. Egypt and five other Middle Eastern states received \$22 billion in missiles, bombs, tanks & planes. The Bush Administration also sold \$73 billion in military hardware to allies in the Middle East. It followed \$31 billion in US arms sales each of the previous two years. The US is the largest supplier of weapons to developing nations. Their economy is dependant in no small way to their arms sales world wide.

US and its allies bombed Iraq hospitals, schools and houses and then rebuilt them at a cost to the nation. Baghdad was forced to sell \$2 billion worth of their oil every 6 months to pay for emergency food and medical supplies, which did little to revive the devastated country at the time of an international sanction – destroyed them. During 2006

some 3000 Iraqis were killed every month, a warfare based on deception – a threat that wasn't there.

## ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES

Let's be clear about the definition of "anti-personnel mines mentioned several times in this synopsis. The weapons' designers think only in terms of "kill probabilities" & "effective casualty radius". It is designed primarily to be exploded by the presence of a person and will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons.

Of the 350 anti-personnel mines, what depraved mind conjured up a landmine in bright colour & weird shapes that attract children to pick them up. Blinded and mutilated child in Cambodia & Afghanistan can attest to their folly.

On the question of depravity I feel compelled to repeat my earlier description of the inhumane needle bomb, the explosion turning the human body into a pin-cushion. The question one agonises over, the feelings of the design maker of these anti-personnel mines when they go home and play with their children after a days work.

In Cambodia & Angola all parties to the conflict targeted civilians. Mines were used intentionally to stop people producing, to actually kill the population. They either braved the mines or suffered starvation.

Does your superannuation fund invest in companies that make cluster bombs and nuclear arms including Boeing and Lockheed Martin?

The Howard Government suspended the use of landmines in 1996 despite objections of the military top brass. The same military chiefs had persuaded the Keating Government to oppose a global ban because they believed landmines were a vital weapon.

*"He jests at scars, who never felt a wound"; Romeo & Juliet*

Big military powers must stop competing for customers and start cooperating for peace.

Having agonised over graphic photos of torn bodies of innocent children and adults, the thought of a human mind could conjure such evilness, diminishes me as a human being.





# Comberton Grange Quarry

*In August the Shoalhaven City Council advised that the transfer of the Comberton Grange Quarry license to the Shaolin Temple Foundation is nearing completion. The quarry, which was once described in the Jervis Bay Settlement Strategy as “a regionally significant resource”, has been sold along with the rest of historic Comberton Grange to the Shaolin Temple Foundation for a sum of \$5 million.*

*The controversial development proposes aside from a temple, a vast array of villas & town houses, hotel & convention centre, golf course & clubhouse, as well as the right to continuing quarrying, along with various other developments.*

*The Comberton Grange site is listed on the Register of the National Estate and is confirmed as habitat corridor, the site of known and potential aboriginal heritage, as containing significant designated wetlands and with a major portion of the site recognized as land of Ecological Sensitivity and /or within a Sensitive Coastal Location.*

*Following Council’s advice that the sale of the quarry is nearing completion, Judy Gjedsted, a correspondent to these pages, has written to Council, to establish how Council has dealt with and proposes to deal with the licensing conditions for the quarry, as determined by the Land and Environment Court in 1990.*

*At the time of us going to press Council has not as yet replied to Judy’s letter. The New Bush Telegraph looks forward to reporting on what Council has to say. In the mean time we decided to publish Judy’s letter to Council in full. We believe her letter is a good example of how ordinary citizens play a vital part in the democratic process.*

Dear Sir,

**RE: Transfer of Comberton Grange Quarry License by Shoalhaven City Council to Shaolin Temple Foundation, Aust**

I have to hand a ‘detailed resume’ of the Land and Environment Court Development Court Conditions pertaining to the Comberton Grange Quarry (proceedings no. 10367 of 1989) as submitted to Council’s Comberton Grange Task Force in April, 1990.

The NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change have advised me that Council is regarded as the consent authority for these Conditions.

**BUFFER ZONE**

I have noted that the Conybeare Morrison Part 3A Project Application, submitted on behalf of Shaolin, quotes Council as stating that the Quarry buffer zone is ‘discretionary’ and that development may occur within the area. The Development Conditions specify a 1000 metre buffer zone “so as to avoid the introduction of non-compatible development within 1000 metres of the Quarry”. The conditions describe the first 500 metres of the buffer zone as relating to noise and the further 500 metres as applying the ‘appropriate’ provisions of the Environment Planning and Assessment Act.

