

THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH

John Hatton: Lessons for the future p.8 | Green Councillors: Being on council p.2

Beecroft Vision 2020

Janet Mayer

IN 1944 Myles Dunphy drew a map on behalf of the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council showing the proposed Kurrarong and Abraham's Bosom Primitive Reserves. Following notification of various reserves, in 1945 the Commonwealth Government obtained a long term lease over the greater part of the State Lands of Beecroft Peninsula 'for national Defence purposes'. This lease automatically revoked the reserve status.

Beecroft Peninsula was listed on the Register of the National Estate (21-10-1980) for its significant geological, floral and faunal values. Beecroft Peninsula became known as B.P. Weapons Range. It is used for 'naval gunfire support' exercises i.e. shelling from ship to shore. These exercises have led to U.X.O.'s (unexploded ordnance) remaining undetected on the range, resulting in at least one known case of serious injury. Night time exercises use

flares which have on numerous occasions resulted in destructive fires. One such incident resulted in the fire escaping from the 'impact zone' into sensitive heathland near Honeymoon Bay. Weapons testing has left large craters filled with water in areas previously covered by a flora reserve. Combined military exercises have seen damage to sensitive SEPP 14 listed wetlands and areas of heathland have been cleared for camp sites and parking areas accommodating heavy military machinery. B.P. is used as a weapons testing range not only by Australian Defence Forces, but also those of other countries (e.g. U.S.A. and New Zealand) during major international military exercises in Australia.

The area is sacred to the Jerrinja Aboriginal People as the birthplace of the thirteen tribes of the south coast with over 200 listed sites of special significance. The Jerrinja Community submitted a land claim over the Peninsula to the then Premier of N.S.W. Nick Greiner on 9th

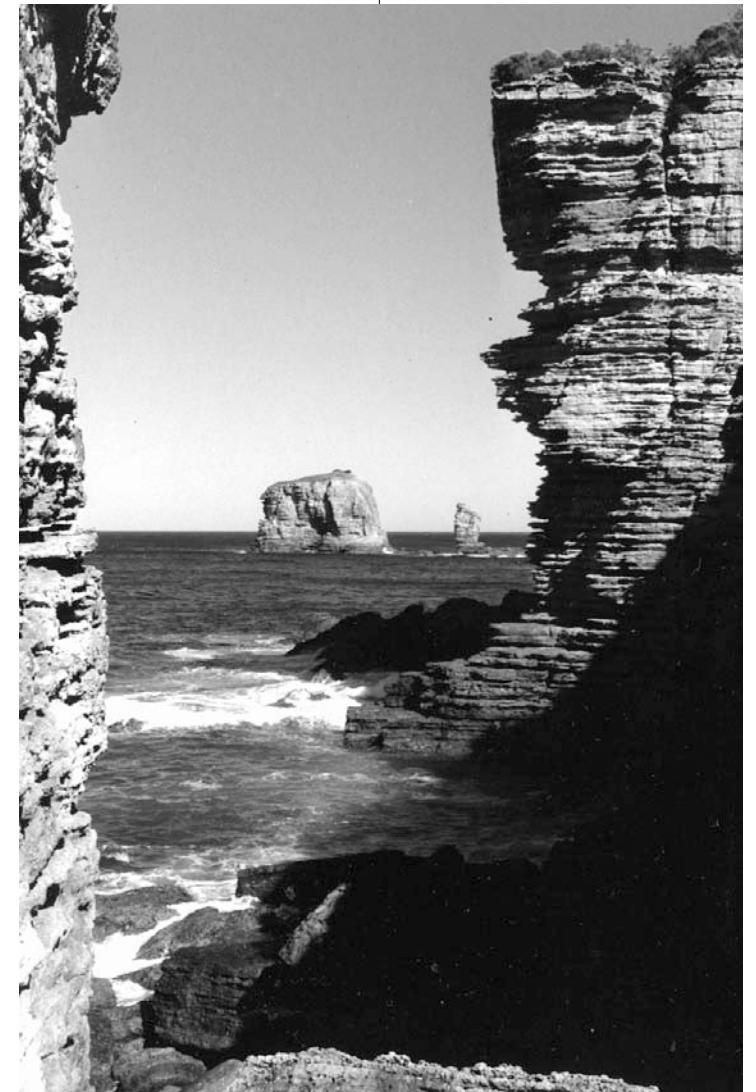
December 1988, this was not successful.

Several protests against Defence activities on the B.P. Weapons Range took place prior to the activity which caught media attention in 1989. A major multinational exercise known as "Tasman Link" was proposed for Jervis Bay involving the B.P. Weapons Range. A plan was hatched to foil this exercise by secreting a number of people onto the Range, then informing the Dept. of Defence that people were hidden there. This forced the allied defence forces to cancel the entire exercise thus abandoning their plans to shell the area from offshore naval vessels, due to the risk of injury to the hidden protesters. Despite intensive searches by the Defence Dept. none of the protesters were located.

The success of this technique for protecting Beecroft was used on many subsequent occasions over the next couple of years, reliably succeeding in cancelling the proposed activity. The intervening periods between exercises were used by members of various conservation groups and the Jerrinja Community to try and put a stop to Defence activity on the range. There were some minor gains during this period which included a cleanup of Defence debris which had littered the area for some time.

In 1993 a proposal was lodged to relocate the East Coast Armaments Complex from Newington (Sydney) to Jervis Bay (including a wharf to be built from Long Beach B.P. into the Bay.) thereby further eroding the conservation values of the area. Many rallies opposing the relocation were held and eventually plans for Jervis Bay as the preferred site were abandoned.

That same year a vigil was held by two A.C.F. (Australian Conservation Foundation) members Alec Sourdin and myself to thwart a proposal by AMSA (Australian Maritime Services Authority) to erect a 20mtr high steel automated lighthouse tower adja-



The Drum and Drumstick, Beecroft Peninsula. Photo Howard Jones

cent to the heritage listed Point Perpendicular Lighthouse and associated buildings on B.P.. The proposal would significantly affect the visual amenity of the headland and impact on the relationship of the lighthouse to its surroundings. Alec and I were arrested for our efforts!

There were more "battles" over the lighthouse when Defence Dept. and the National Parks and Wildlife Service "fought" for ownership of the Point Perpendicular Lighthouse and adjacent buildings. The Dept with the greater budget won that one.

In both the lighthouse issues Milo Dunphy (Myles' son) on

behalf of Total Environment Centre gave written and moral support to the campaign. Despite all our efforts however, the tower was constructed and Defence acquired the Lighthouse and adjacent buildings.

More protests were held in an effort to foil the next claim for B.P. by Defence. A Supersonic Missile Launch Facility was proposed in 2001. Once again the battle was lost and the launch pad and storage area were constructed on the range. Energy waned, and the hopes, dreams and schemes abandoned when the Howard "Liberal"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Rebecca reflects

Rebecca Rudd looks back on four years as a Greens Party councillor in Shoalhaven City.

MY time as a councillor in Shoalhaven has surely had its ups and downs. It has been difficult and frustrating but at other times rewarding and even occasionally gratifying. However, the really important thing is that the Greens—or at least politicians with a similar agenda—continue to have a voice in Council.