The Conybeare Morrison application claims that “most of the proposed development is to be on land outside the buffer” although maps provided in the Application do not indicate the nature or extent of any development within the 1000 metre buffer zone.

Could Council please advise:

Q) To what extent does Council regard the Quarry buffer zone as ‘discretionary’?

Q) What kind of development is proposed for within the buffer zone? Or

Q) What kind of development would be considered acceptable within the buffer zone?

**ENVIRONMENTAL & RESTORATION FUND**

Condition 8 of the Development Conditions specifies the creation of a contingency fund “to safeguard against potential environmental damage and for progressive rehabilitation to be entitled the Comberton Grange Environmental and Restoration Fund”.

My enquiries to Council have established that this Fund was never created and that “Council specifically accounts for restoration in its accounting systems”. Given the changed circumstances of the Quarry License transfer:

Q) Will Condition 8 be revisited and will Shaolin be required to create a contingency fund for the stated purposes?

**INCOME EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

The Conditions also directed that an “income expenditure account” was to be created to cover matters including”:

- “Quarry rehabilitation (charged at a rate per cubic metre quarried), and
- Royalty payment charged in to Council’s Cultural Fund”.

Q) Were these charges imposed on the Quarry in the past? If so,

Q) How much is held for Quarry rehabilitation?

Q) How much was paid in to Council’s Cultural Fund?

Q) If not, why not?

**REHABILITATION PLAN**

A detailed rehabilitation plan was provided and approved by the Land and Environment Court to deal with the Quarry site after completion of quarrying operations.

Q) What provision has been made to ensure that the Court’s rehabilitation plan will be implemented when required and that the Quarry’s rehabilitation will not become a public charge?

**CONSERVATION AGREEMENT**

The Conditions include (in Condition 28-a) an instruction that “the Applicant shall enter into a Conservation Agreement

with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of:

- i) Red Gum communities on dolerite;
- ii) The Bid Bid Creek Catchment;
- iii) Eucalyptus Robusta”

and a further provision (28-b) “that the applicant shall enter into negotiations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of other conservation values on the Comberton Grange property”.

I have a copy of a Deed of Agreement between the (then) NSW Minister for the Environment (and his successors in office) and Shoalhaven City Council which was forwarded by Council to the National Parks and Wildlife Service on the 27th August, 1992 with a request for the National Parks and Wildlife

Service signature on copy of the Deed. I have been advised by Council that “the Conservation Agreement does not appear to have been finalised”.

Q) Why?

**CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Council’s proposed Catchment Management Strategies, copy of which accompanied the Deed to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, stated that:

“All Quarry operations will be in accordance with the Conditions of Development Consent and which provide in relation to catchment management:

- a) the vegetation communities located on the fertile dolerite soils as outlined in respect of Dr K. Mills dated November, 1989 shall not be removed or be the subject of excavation”.

(I presume the plant communities referred to in the Quarry Management Strategy are those also referred to in Condition 28-a. i.e. the Red Gum communities and the Eucalyptus Robusta.)?

Q) Were the Management Strategies specific to the Red Gum and Eucalyptus Robusta plant communities implemented by Council during Council’s establishment and operation of the Quarry?

Q) Are the plant communities named in Condition 28-a a still extant?

Q) If still extant, will these plant communities remain protected?

With reference to the catchment of Bid Bid Creek (condition 28-a) the Strategies state:

“The only drainage from the Quarry to be overflow from the stormwater retention basin and shall be directed into Georges Creek to ensure that no works or drainage will enter the catchment area of Bid Bid Creek”.

As maps show Georges Creek flowing into SEPP 14 Wetlands and on into the Currambene Creek Estuary:

Q) Does the protection of the Bid Bid Creek catchment compromise environment protection standards for Georges Creek and the Currambene Creek wetlands?

Council’s Management Strategies state “in accordance with development consent requirements” that “regular water samples shall be taken at the last discharge point into Georges Creek to ensure compliance with water quality controls under the State Pollution Control Commission Act”.

Q) In this context what is meant by ‘regular’ water sampling? How often is regular? Or, how often did Council take water samples?

Q) With Shaolin as license holder, would the extent, the process, and the results of water sampling be monitored by an independent agency?

Q) If sampling results were not satisfactory, who would know and who would have the power to intervene?

I would be most grateful for your response to these questions.

In anticipation,

Yours faithfully,

J.A. GJEDSTED

## Techno Toxins

Greig Nichols and Christine Clarke

Since the end of WW2 our world has become full of Technological Toxins in the soil, in the air, in our water, and we eat, breathe and drink these Techno Toxins every day. Our natural world is shrinking to the point that it is almost impossible to find anything that hasn’t been contaminated in some shape or form. Our bodies absorb these toxins and contrary to popular belief they are not eliminated but are stored in our bones, fat, tissues and organs and can stay with us for life. These toxins are the root cause of many ailments in the world today including asthma, dementia, parkinson’s, cancer and affect every organ and tissue of our body. In fact these toxins can be passed onto the unborn child. So what can we do about this?

Firstly each and everyone of us has to have a genuine respect for Mother Nature and at least encourage and support individuals who are committed to creating an environmentally sustainable future for the world.

For the past couple of years I have had problems with my makeup especially eye makeup and I am sure many readers will be able to relate to this. Many cosmetic companies claim to be “natural” or “organic” but there isn’t an authority that governs the use of the term organic on labels – the chemistry definition of “organic” means a compound that contains a carbon atom. Unless a product is CERTIFIED ORGANIC you need to check out all the ingredients. Luckily just before Christmas 2008 we found an advertisement in a magazine offering CERTIFIED ORGANIC skin, body, hair, cosmetic, oral and nutritional products. WOW! We couldn’t get on the computer fast enough to check out the website. We were so impressed and so excited we contacted the Rep and asked her how, when, and where we could buy these fantastic products.

The expertise and knowledge of the people behind this business is second to none. They are an ethical, carbon neutral Australian company offering the Worlds first CERTIFIED ORGANIC to food standards products. If you are interested in providing a healthier lifestyle for yourself and your family check out our company, the products, buy on-line, and support a company that is supporting the planet <http://www.mimollyorganics.mionegroup.com>

We can also be found at the Tomerong Markets on the 3rd Saturday of the month.

[Editor’s note: This article could be considered “advertorial.” We are a small newspaper dependant on our advertisers, who operate small businesses in the Shoalhaven. Our policy is to invite advertisers from time to time to tell us something about what they are doing.]

# Flood Study Bungle Affects Thousands of Shoalhaven Properties

By Alex O'Brien

SHOALHAVEN City Council documents reveal that Floodplain Risk Management Studies and Plans for the Lower Shoalhaven River and St Georges Basin need urgent revision because they fail to adequately consider impacts of climate change on flood levels and associated plans for planning, development assessment, public safety and mitigation works. This means that current emergency and development planning activities have been based on erroneously low figures for potential flood heights. The studies currently indicate 1,342 buildings around St Georges Basin and 1,141 buildings on the lower Shoalhaven would be inundated in an extreme flood event. The number of affected buildings can be expected to rise, possibly substantially, when the revisions are finalized.

The affected flood strategies were both released by the previous Shoalhaven City Council, which showed great reluctance to come to terms with the real world implications of climate change impacts. As a result of these shortcomings, the present Council has had to seek funding of \$50,000 to undertake additional modeling studies to "retrofit" the flawed analyses.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the peak body providing advice on climate change science to governments around the world, has concluded that the observed increase in global average temperature since the mid-20th century is highly likely due to human emissions of greenhouse gases. Furthermore, as a result of both previous and projected future greenhouse emissions, global climate is expected to continue to warm over the 21st century, potentially affecting all aspects of the water cycle. The implications for food hydrology are expected to be significant, with projections of increased rainfall intensities, higher "tailwater" levels due to sea level rise and storm surge, possible southward migration of cyclone tracks and

increases in cyclone intensity, as well as potential changes to antecedent moisture and other catchment conditions.

The two flawed flood studies, which run to hundreds of pages in total, each devote scarcely one page to climate change, which both indicate will have only "minor impacts". It is difficult to fathom how any credible 21st century flood study could have been so cursorily dismissive of well documented impacts arising from climate change, especially since authoritative research by both the IPCC and Australia's own CSIRO had produced a series of reports over the previous decade outlining looming impacts of climate change on temperature and precipitation patterns across Australia, including one 2004 CSIRO report solely focused on projected changes in climate extremes (including flooding) across NSW prepared for the NSW Government.

It is anomalous that the St Georges Basin Flood Study was released by the previous Shoalhaven City Council in December 2006, well after the ground breaking Stern Review of Climate Change had unambiguously put the economic impacts of climate change on all governmental agendas, and during the widely publicised run-up to the April 2007 release of the Fourth IPCC Assessment Report on climate change, which unequivocally put the broad scientific issues beyond doubt.