I ran for election to Council in 2004 because I loved where I lived and wanted to keep loving where I lived. I was concerned that the decisions being made by our councillors were not in the community's best interest. As well, it has always been a maxim of mine that, if you don't like the way things are, there's no point complaining unless you're prepared to throw your hat into the ring. So I ran for council and was elected.

Once elected I suddenly had no spare time, had to give up many of my favourite pursuits and felt very alone. I realised that I had run for council with certain preconceptions—as one does—that were very soon dispelled.

Very early in my time as a local politician, I learnt a significant lesson. It has to do with certainty and belief. While I have never lost my sense of right and wrong, I did lose my sense of the certainty and cut-and-driedness of things. To members of the public, out there in the community, most things are very black-and-white. But in the political arena, everything becomes grey. Once you're exposed to the multitude of points of view and conflicting issues, there are no simple straightforward answers. Life becomes a balancing

act of trying to achieve the best possible outcome for the majority of people. Of course, you never satisfy everyone and there is always a critic ready to judge you and your decision-making ability.

As a councillor you learn that the community is by-and-large apathetic. Most people are concerned with things that affect them personally or affect their immediate surroundings. A minority of the community is in touch with the bigger picture and it is those people I am most grateful to.

I also came to realise that my party, the Greens, had rather unrealistic expectations about the Greens councillors' ability to bring about change in Council's actions and attitudes. The reality is that the Greens are a minority on Council; there are two of us, Richard Bates and I. Far from holding any balance of power, we are two out of thirteen councillors in an otherwise uniformly conservative and pro-development council. It is difficult and sometimes disheartening to be so much in the minority; we rarely get a motion up and generally can't take a trick. I've learned that if I want something to happen, I have to plant the idea with someone else. If it's a good idea it really doesn't matter where it comes from.

But the Greens councillors have had their achievements. We have sometimes achieved a degree of moderation in Council's decisions and we played a significant role in two notable outcomes. These included: getting developer donations into the public arena; and the policy on water extrac-

tions from the Shoalhaven. As Terry Barrett rightly pointed out in Edition 99 of the NBT, this outcome was the result of action by a number of groups. But the Greens councillors still played an indispensable part in securing environmentally sensible policy on the use of Shoalhaven's water.

The take-away messages from this are firstly, that anyone running for council should do so in the knowledge of the political realities of Council and what being a councillor will take out of them. Secondly, the Greens Party needs to understand this as well. It needs to support its councillors and not make unrealistic demands of them.

It is really important that the Greens (along with genuine community representatives) continue to have a presence in council, regardless of how much influence they can actually exert. It is vital that people of integrity and sincerity, who are determined to bring community views into Council, continue to have a seat there. I am repeatedly astonished by the 'we know best' attitude of many of my fellow councillors. They seem to believe that their role is to make 'expert' decisions on behalf of their constituents, not to listen to what the community says and act accordingly. Again and again this council has ignored the recommendations of Council staff and the express wishes of residents. This is most pointedly demonstrated by the dramatic increases in building-height limits in the last couple of years. It is breathtaking that as soon as Council has a policy we immediately look for ways

LETTERS

NEW ACTION GROUP FORMED

On Tuesday the 24th April last year, Shoalhaven City Council voted to adopt its Development Control Plan for Huskisson, with major increases in height, despite overwhelming community opposition.

A couple of days later a decision was made to call a meeting to consider options. These were to either congratulate ourselves on a fight well fought, but lost and give up – or continue on trying to have influence on Council.

The meeting was held the following Sunday, with around 50 people attending. This included some from Ulladulla – who had very similar problems with Council.

The unanimous decision of the meeting was to form a new group with a Shoalhaven wide focus. This became the Shoalhaven Action Campaign. SAC has become

well organised with a committee representing the northern, central and southern areas of the Shoalhaven.

SAC is now finely focussed on the Council elections of 13 September and will be supporting independent candidates at the election. These candidates will be announced well before the election.

We are about to commence a membership drive and need your support.

A public meeting was held in Nowra on Tuesday night, with around 120 people attending, including Mayor Greg Watson. SAC's approach to the election was outlined at this meeting. In response to this Mayor Watson said (on WIN TV) that the meeting was all about SAC getting its "puppets" elected. The Shoalhaven Puppets Campaign? You decide.

Graeme Gibson, Chairperson Shoalhaven Action Campaign

to breach it, vary it or bypass it. There are simply so many rules that Council invariably finds one to suit their purposes and overturn what the residents believe is 'law'. What we desperately need is consistency and integrity in the NSW Government's planning reforms and Council's own development control policies.

Without honourable representatives like the Greens, Council will continue to be guided by the notion that 'a strong community is one in which developers can make lots of money'.

It has been both a privilege and an extremely rewarding experience to have been a

councillor. While it is time-absorbing and very hard work, I have learned so much about the place I live in and the people that live around me. I feel that I've emerged stronger and wiser from the experience. I have a more informed view about how and why things happen and, better able to accept when they don't go the way I would prefer. I have been glad to work with community representatives and Council staff—a thoroughly worthy bunch of people—and realise that these relationships are essential to achieving good outcomes for the community and building up the community's respect for its elected representatives. ■

Understanding local government

Clr Howard Jones and Clr Nerissa Bradley. (Kiama Council)

What role "Local Councils"? – what role "community involvement"? – what role "a local voice"?

It is often stated that in "the good old days" local Councils and Shires dealt with "roads, rates and rubbish".

In more recent times Councils (and Shires) have had a somewhat more complex role. This has included land use planning, social and cultural planning, infrastructure planning, funding and maintenance and other long term "strategic" activities. At the same time a Council's decisions are integrated with and subject to a complexity of State legislation in the areas of environ-

ment, heritage, planning, development assessment, health etc.

Subject to the standards established by the State legislation, local Councils were seen as the means by which local communities could express their identities and aspirations through their input into the development of Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and other Council plans and policies.

Over the last few years, changes to planning laws have begun a process of starving local communities of a say in the future of those communities. Further changes are proposed which will consolidate the loss of democracy in local government. The changes will allow increased development impact on the amenity of local environments both natural and

built. At the same time there will be reduced opportunities for appealing decisions made by consent authorities.

It is natural that the people of Wollongong should feel disgusted, offended and angry about the lack of respect for that community demonstrated by the alleged associations between developers, Councillors and council staff publicised in the recent ICAC enquiry. However a much more insidious and broadly based disrespect for "local" communities is being perpetrated through the "anti local" provisions in the NSW Government's planning changes.

At the same time the principle of bureaucrats providing "frank and fearless" advice to Ministers is under threat. The knowledge

that such advice is the basis for Ministerial decisions is fundamental in maintaining confidence in the decisions made by Government. The recent allegation that lucrative residential development opportunities were offered by the Minister of Planning to two developers in the Lower Hunter against the advice of the Department of Planning which placed the areas last (ie the least appropriate) on a list of over 90 areas considered, did little to provide that confidence. The Minister has assured the people of NSW that in excess of \$300000 in political donations to the ALP from the two developers had nothing to do with the decision.