The Lower Shoalhaven Flood Study was released by the previous Council even later, in May 2008, more than 1 year after the release of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report. It was also some 8 months after the October 2007 release of a NSW Government Floodplain Risk Management Guideline Practical Considerations of Climate Change. This publication was specifically designed to provide Councils with a guide on how to incorporate climate change implications into flood studies, risk management studies and plans, yet was totally neglected in the Lower Shoalhaven Flood Study. Why the previous Shoalhaven City Council would want to release such obviously impaired docu-

## BOOK REVIEW

# Overloading Australia

## How governments and media dither and deny on population

By Mark O'Connor and William J. Lines

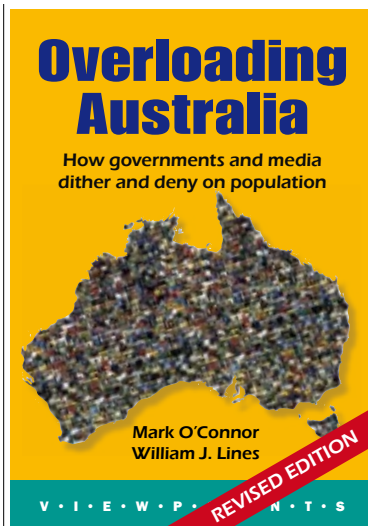
Review by Ian Rae

This is a brave book, because it confronts and contradicts beliefs most people hold unquestioningly. People hold those beliefs because they have always been endorsed by both sides of politics, and the media rarely air a contrary point of view. Most of us have always known that increased population is vital for Australia.

In February 1942 the Japanese bombed Darwin, and invasion seemed imminent. Malaya and Singapore were in Japanese hands, and less than a month before the Australian garrison at Rabaul had been overwhelmed. It was clear that Australia did not have the numbers to defend this vast land, and the wartime Curtin government even then started to develop strategies to increase our population. The job fell to Arthur Calwell, Minister for Information, and negotiations started with European countries before the war ended. From 1945 Calwell, then Minister for Immigration under Ben Chifley, told Australia that immigrants would build and strengthen the country, and that we must "populate or perish". Thus began another legend such as we Australians are so very good at perpetuating and growing, despite all facts to the contrary.

ments, entailing significant planning, public safety and risk implications at odds with relevant NSW government guidelines and current scientific knowledge, is difficult to fathom.

The present Shoalhaven City Council is to be congratulated in taking positive action to address the significant deficiencies in the St Georges Basin and Lower Shoalhaven studies, but these clearly deficient analyses should not have been released in the first place. A moratorium on making any new emergency management strategies or planning decisions, including spot rezonings such as the proposed new town of 5,000 people at One Tree Bay on the shores of St Georges Basin, should be instigated by the present Shoalhaven City Council until amended studies have been prepared, vetted and released for use. ■



*Overloading Australia* examines all aspects of what should be "the population debate". However, there are two central themes that make this book a "must-read" for thinking Australians. One is the exposition of the effects of Australia's rapid population growth - largely through immigration - and the inevitable consequences if we do not reverse the long-standing trend. The other is the revelation of a conspiracy to muffle discussion of the population problem.

The former is dealt with through a meticulously detailed series of chapters that lay out the effects of uncontrolled population growth on Australia's environment, resources, society and living conditions. The arguments of the "boosters" - including the

claims that technology will solve all problems - are statistically, factually and logically revealed as self-serving nonsense.

The latter is something of an intellectual shock. The statements of enlightened and qualified people have always been out there, as has all the evidence. Why, then, do most Australians see only one side of the picture? It is because the many interests that make money or political capital from population growth conspire to perpetuate the myths in both global and local contexts so that "people began to think of it as common sense". We know that Australian public perceptions are media-dominated; yet it is a sobering surprise to see how comprehensively reality has been suppressed, even when that reality is already evident.

The great strength of this book is that it gathers all the evidence and argument, evaluates it intelligently and fairly, and arrives at an inevitable conclusion that Australia is already over-populated, and must limit the growth or face certain disaster. One can rarely say that there is no room for argument; but in this case, it is clearly so.

*Overloading Australia* is available for \$19.95 (cheque or money order), post free in Australia from Envirobook, 7 Close St, Canterbury, 2193.

*Ian Rae is an author and a retired university teacher.*

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# THE LIMITS OF GROWTH

Pat Thompson

**T**HIS week while watching the 7.30 Report I saw Prime Minister Rudd speak enthusiastically about Australia's future population growth. In response to a question from presenter Kerry O'Brien that Australia's population growth is now predicted to increase by 60 percent over the next four decades, substantially as a result of boosted immigration, the Prime Minister said: "I actually believe in a big Australia. I make no apology for that. I actually think it's good news that our population is growing".

The interview came at a time when the opposition was making merry weather out of a boatload of Tamil refugees that were making life difficult for the Government by refusing to be landed in Indonesia. Floundering around in a divided party, the opposition could at last be united around the spectre of a how a handful of refugees were threatening the security and future of Australia – it had worked for Howard, so why not whip up hysteria once more, by appealing to the xenophobic. Not a word from the opposition however about Australia's population growth; on this the two major parties are in agreement.

The original comment about concern on population growth had come from Dr Ken Henry, Secretary of Treasury speaking in a "personal capacity". Just so it is clear what Dr Henry actually had said, I quote: "Are Australia's natural resource endowments, including water, capable of sustaining a population of 35 million? What are the implications for environmental amenity of this sort of population growth? Must it mean an even greater loss of biodiver-

sity difficult as that might be to imagine, given our history of species extermination?

We don't know the answers to these questions, even though all of us would have opinions. My own opinion on the last of these sets of issues and I must stress that it is a personal view, not to be taken as a Treasury view is pessimistic. In the last decade, permits have been issued to allow the commercial slaughter of 49.6 million kangaroos in the last decade primarily to give household pets a bit of variety in their diet. That is but one instance of a set of behaviours that suggests that with a population of 22 million people, we haven't managed to find accommodation with our environment. Our record has been poor and in my view we are not well placed to deal effectively with the environmental challenges posed by a population of 35 million."

Good on you Dr Henry; it takes a brave public servant to say something so far from the government line. Dr Henry is in fact closer to what average Australians think, than what the powers that be would care to admit. Opinion polls show that 70 per cent of Australians want a reduction in immigration, but growth-obsessed governments continue to maintain, and in the case of the Rudd Government, increase the numbers of immigrants.

Advocates for increasing Australia's population point to higher Gross Domestic Product, but there is no evidence of high population increasing GDP per head. In fact, the evidence points to the opposite. Take the past 15 months, while the Government has been crowing about Australia having escaped "technical" recession, we find that if population increase is taken into account then the real

GDP per person has in fact been falling.

A century ago Australia had one of the highest standards of living in the world. Our population then was less than a quarter of what it is today. Today we rank no where near the top of the list for standards of living. Countries such as Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands and Austria all with small populations rank above Australia.

Australians have never been comfortable with high levels of immigration. The net inflow in the year to March was almost 280,000 – 20 per cent higher than the previous record year. What can be assumed from these figures is that business well and truly has the ear of government. It is big business that drives our immigration policy. They want a bigger market to increase sales. Some employers are also seeking cheaper labour, either skilled or unskilled.

But the other point, as Columnist Ross Gittins, recently pointed out is "that when you use immigration to force the pace of economic growth, it comes with a lot more costs attached than usual". He goes on to point out that immigrants roughly double their greenhouse emissions when they join our high carbon use society as well as the cost of all the roads, hospitals, schools, police stations and untold other infrastructure needed for them. All this is precisely what increasing our GDP is all about. It is what Big Business is looking for and it is called *Capitalism*.

And speaking of *Capitalism* the other person I saw interviewed on *Late Line Business* this week was the American film-maker Michael Moore, who was talking about his new film "*Capitalism: A love story*". I haven't seen the film yet but

## TAFE FINE ARTS COURSES UNDER THREAT

James Marius

At the Nowra Campus of TAFE, Illawarra Institute, the existing buildings currently used to deliver Arts and Media courses will be demolished at the end of this year. Ceramics will not be delivered in the future and the Block where ceramics, drawing, printmaking, sculpture and theory are delivered is not to be replaced.

This means a 60 per cent overall reduction, (73 per cent in Arts & Media), in the existing spaces where Arts and Media Courses are presently run and can only presage a similar reduction in course offerings, student numbers and staff employment.

In the proposed new building there will be no studio spaces only one room with a linoleum floor for the use of Visual Arts and one room for teaching Aboriginal Arts. Course offerings will be drastically reduced and no courses will be able to be completed at this Campus.