Already in place is the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH

EDITION 100, LATE AUTUMN 2008

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

Editor: Patrick Thompson

pat@envirobook.com.au

© 0402 36 1424

Web Editor: Dennis Argall

dennis.argall@gmail.com

© 02 4421 3840

Layout: Bungoona Technologies,
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

♦ ♦ ♦

BUSH TELEGRAPH on the WEB at
www.newbushtelegraph.net you can
✓ download past issues ✓ use our
custom search engine for our region
and local papers ✓ get additional
background for each issue.

Basra to Beecroft?

Dennis Argall

BEECROFT Peninsula – should it be handed back to the Jerrinja people?

On the South Head of Jervis Bay is the Booderee National Park, land of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal people. Also in the park is the Australian Naval College.

On the North Head of Jervis Bay, Point Perpendicular and beyond, is land used as a naval gunnery range by the Navy, the 'Beecroft Range.'

Janet Mayer provides a history of Beecroft and public concern about its use. The Jerrinja Aboriginal people, whose traditional lands run down to Beecroft and Point Perpendicular have maintained their own 'embassy' at the gates of the defence lands in the past. They enjoy no such situation as the Wreck Bay people to the south. Now, however, it ought to be possible for the Commonwealth to consider relinquishing the Beecroft Range and together with the NSW Government, enabling the

Jerrinja to acquire a custodial relationship with the land of the kind in place in Booderee.

The Navy's case for retaining the Beecroft range is tenuous and exaggerated.

This year, when the bombardment of Beecroft began again, as it always does after the school holidays finish in January, I wrote to the new Labor Minister for Defence, Joel FitzGibbon, to ask "what is the operational need in 2008 and beyond for the Navy to hone its skills at the task of bombarding targets, in an area otherwise nature reserve,

in the middle of the part of the country with the highest population growth and the highest number of tourists?"

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, Mike Kelly (new member for Eden-Monaro, a former officer who left the Army to help get rid of the Howard Government) signed a reply with the Navy's position. To my astonishment, they argued that Beecroft "remains a critical part of the ADF's training infrastructure" not on the basis of operational requirement but on the flimsy historical basis that one ship, HMAS Anzac, joined British naval ships in bombarding the coast of Iraq near Basra in the invasion of Iraq.

This confuses a minor moment

of history, where this ship was sent into harm's way in support of the greatest act of strategic folly in the history of Australian government, with any real assessment of operational need. On that occasion Anzac fired 10 ranging salvoes and 31 rounds for effect, over 36 hours, under direction from US and British land forces. This somehow becomes the basis of Beecroft remaining "a critical part of the ADF's training infrastructure."

Writing on the basis of my background with a masters degree from ADFA, with earlier roles in Defence policy, and senior strategic policy responsibilities in Foreign Affairs and the Washington embassy, I wrote back to Dr Kelly, asking for more careful consideration in the light of real future strategic and operational needs. Defence force structure and facilities cannot be based on enabling follies of whatever prospective government.

I also wrote to the NSW Environment Minister.

Australian naval ships, prior to that action by HMAS Anzac in the invasion of Iraq, have only engaged in naval gunnery support in two circumstances since World War II – with the attachment of a succession of DDGs to the US Seventh Fleet to bombard the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s and in similar attachment of HMAS Warramunga to US forces in the Korean war (1950-53).

It's time for a new vision. The text of my argument to Dr Kelly can be downloaded from www.newbushtelegraph.net

Left: Honeymoon Bay, Beecroft Peninsula. Photo Howard Jones



Local Government ...

continued from page 2

Standard LEP Template. Agonisingly for local Councils such as Kiama, which are currently engaged in preparing new Local Environmental Plans, it is subject to constant review. Designed as a "one size fits all," in part to remove the problems associated with having more than 5000 differently defined zoned across 177 Local Government Areas, it has in fact so restricted options that Councils are fighting with the Department of Planning to include "local" clauses. The absence of "local" clauses in a "Local" Environmental Plan does seem somewhat paradoxical and will result in local communities being less able to protect and repair what is dear to them.

Once again "security" and "certainty" for the development industry across local government areas is at the expense of "security" and "certainty" for local communities.

There are times when projects are seen as being of "State or Regional" significance. So significant would these be that development consent should lie with the Minister and local considerations might have to play second

fiddle to State imperatives.

When Minister Sartor added Part 3A to the EPandA Act he provided an opportunity for bypassing not only the Local Environment Plans of local Councils, but most of the other Environmental and Heritage legislation that applied to the rest of us as well. The Minister only has to "be of the opinion that the project is of "regional or state significance"" or "essential for economic, environmental or social reasons"". The Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) notes that "this is "open to broad and highly variable interpretation and can as a result see single-residential developments as being classified as Part 3A projects".

Part 3A is seen as the "path of choice" for developers wanting to bypass "tricky" provisions in LEPs. Not only are the pesky Councils kept at bay, but also the opportunities for appeal are stacked against anyone who wishes to challenge the decisions of the Minister in the Land and Environment Court. Of course if the Minister looks like losing in the LEC he can always change the law. This was the case in the recent Gerroa Environmental Protection Society appeal against the Minister's decision to allow the extension of a sand mine, prohibited in Kiama Council's

LEP and which destroys vegetation classified as an Endangered Ecological Community. When it looked like the Minister might not legally have been able to approve that development, the Act was amended (after the appeal was lodged) in a way that retrospectively allowed him to have legally make that decision and in a way that would never apply to any other situation!

Evidence of the status of Part 3A within the development industry was no better expressed than via the Urban Development Institute of Australia's \$120 per head 90 minute breakfast forum titled "All the way with Part 3A". While you enjoyed your Weetbix and Nescafe you were informed about the "top five tips to getting your Part 3A development proposal accepted". Advice was provided by representatives from the Department of Planning, Town Planning professionals as well as a senior legal figure.

In further changes promoted as "cutting red tape" (read as "reducing the scrutiny they deserve") there is to be more reduction in "local" input and scrutiny of the development assessment process. Councils will be required to deal with 50% of DAs on a "tick the box basis." The Independent Certifier process is to be expanded despite

significant concern expressed by many Councils and community members about a lack of transparency and perceptions of bias and conflict of interest. Independent Certifiers will also be given the right to vary development standards when signing off on "complying developments". The community will not be informed about such development until after approval.

And there is much more!

Planning issues are only part of the story. Consider also the proposed reduction in Council's ability to raise Section 94 (S94) funds from the development industry for future public works, years of pegging rate increases below the CPI and below Councils' running costs, ever reducing grant funds for public infrastructure and things like libraries and you see that Councils are increasingly unable to meet local community expectations for services. Then we have plans by Treasury to grab councils' restricted assets and the lack of willingness by State and Federal Governments to commit some of the surpluses for infrastructure renewal. These things add a "financial" layer to the "planning" issues described above and show further why the "local" in "local government" is becoming wishful thinking. ■

Beecroft Vision 2020

continued from page 1

Government introduced the sedition laws. Actions opposing the Defence Dept. could now be considered as 'terrorism'.