In spite of strong local protests TAFE has not budged from its proposed plans. With the support of the Shoalhaven City Council, the community has looked to Local Member, Matt Brown, to negotiate the changes that are needed to save the courses, enrolments and staff positions, but all to no avail. The Bush Tele hopes to interview Mr Brown in time for the next issue, and ask why he is proving to be an ineffective local member on this and a range of other local issues.

Also, as a result of the proposed changes, Aboriginal students will be denied the opportunity to advance to higher level mainstream Arts and Media Courses. School leavers wanting to do TAFE Arts Courses will have to move from the Shoalhaven as the proposed facility will not permit any pattern of course delivery that would attract AUSTUDY.

The new accommodation that has been proposed is a long way short of the long awaited "state of the art" facility that had been expected. In fact if built to the proposed plan, it would be completely inadequate to deliver the range of courses currently delivered, nor would it be adequate for any delivery of any higher level courses in the future such

I gather Moore explores with his usual humour and outrage the question of what price we all pay for our love affair with modern Capitalism. Years ago, that love seemed so innocent. Today, however, the American dream is looking more like a nightmare as families pay the price with their jobs, their homes and their savings.

Asked by the interviewer, does the film offer any solutions, Moore replied that was not his job. He was right to declare that it wasn't his responsibility but rather it is up to the rest of us.

Next month the world leaders meet in Copenhagen to consider ways of dealing with Climate Change. The outlook is bleak both in reality and what

the international community is at this stage likely to achieve. Perhaps, it might be better, if Kevin Rudd stops lecturing others, and returns home and shows some real leadership by attempting to address the difficult issues that confront us all.

His government is failing badly on climate change, health, transport and the environment. If he continues to pander to big business, his government will be an ultimate failure and Australia will be the worse off. If he is to succeed and show true leadership then, he will need to make a u-turn on many policies, and a zero net immigration i.e. immigration equal to emigration, is among the most important. ■

# Burning Wood is for Caveman

by Harriet Swift

**J**UST as Eden is home to Australia's first native forest woodchip mill, it is now proposed to become the site of our first 100% wood-fired power station. This has been made possible by a new Rudd Government law which classifies burning native forest wood 'waste' as renewable energy.

South East Fibre Exports (SEFE) is currently seeking a Part 3A approval from the NSW Minister for Planning for a 5MW wood-fired power station. Conservationists have little confidence that the State Government planning process will be rigorous or even honest.

Both the National Association of Forest Industries (NAFI) and SEFE have been misrepresenting WWF Europe support for biomass burning there, as implicit support for the Eden

generator and have even handed out WWF brochures at local conservation events.

The fuel for the SEFE plant, which would power woodchipping operations and feed surplus power into the grid, would be the 'waste' of the 'waste': the leftovers from the million tonnes of native forest woodchips that SEFE currently exports (71%) as well as some plantation pine residues (29%).

The vote in the Senate in August to include some forms of native forest wood in the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) signaled that conservationists have a big fight ahead of them to stop industrial scale burning of native forest wood for energy.

In spite of its lobbying victory with MRET, NAFI is not satisfied. The industry wants more. It wants to be able to burn the 90%+ of the forest that is currently woodchipped as well

as any trees that are "below sawlog or pulplog quality."

On the far south coast, this means burning those species that are too hard or too red to chip (and are not suitable as sawlogs). In other words: the redgums, ironbarks, woollybutts, grey boxes, bloodwoods and angophoras that are currently considered useless by the industry.

It is hard to reconcile this with industry claims that "not one single extra tree will be cut down" for burning.

One preliminary estimate puts the greenhouse impacts of native forest wood fired power at 6.4 times those from coal fired power. When trees are felled and the wood is burned, it takes 80 years for the emissions from the wood burning to be neutralized by the regrowth forest.

It is more than twice as long when all logging impacts, such as, loss of soil carbon are taken into account.

Wood 'waste' continues to store greenhouse gases for decades if left in the forest. As woodchips/paper it has a likely life of about 3 years. When burned for power it becomes instant carbon dioxide.

Ironically, the Eden chip-mill is located in one of the best wind power sites in Australia.

A handful of turbines would generate the same amount of electricity for less money!

Gnupa State Forests after recent logging and burning. Destructive as this is, at least it returns nutrients to the soil. Industry plans would leave nothing in the forest after logging. Image: H.Swift