Late in 2007 hopes and energy for a better future for B.P. were rekindled with the election of the Rudd Labour Government. The Greens candidate for Kiama in that election Ben van der Wijngaart as a Fellow of the Australian College of Strategic Studies, Group Captain (retired) and former Commandant R.A.A.F. Staff College, recently wrote "...the concept of naval gunfire support, that is, firing shells from a surface vessel to a shore position, is now generally regarded as tactically arcane and an inefficient use of naval assets... Modern ships now rely on various forms of missiles including cruise missiles, ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore. ...Beecroft Range would be entirely inappropriate for such weaponry..."

A few 'hopefuls' including Ben and myself 'armed' with the above knowledge and history, together with the Jerrinja Community will continue the efforts to secure a permanent conservation status for this sacred area.

Don't Torch Tibet!

Richard Bates

A Salong-timesupporter and one-time activist for a Free Tibet, I took the opportunity to attend the Olympic torch protest in Canberra on April 24.

I figured that pro-Tibet supporters would be far outnumbered by Chinese supporters and they could use any extra presence, particularly if things flared up and got nasty – all of this proved to be true.

This of course was not a protest against the torch relay in Canberra, or even against China holding the Olympics – that debate had long ago been fought and lost.

This was an opportunity to once again raise the injustices and human rights violations inherent in an occupied Tibet and, also to appeal for opposition to the torch relay through Tibet.

Common sense and decency would dictate that the Tibetan people not be subject to the gross indignity of the Olympic flame passing through their country in the hands of the occupying forces who have brutally repressed their freedom for the last 60 years.

This is a passionate matter for all the Tibetan immigrants and exiles in Australia. As a member of the Australia Tibet Council and The Greens, I proudly took my place with a full size Tibetan national flag in the front row of the protest at Parliament House. Along with many friends old and new, Tibetans and Westerners, some from the old peace march days, many from the ranks of a new generation of dislocated and disaffected youth, a few hundred of us next to equivalent numbers of Chinese with small groups of other communities such as the Uighurs (East Turkestan), Burmese and even Vietnamese, I joined the Tibet supporters in solidarity.

Bob Brown and kd lang addressed us (always good to catch up with Bob – my political hero and the only politician to attend), a sky-writer wrote a huge 'Free Tibet' above Parliament House and everything seemed to be OK.

Tibetan flags were pre-dominant over Chinese and there was a lot of activist catching-up going on.

There was a bit of argy-bargy at the Tibet-China interface but police kept the lines apart.

One thing I did notice was the age of the Chinese (nearly all young – uni student age) and the abusive language they used, in contrast to the mixed ages

(and nationalities) of the Tibet supporters and their politeness (many were Tibetan Buddhists chanting mantras).

Of course there was a lot of slogan chanting and even a few arrests when distraught Tibetans broke through the police lines as the torch approached but all-in-all it was well contained. The police were efficient and firm but friendly and polite and to tell you the truth, after what has occurred elsewhere in the world during this relay, I felt proud to be an Australian.

To be allowed to protest, to do it peacefully with opponents, to do it on the steps of our parliament, to be treated with respect – even compassion as some transgressors were – by the security forces. To be allowed to demonstrate within cooee of the torch; all of which would have led to immediate arrest in China and elsewhere the torch has been.

It seemed that we were showing the world how it was done.

At least the Federal police refused to allow any Chinese security to get involved – unlike everywhere else in the world.

Unfortunately it was spoilt, not by the hundreds of police present but by the Olympic officials themselves, many of whom drove by brandishing Chinese flags and abusing us.

The torch came and went and we made our way down to the lake and the bridge across to the park where the torch eventually ended up and there was entertainment etc.

It was on this long walk that we had our first reality check.

Once we could see the lake we could see the thousands of Chinese with their flags abandoning their torch route positions and making their way along the shore to the park and as we approached the bridge we became greatly outnumbered.

Only a few of their activists had been up at Parliament House – most had been lining the torch route.

Things were getting a bit tense so we decided for safety to walk on the other side of the bridge to the Chinese but as we approached the park we could see what we were in for. The whole place looked like a huge Chinese rally – and I mean Chinese not just China supporters.

We were a mixed bunch, race and age – lots of families with young children – but as we approached the gates we were met by chanting, abusive and aggressive young Chinese who lined the pathway making us run the gauntlet of their hostility.

It was not pleasant.

But worse awaited as we entered the amphi-theatre packed with thousands of Chinese (the media reported 10,000 but I can assure you it was somewhere between 20 and 30,000 – I've been to enough sporting events to tell) – a sea of red flags and shouted slogans.

It was no place for a westerner, let alone a Tibet supporter.

For our own safety the police had erected a corral into which we were herded, surrounded by taunting Chinese (students as I later found out) and unable to see anything that was going on.

I decided not to stay but the police weren't keen on letting me back out with my Tibetan flag and all.

I assured them I could look after myself and proceeded to walk out through the red sea with my lone Tibetan flag held high – yes it was intimidating but I was buggered if I was going to let myself be bullied by visiting Chinese in my own national capital!

Once back out past the 'welcoming committee' I spent some time organizing the last stragglers into groups for their own safety (the police were powerless) and warning parents not to take their young children inside – it was nasty and quite scary.

Then when all the supporters were off the street and inside I left.

I noticed the Uighurs (all fit young Muslim men) didn't attempt to enter but had a quiet and peaceful rally outside.

There were very few ordinary Australian 'civilians' in the park – it was too frightening and unpleasant – really quite nasty.

It was like a political rally in China with a few brave protesters – I would say at least 10,000 Chinese flags (let alone people) to 100 Tibetan, something like that.

There have been a few media reports confirming my account (mostly on the net) but the media has largely repressed this aspect of the day, preferring to concentrate on how the relay went off with very little trouble – which was also true.

Once I got home I found out that 3,000 students from Melbourne alone had been bussed in (making a mockery of the 10,000 figure). It had been mostly uni students that we had been confronted with – not Australian citizens supporting the motherland but visiting students, guests in our country abusing their hosts and trying to bully and intimidate us by sheer weight of hostile numbers into silence, just like back at home.

The media chose not to report this – only that it was only Tibetans who had been arrested as if they were the violent ones.

The Tibetans arrested and later released without charge were not being hostile or violent to anyone but themselves, bursting through police lines in distress and the heat of the moment. The Chinese by contrast were organized into an orchestrated and sustained attack on us.

The first part of the protest – at Parliament House – was very successful; the second part was horrible.

So when you digest news of the torch relay through Canberra, add this to the mix.

And please continue to protest the torch relay through Tibet – Don't Torch Tibet! ■

China and Tibet Wider perspectives

Dennis Argall

I don't propose to argue facts in relation to the situation in Tibet. Wikipedia – see links from www.newbush-telegraph.net – covers that.

The Dalai Lama does not challenge Tibet's incorporation in China and if you look at the condition of isolated, poorly resourced states as in the Pacific as well as on the Himalayan rim, you can begin to imagine how difficult life would be in reality for an independent Tibet... and how intruded upon and corrupted by foreigners, with litter and nihilism.

Without question there have been human rights abuses in Tibet – and in other parts of China, as also in many places: tragically in the great lakes region of central Africa (4 million dead in a decade) where I spend my main energy on community development via the internet (see links). Government-sponsored also in the Northern Territory of Australia. Different dimensions in different places. All demanding ethical rather than quantitative response.

International relations are an ecology, containing large organisms of nations and states and corporations, smaller communities, individual people – and other species. All to be valued. We cannot expect a healthy international society if we disregard any elements. Drown human rights with state power and the system fails. Shout human rights without regard for the larger organisms and the system fails.

China needs to know the feelings of people here. Our feelings need to be informed by knowledge and regard for the whole ecology. We don't make China's laws, they don't make ours. We don't make good communities by yelling. Abusive Chinese students produce negative effects. But to find cultural roots of such passionate and angry conduct against the west and fervent search for national identity, consider the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the issues around Falun Gong.

We need also to be aware of other connections with China. When the highway is getting fixed, thank China and China's impact on our tax revenues. When the petrol price goes up, thank China's growth, don't expect Kevin to fix it. When we get grants for community, China enables that too. We are all in this together. Reject China at one level, should we be consistent and try to reject it at all?

There is a Chinese perspective. It is not helpful to demonise China on this or other issues. Rather, it is important to be conscious that China has been demonised by the west for a very long time.

This Olympic year has been, in Chinese eyes, a moment for ending much of that negative process.

Back in the days when Kevin if not Adam was a boy I was, as ambassador in Beijing, young Kevin's boss. Together we witnessed China beginning a process of reform and revolution which has no parallel in human history. At no time in the world have the lives of so many been transformed for the good so radically as in China in the past quarter century. To say this is not to put aside sufferings in the process. China has the difficulty of endeavouring to advance under the leadership of what is now an archaic political party apparatus. We also have archaic parties in Australia and thinking of them, it is clearly difficult to reform political structures.

China is in uncharted political territory – what examples are there of management of very large states upon which China can draw? Zero. If we look to the management of our country, or the United States, or the former USSR (each 12 times Australia's population) what examples are there to follow... many practical details of systems, many negative examples, but nowhere comparable magnitude of the tasks. China's population is 60 times that of Australia. The population of Tibetans in China is a quarter of Australia's population, China's minorities altogether, including Tibetans, number over six times the Australian population. As a result of the turmoil of change, the 'floating population' of China grew from nothing in 1980 to 70 million in 1993 to 140 million (seven times our population) by 2003.

In 1980, per capita GDP in China was \$US460, in 2000 it passed \$US7000, in 2005, \$14000. (Australia \$36,000, Rwanda \$800). The numbers do not convey the enormous changes involved in proceeding from a society without lawyers or rights of redress in which the right to be born, the right to work and housing, marriage and pregnancy were all dictated by membership of a state-owned 'work unit', to a modern social, economic and legal structure.

Having drafted the cabinet recommendations on the basis of which the Fraser Government in 1980 began the process –

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Hyde's

Wood fired Pizza & Coffee

Business of the Year 2006

(under 10 employees)

182 Jacobs Dr, Sussex Inlet

**Open Wednesday to Sunday
from 5.00pm to 9.00pm**

*Bookings preferred at least one day
in advance as this helps with food
preparation and staffing*

☎ **4441 1480**

Grey Nurse Sharks (*Carcharias taurus*) Maligned, Misunderstood, THREATENED!

Attila Kaszo Chair, Jervis Bay Marine Park Advisory Committee

THERE has been much conjecture regarding shark ecology, allowing unsubstantiated and often fictitious information to filter through, significantly clouding an often emotional issue while research based evidence remains elusive. It appears therefore in part, that protective programmes and measures for Grey Nurse and other shark species seems to be carried out only when the species is in serious decline or on the brink of extinction.

The Jervis Bay Marine Park is a multi use park divided into various zones of use. The zone allocated to total biodiversity protection is the Sanctuary Zone. Activities within the zone are limited to ensure the viability of the species which habitat the area. Unfortunately the Grey Nurse, which is unaware of the zonings, swims where current and food sources are, invariably the same grounds as those fished intensively by anglers. As a consequence the protected shark is caught and brought to the surface, where after photographs and accolades are exchanged the fish is released, having suffered intense stress and probably an embolism on its way to the surface. The end result for the shark is probable death.

Given that there is an estimate of about 500 Grey Nurse sharks on the East Coast; can we afford the loss of even one individual?

The Grey Nurse shark has been for some time regarded as susceptible to extinction due to its low breeding rate, small population size and human induced mortality.

It has been suggested that Grey Nurse sharks could reach "quasi-extinction (less than 50 female sharks)" within a ten year period, unless significant Sanctuary Zones are introduced around critical habitat areas on the East Coast of Australia.

Critical habitats are usually defined as those regions where there is evidence that shark aggregation takes place as a regular event, and is substantiated by scientific study.

Based on this premise, there are no aggregation sites listed for the Grey Nurse in the JBMP. Clearly however, there are many sightings by SCUBA divers of these sharks, and there are some well known haunts where several juvenile female sharks congregate, but are outside Sanctuary Zones, therefore making those sharks susceptible to fishers.

Given that it would be a massive undertaking by any authority to track all Grey Nurse sharks, wouldn't it be prudent and scientifically responsible to take measures in the JBMP to protect all shark

species especially those listed as critically endangered wherever they may be in the Park?

To do this, Sanctuary Zones need to be increased and new sites allocated to those areas where Grey Nurse sharks are regularly sighted, whether is deemed an official aggregation site or not.

Further to this measure, I believe we should provide temporary Sanctuary Zones in the Park, during times when

Grey Nurse frequent the area, thereby allowing greater overall protection to the species when it's most vulnerable.

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that Sanctuary Zones have been shown to increase numbers and size of fish populations in the short period they have been in place. This no doubt would translate to better fishing and tourism opportunities for effected industries, but more significantly

help stabilise a declining fauna species.

The opportunity is currently presented to make these changes through the zoning plan review process.

During this review process, I urge everyone who considers ecology as an important issue to press for the further protection of the Grey Nurse shark and its habitat, and all other species of sharks which frequent the marine park. ■



China and Tibet

continued from page 4

continued since – of working on equal basis to support China in building modern civil institutions, I am acutely conscious of how difficult and fragile the process has been for China, how miraculous it is that China has not fractured like the USSR and has begun to emerge as a modern civilised state. Imagine the catastrophic impact on international security (and the Australian economy) if China were to fall apart or fail in modernisation. Consider the way relatively small issues are fracturingly difficult in Australia. In Beijing in the 1980s I would be engaged with open discussion of huge issues daily, but turning on Radio Australia for the news in the morning I would hear arguments in Australia which seemed like comparisons of bottom pimples.

China has struggled with security on its borders during much of the modern era. The first CIA attempt at open insurrection in Tibet was in 1959; India stupidly provoked (and lost) a war with China around Tibet in 1962. When I stood on an airfield in Qinghai, north of Tibet (Tibetan pilgrims rolling

by on trucks, on their way to Lhasa) I imagined how it would feel to stand at RAAF base Tindal in Katherine in the Northern Territory but without an ocean next door, instead with Russia and India right there. See the world from other people's shoes. Do not imagine George Bush's affection for the Dalai Lama is more than Neocon mischief.

To imagine that we can discard history and wider perspective tends towards the same logic as the Northern Territory Intervention, with its self-righteousness, simplification and disregard of local achievements and complexities.

I congratulate Richard on his passion and vision – and on his commitment to local government over the past four years... I am sure we agree that Shoalhaven City Council would not make much of a job of tasks in any way comparable to those in China and Tibet.

Who next among our readers will next take on the task of building integrity in our local government? If a new generation of accountable leaders does not come forward in the Shoalhaven, we wallow in mediocrity. If you want good government in China, please work for it here first, as Richard has done.

LASER ApT

LEADING EDGE COMPUTERS



New Computers Sales & Service
Printers Multifunctions Scanners
Reconditioned Systems
Modems + ADSL + Dial-up
Education + Repairs + Upgrades



Shop 1, 74 Kinghorne Street, Nowra 2541

TEL (02) 4423 3376 FAX: (02) 44233378 Email: info@laserapt.com.au

Sussex Inlet Mechanical Services

- ✓ Comprehensive mechanical services
- ✓ NRMA Road Service
- ✓ Suzuki outboard sales & service
- ✓ Marine servicing



(02) 4441 1955
(02) 4441 3055

Unit 2/4 Flood Avenue Sussex

Anne's

2nd Hand Books

Shop 1
138 Junction Court, Nowra

☎ 4423 3281

Shoalhaven Food House Inc.

Organic produce at affordable prices provided by a non-profit community group run by volunteers
Supporting local growers ♦ Bulk buying power ♦ Sustainable & ethical

Available at Tomerong Village Markets,
3rd Saturday every month,
Tomerong School of Arts Hall,
Hawken Road, Tomerong
Call 4443 6607 or 4441 8626



Sussex Inlet Country Garden

Shop 2/ 191 Jacobs Drive,
Sussex Inlet

Fruit & Vegetables,
Tobacconist, Nursery,
Garden Care Products

☎ 4441 2716

Open 7 days

Local Home Delivery Available

VALLEY ORGANICS

100% Certified Organic

Your Organic Supermarket on Wheels

Fruit & Vegetables
and a large range of Groceries

FREE DELIVERY

in the Shoalhaven:

**Nowra, Bay and Basin,
Kangaroo Valley and Milton**

Certified Organic Produce does not pollute the land with pesticides, herbicides, or hormones.

The farmer cares for the environment by promoting a vibrant living soil and a balanced eco-system far into the future. Food produced this way is tastier, more nutritious and is your best health insurance.

**GOOD FOR YOU –
GOOD FOR THE PLANET**



Contact Suzi and Peg:
Phone/Fax 4446 0569

e: valleyorganics@westnet.com.au

Tomerong Hall, Your name in history

SINCE 2005 we Tomerong School of Arts has become aware of major conservation work that is essential for the long term preservation of the building. Briefly the concrete area around the front of the hall needs to be removed and the ground level lowered to allow ventilation under the hall and to send water

away from the building.

The present situation encourages damp and termites to invade the front part of the hall and there is no way to get under the hall to correct this situation. Following this work we then have to repave the front section of the hall and replace the steps leading into the hall, and possibly

do some work with the gardens.

The Hall has received quotes for this work which totals around \$18,000. They have been successful in obtaining a small grant of \$3,000 from Shoalhaven City Council for this work and are hoping to raise the remaining money by asking the community to contribute by

having your name engraved on one or even two pavers which will then become a permanent part of the new forecourt.

Become a permanent part of Tomerong History and support Tomerong School of Arts at the same time by purchasing a paver which will be placed in the entrance forecourt of the

Hall; this will be a unique and lasting record of your support.

For businesses who wish to support the cost is \$60 per paver – this could be a tax deduction and a receipt will be provided upon request. For individuals or families the cost is \$40 per paver.

A form is available from www.tomerong.org/pavers/ so you can spell out what you wish to appear on the paver. For more information on the manufacturer of the pavers you can visit their website: www.fundraisingbricks.info Or you can email Sandra: leebrates@aapt.net.au and she will send you one electronically.

Thanking you in advance for being part of this community project to ensure the long life of our historic hall – we would be grateful if you could respond by 10 May 2008.

If you are able to offer any volunteer labour for this project please could you contact Chris Senior on 4443 4923



Our vibrant community and the arts

Pam Crohan, Sanctuary Point

I KNEW I'd moved to a very special place when, on going into a fruit shop, I was amazed to find the walls filled with vibrant art works – not your usual mass-produced generic variety, but striking originals by a young local artist.

This, as time revealed, was no isolated example. Surprises continued – topline musicians entertaining us in local halls, the streets, marketplaces and even private homes, "arthouse" movies at Husky Pictures, filmmakers sharing their responses to local faces and places, poets sharing their verse in cafes. The

list goes on.

The arts are not just celebrated occasionally – more they are an integral part of the life of many of us in our community. It doesn't matter what level of expertise you have – there will be a time and a place for you to learn, to share.

Our first-class arts festival "See Change", brought about through huge community support, showcases local and "imported" artists (in the widest sense of the word) and musicians.

Many members of this organisation are supporters of the arts, playing an equally important role as the art and music-makers.

There are many more examples of this strong community spirit, as was revealed at a recent workshop in St. Georges Basin, at which town planners encour-

aged us to share our views and priorities.

As one voice, we talked of community pride in our environment and the need for cohesive, sensitive future development. No one talked in terms of his or her own village and the mere provision of facilities.

Communities need so much more than just physical resources. Sharing of expertise and enthusiasm is equally important – as evident in the Men's Sheds and the like. Not surprisingly there are so many artists, craftspeople, musicians, writers and so on choosing to make their homes here and to become active participants in the community.

An environment so rich in natural beauty, with abundant flora and fauna, is food for the soul.

Let us hope that our vibrant

community continues to flourish and that our love of sharing in the Creative Arts continues to grow.

Pam Crohan is a former Melbourne arts consultant, President Jervis Bay and Basin Arts Inc. 2003/04

Remnant Shells

Josh Black

As I look upon scattered sea shells
The day's collection of hollow remnants
The empty vessels once housing life
In me trigger haunting thoughts and portents
For we are much the same in our humanoid shells
At times we find ourselves empty, barren and wrought
Hoping a last trip through the mind to memories of better times
Leads to some inspiring insight with which we can be bought
Because life is what you make it
At least that's what we're sold
Throughout life's journey
The search for purpose and meaning weathers the mould
Yet it is often the truth that we reject
We come in alone often leaving alone
Bound in our organic prison cells
Freedom upon death and if you're lucky nothing to atone

Josh Black will be reading some of his poetry on 5 June in Nowra as part of "Celebrating the Voice - Indigenous Writers night" organised by the South Coast Writers Centre Program - part of the Sydney Writers Festival. **When:** 6pm, Thursday 5 June 2008. **Where:** Lecture Hall, Shoalhaven Campus, University of Wollongong, George Evans Road, West Nowra. **Program:** Aunty Barbara Nicholson, Ernie Blackmore and Elizabeth Hodgson and Josh Black



Poet, Josh Black

The Olive Farm

Well-known For Our...

- Delicious Olives
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Local Honey
- Free Range Eggs
- Fresh Seasonal Vegetables

Wholesale Prices

Direct to Public
Cnr Peterson Rd & Princes
Hwy, Falls Creek, NSW

02 4447 8791

the.olive.farm@hotmail.com

All Trade
Welcome

SUSSEX INLET ANTENNAS

DVD





VIDEO



TUNING TELEPHONE EXTENTIONS DIGITAL

MASTER CABLER REGISTERED

CALL : BRIAN

PH. 444 12 715 MOB. 0429443747

A secret garden no longer!

Terry Barratt

NEARLY thirty like-minded citizens have decided to ensure that the Bomaderry Creek Bushland is a secret garden no more (NBT Summer 2008 Edition No.99).

Following on from the article in the last edition of NBT we all met at the Nerang Road picnic area on Saturday April 12 (on one of the few rain-free days this month) and resolved to expand our role as both a Landcare Group and as a separate active conservation group to promote and protect the values of Bomaderry Creek and its wider catchment.

This position was arrived at not only because of the threat of the proposed link road through the middle of the Bushland, but because of proposed urban expansion both within the Bushland and elsewhere in the catchment.

Following State Government approval of the Nowra/Bomaderry Structure Plan, the Council has every encouragement (as if they needed any) to develop a local environmental plan which will set the scene for massive urban growth from Bomaderry to Cambewarra village and from North Nowra

to Bangalee. In addition, three cosy slabs of the Bushland have been singled out for a similar fate.

This loss of rural scenery, natural environment and water quality will massively contribute to the existing deterioration of our local environment on the northern side of the river, let alone the inevitable deterioration of an already bad traffic situation.

The gathering decided to renew and expand its efforts to improve the environmental amenity of the whole Bomaderry Creek catchment under a separate Landcare group while continuing to pursue its efforts through the Friends of Bomaderry Creek to stop any further roads and housing within the Bushland. The Friends will also work towards a better traffic management regime for the northern approaches to the river.

One of our supporters for protection and better management of the Bomaderry Creek, Barry Horton, announced his candidature for the coming Council elections and many present at the meeting committed their support to help him succeed.

Barry has since decided



to work for a better deal for the Bushland in conjunction with the Shoalhaven Action Campaign (SAC). I will also be offering my support for SAC. If you would like to know more about SAC give them a call on 4441 5735 or look up their web page: www.shoalaction.org.au.

If you want to get involved in the Landcare group or the Friends of Bomaderry Creek please give me a call on 4422 1211.

The Landcare group is currently undertaking a weed survey of the land under management by Council. If you want to learn more about these pesky destroyers of the natural environment and at the same time see some marvellous scenery and enjoy some unique wildlife experiences let me know and I will be delighted to include you in this activity. We will also soon be organising weeding and planting days

and offering a plant identification course. So, don't hesitate to offer your bit for the environment while gaining some new knowledge and experience in a delightful setting. ■

Above: At the April 12 meeting Margie Jirgens explained the major community commitment made to restore the riparian environments of Taptallie and Good Dog Creeks within the rural landscapes of the Bomaderry Creek catchment.

ENVIROSCENE

Migrating birds

Ubiquitous thermals and magnetism

Bernie Clarke
Sussex Inlet

EVERY year around 2 million wading birds, involving about 40 species, depart their northern hemisphere feeding tundras and migrate to the southern hemisphere to escape the northern winter.

Their flight path is referred to as the East Asian-Australian Flyway, which extends from the Arctic Circle through South-East Asia to Australia and New Zealand. Their migration starts when the winds are right to fly enormous distances, with tail wind assistance the birds fly at speeds of 90 km/h or more.

Weighing as little as 30 grams and from 15 to 60 cm in length these trans equatorial migrants depart northern hemisphere feeding grounds during late August early September and from southern feeding habitats during late April May on their 28,000 kilometre round trip.

There is strong evidence these avian navigators sense the magnetic field of the earth for orientation and wind assistance over the ocean from ubiquitous thermals which can provide vertical motions of sufficient magnitude to influence migration patterns.

Navigational skills come

"Sydney's only Ramsar site, Towra Point Nature Reserve on Botany Bay, is unique [but due to outrageous neglect] no longer meets the criteria, which qualified it as a wetland habitat of international importance."

from their celestial compass which they adjust during flight by checking their "magnetic" compass and relying on tiny magnetic crystals in its brain to sense the Earth's magnetic field. This provides them with a high level of discrimination required for them to find their geographical positions accurately.

Migratory bird communities have an association with scientific river systems and are integrated with their sites. It would appear the birds have been entering the "flyway" since the seas stabilised after the Holocene Epoch about 6,500 years before present.

As their common name implies, the waders feed largely in the shallow waters of the seashores, beaches and estuaries, or in the inter-tidal mud and sand-flats. They concentrate in areas of high food productivity and prefer roosting in sites close to their feeding grounds where they can preen and rest free from disturbances.

Before leaving Australian wetlands the birds have doubled their normal weight and are so fat that they struggle to walk up the beach.

The Ramsar Convention, which was set up to recognise and protect wetlands of international importance, took place in Iran in February 1971. The treaty now has the signatures of one hundred and thirteen countries around the world.

Australia has 53 sites. Sydney's Ramsar site, Towra Point Nature Reserve on Botany Bay, is unique in that it is the only Ramsar site in the world surrounded by an aquatic reserve.

Sadly, due to erosion caused by dredging for the port and Third Runway and lack of management, only a few of the assemblage of 34 recorded wader species may be found in a small corner of Towra today. Other impacts include dogs and interference from the boating fraternity.

Towra Point Nature Reserve

no longer meets the criteria, which qualified it as a wetland habitat of international importance. Towra's trustees, the Department of Environment and Climate Change, formerly NPWS, have abdicated their responsibilities under the Ramsar Agreement, Article VI to..."endeavour to take appropriate measures to preserve and enhance the environment of birds protected under the provisions of this Agreement".

It is a disappointing outcome for Friends of Towra supporters. The writer successfully campaigned to stop the Federal government's plan to turn Towra

Point into Sydney's second airport during the late 60's to 1974. I was invited to participate in a plan of management for this icon site.

With local conservationists pressing the Department of Environment and Climate Change to nominate

Lake Wollumboola for a Ramsar listing, it is hoped that if successful the public will insist the trustees are fully committed to abide by Ramsar's strict criteria. It would be a tragedy should another Wetland of International Importance suffer the outrageous neglect of Sydney's only Ramsar site. ■

RBS
Proust Bushland Services

Shoalhaven - Wingecarribee - Illawarra - Wollondilly Areas

• Bush Regeneration • Weed Control
• Site Assessments
• Vegetation Management Plans • Training

Free Quotes & Advice
15 Years Experience
Qualified Staff

Contact Gerard Proust

0417 236 181 / 4443 6537

Terry Hennessy "In Our Midst"

GOOGLE "Terry Hennessy Dulcimer" and you will have pages of articles to read, all telling stories of a man who is both a world renowned Luthier and an exceptional man who has played a major role in increasing the awareness of the Appalachian Dulcimer.

Reading articles on Terry Hennessy it soon becomes clear how respected he is as a Luthier/sculptor. It has been said that Terry Hennessy creates musical magic when his hands work with wood. With artists saying that, having a dulcimer built by Terry Hennessy in Australian timbers makes it 'arguably, one of the finest in the world'.

Master luthier Jerry Rockwell once said 'Finding Hennessy still alive, and still making dulcimers, is an incredible thrill. It is like touching infinity or immortality.'

One of Terry's Dulcimers is held in the Smithsonian Institute's music collection.

Not content with just making instruments Terry was also once a member of the "Mudsteppers" a 1980s jug band in which he played the ukelele, banjo, jug and twelve string guitar while also adding to the vocals.

Sit down with Terry and chat for a while and you discover a man who is extraordinary and full of life.

Terry was born in South London in the 30s and was one of seven children. He lived through the Second World War and remembers vividly the bomb shelters to which they had to run when the bombers (doodlebugs) came over.

On one of these occasions he recalls his father coming home and coaxing him out of the shelter to show him what was going on outside.

He remembers being very scared but his father saying to him 'trust me, you'll be alright, I want to show you something.' He remembers being taken to the back gate. 'The light show was incredible' and as his fear subsided, he realised that his father was showing him that the bombs were falling many blocks away, the fear was in the shelters and not knowing what was happening outside.

"I watched the Battle of Britain from the front yard'.

Growing up in the slum area of London, Terry laughs as he remembers that the food situa-



tion actually improved during the war as a ration book was introduced and a dietician determined what was needed in the diet, things like cheese were now on the menu where as before this was a luxury not possible.

"There are two sorts of people in the world those who play music and those that should"

This is a belief that Terry has, and he definitely falls into the first category.

In his twenties Terry was invited to a "Demobbed Party" (People demobilized from the army) in South London, by one of his army mates. He turned up for the party and ended staying for three years!

This was no ordinary house. It was a party house which they declared "independent" from the rest of the country and many gatherings were held there to mark it's independence. Music was central to these get togethers with Blues and Jazz high on the list, people would drop in and stay for days making music and much merriment.

He has a very infectious love of life, together with a mischievous glint in his eyes. In his youth he would practise crashing motor bikes, starting at 10mph and eventually building up to 40mph saying that anyone can ride a motor bike but it's the crashing that is the bit you need to be good at!

We could have sat and listened to Terry's stories of playing guitar in the Black Forest in Germany in the dead of night; of being a puppeteer; travel and music all day and luckily for us Terry lives "In Our Midst" in Kangaroo Valley and our chance will come again.

Terry has made instruments for people such as Peggy Seeger, Richard Farina, and Mimi Bias but now spends his time passing on skills in instrument making to friends.

Whether it's luck or karma who knows, what we do know is that good things happen around Terry Hennessy...

If you see Terry on your way through Kangaroo Valley be sure to stop and say hello, your life will be richer for the experience. ■

The past, the present and the future

John Hatton

CAN we look into the past for a path to the future or is this for fuddy duddies?

The year is 1970. The occasion is the opening of the original Ulladulla Civic Centre. The realization of an impossible dream for a small town and a largely rural south Shoalhaven.

Bert Jackson, a motel owner, Joe Greco, Noel Hilder, Maisie Williams, Rotary, Apex, Quota and many others made it happen. Businesses asked to donate a chair or two, money for the building and equipment.

The opening day: a celebration of achievement buckets passed around, soon filled with coins, cheques and notes pinned on the Shire of Shoalhaven flag. It was their centre, community pride in community ownership.

For over 25 years Joe Greco, Noel Hilder manned the centre, with a new management structure they retired without so much as a letter of thanks.

Of course there are still plenty of examples, in surf clubs, sporting complexes, community centres and halls, but are these people encouraged or appreciated?

A once-a-year morning tea, citizenship certificates and the occasional civic reception miss the point.

A community depends upon cooperation based on a sense of ownership. The community elects its mayor and councillors. It employs the hundreds of council staff, it pays off the millions in loan indebtedness and a significant number work voluntarily in hundreds of organizations giving service in thousands of ways free of charge.

The fastest way to kill off a community is to pretend to appreciate community work, give token thanks and freeze the

community out of the vital decision making processes.

Community consultation is not a public briefing, where council is in charge of the agenda and chairs the meeting.

The public must be encouraged and assisted to call, organize and chair the meeting and the councillors and staff are invited to make presentations, speak and to answer questions.

In other words, they work for us, we the community expect to take ownership, and be encouraged to do so by true meaningful, participatory involvement.

This is not happening.

Sure there are Community Consultation Bodies but they are regarded by Council as tools of Council and threatened if necessary. Community Consultative Bodies must be resourced, structured and recognized by Council as voices of their employers and electors.

The loss of community ownership expresses itself in frustration, anger and "why the hell bother" and the loss of volunteer services.

How else do you explain unprecedented public outrage (over 600 at a meeting in Ulladulla), over 300 at Huskisson calling for the sacking of Shoalhaven Council.

Councillors have to realise that they dictate at their peril. Councillors must be made to feel in peril if they accept large developer donations, hold secret developer consultations, threaten Community Consultation Bodies, sell off public assets at a fraction of the value (especially when rezoning after the sale greatly enhances the value and profits the developer). Profits which rightfully belong to the public.

It's the public land – ask us!

It's the residents city – involve and consult us!

Council servants are the

employees of the residents.

Shoalhaven is the lifestyle, lifeblood and the home of it's residents. It is not the plaything of a council.

Information collected by council servants, paid by the public, belongs to the public.

Public ownership of the community by the community must be experienced, encouraged and not spat upon by arrogance and tokenism. ■

ART ATTACK GALLERY

Still life and abstract paintings,
specializing in pointillism.

Art classes, workshops all year round.

Shop 1, 182 Jacobs Drive, Sussex Inlet
Open 10 - 4, 7 days

Ph 4441 2646

Nikki Wright

LADY DENMAN HERITAGE COMPLEX

www.ladydenman.asn.au

- Restored "Lady Denman" Ferry
- World Famous Maritime Museum
- Art Gallery and Museum Shop
- Boat Builder's Shed
- Ocean Fish Feeding Pond
- Mangrove Boardwalk
- Timbery's Aboriginal Workshop
- Produce Markets 1st Sat of Month

Ph : 4441 5675

2006
NSW Tourism
Award Winner



Open 10am to 4pm 7days
Woollamia Rd Huskisson



An accredited provider for grid connected photovoltaic solar systems.

Install a grid connected solar system to:

- Reduce your "carbon footprint"! • Receive payment for any excess electricity you produce!
- Reduce, or even eliminate, your electricity bills!
- Sell your Renewable Energy Certificates! • Produce your own clean "green" electricity!

Kangaroo Valley Solar provides a quality "all inclusive" installation package & reliable local service into the future.

To investigate solar options for your home please contact us for more information:

P. 44651 540 E. mikeg@bigpond.net.au

Kangaroo Valley Solar is owned and operated by Kangaroo Valley Electrical

ABCSE Accreditation no. 1710 NECA Member

