

THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH

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We have had sufficient audacity of faith to advance a pathway to that future, with arms extended rather than with fists still clenched. So let us seize the day. Let it not become a moment of mere sentimental reflection. Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd** 13 February 2008

NEXT...

Dennis Argall

I REACHED across the table to the tall dark handsome young man on the other side of the mosaic we were working on, at the Aboriginal Embassy.

"Sorry" I said. He smiled and took my hand.

"New world," I said. His hold on my hand strengthened and stayed. He smiled and said, "Yes."

"Where are you from?" I asked. "Moree," he said.

"Moree is a hard place," I said.

"Yes, Moree is a very hard place. That's why I'm here in Canberra," he said.

The Shoalhaven is a hard place too.

- Hard for indigenous people trapped in poverty and in the shellacked wisdoms of generations of imposed policies of welfare, or shell-backed with ingrained hatred or despair.

- Hard for those people who, in the words of Barack Obama, "would seek, under whatever flag or slogan or sacred text, a certainty and simplification that

justifies cruelty towards those not like us."

- Hard for all decent people who hesitate to know where to start on an intractable issue, to know whom to embrace, what way to express regard or care, how to act in any concrete way.

In the Prime Minister's wonderful, urgent and necessary speech to the parliament on 13 February there are, alas, seeds of new problems. He said:

Let us resolve today to begin with the little children, a fitting place to start on this day of apology for the stolen generations. Let us resolve over the next five years to have every indigenous four-year-old in a remote Aboriginal community enrolled in and attending a proper early childhood education centre ...

Who has determined this priority, what is this word 'proper'? I asked this question on Radio National a year ago:

"What happens if you dump a national literacy test on kids like this [in remote communities]? How can it respect the fact that they arrive at school to learn English (as most likely a third

language), to learn our world view as so contrary to their own deeply-rooted sense of country, of symbol, of meaning."

Why didn't the Prime Minister say: "we will change school systems to support and respect all cultures, especially indigenous culture, so that when a tiny child comes to school it is meaningful and supportive of the core of their lives and does not demand rejection of culture and assimilation to another man's good design"? Didn't he know in some places they still are told not to speak their own languages in schools? Didn't he know that the best and brightest out there can go off to secondary boarding schools and often run home, just weeks later?

The focus of the rhetoric, in any case, was still on remote communities, not on the young man from Moree or the Koori woman in Shoalhaven who said to me half a year ago: "I am sick of hearing about all these remote communities, don't they see what we face?"

The Prime Minister went on to say "Let us turn this

page together: indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, government and opposition, Commonwealth and state, and write this new chapter in our nation's story together. "We wait to see how indigenous people are to be represented, to have elected representatives. Locally, we need to be sensitive to what Aboriginal people want. Even a very materially generous white man, late at night – indeed last night, as I write this – can say: "What our [Koori] friends have to learn is..." Sorry mate, no, start again please.

In just the immediate region of Nowra there are four different Koori mobs: Jerrinja at Orient Point, the mixed-origin population in Nowra, Wreck Bay and Injagunji in Tomerong. They evade the sight of most. How are these communities to work out their differences among themselves and among themselves, the Koori people, and to have "...sufficient audacity of faith to advance a pathway to [the] future?" How are they enabled to have the audacity, courage, hope, space and time to find strength together... rather than be called into political offices and told how the white world knows the best, how the white world will intervene—with either smiles, schools or police.

When people campaign to keep Huskisson unchanged are they aware of the grand irony? Have they read Auntie Jean's words:

"The history of Wreck Bay is that Aboriginal fishing families that lived around Huskisson were getting more fish than the other

local fishermen and there were such mutterings and complaints about that that our people were brought out to Wreck Bay, and a school was established there. [Note again the first imposed priority: "Let us resolve today to begin with the little children."] It was a government policy to move the Aboriginal families." (Jean Carter "A Big Dose of Social Justice." *Steppin' Out and Speakin' Up*, Older Women's Network, 2003, p 57.)

Sorry about losing your home brother... Sorry not enough? Take it to the Land and Environment Court maybe, brother? Sorry. Can't.

On 12 February *The Australian* reported that "the Prime Minister ... was confident the apology would not trigger a frenzy of litigation." How soon does he say this after, in his poll victory speech on 24 November, heaping praise on Bernie Banton for his courageous fight for compensation for asbestos victims. It seems a popular wisdom to suggest that the dispossessed lack financial wisdom, waste their money, are unfit for personal compensation benefits and should accept nobly the expertly designed community projects proposed by the enlightened successful. In Sweden Kylie's swimsuit is auctioned to buy cows for women in Asia. Some people know how to spend wisely.

Clack, clack, clack go the dominoes of decency. Can we, for a moment, take all our dominoes and cards off the table and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

LETTERS

WELCOME SUPPORT

I've been meaning to write this for many months. Well done for all the hard work in getting the *Bush Telegraph* out and with such interesting articles.

Chris Nobel
Kangaroo Valley

GM CANOLA

Canola is not just an oil seed crop. It is also a major animal fodder crop fed to cattle, sheep and dairy cows. Historically, dairy cows in the Shoalhaven have been fed on Canola stubble and, in drought years, the whole plant of failed crops, which has been transported from Western NSW. In those areas where Canola is grown, sheep and cattle are grazed on the stubble (or failed crop) and so this plant is a major part of their diet.

It is the use of Canola as animal fodder that gives me the greatest concern, once GM Canola is released because THE GENETIC MODIFICATION IS IN EVERY CELL OF THE PLANT not just the seed from which the oil is extracted.

Farmers and consumers need answers to the following questions:

1. When approval was given for the commercial release of GM Canola, did FSANZ (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) or OGTR (The Commonwealth Office of the Gene Regulator) assess the effects of feeding the fodder to meat and dairy animals. What research has been done on the long-term health effects of such a feeding regimen on the animals and then the long-term effects of eating the animal products on human health?
2. What are the economic implications of feeding GM Canola fodder to our beef, lamb and dairy export industries?
3. Will animals which have been fed on GM Canola crops be segregated in the supply chain and will they be labelled as such?
4. How will the transport of this fodder be documented and traced? How will the growers of GM Canola guarantee that no seed will escape into non-GM areas when such fodder is transported, and will they finance the clean-up of any contamination?

Minister for Agriculture, Ian Macdonald, did not mention the issues of feeding GM Canola to animals nor the potential for the escape of the seed in the transport of the fodder, in his media release of 27.11.2007.

Please write to Ian Macdonald Parliament House Macquarie St, SYDNEY 2000 ask some of these questions.

Suzi Krawczyk
Cambawarra

IRAQ TRAGEDY

On the 24th Nov, John Howard and the Liberals were defeated and I, like most Greens, am happy to see them depart. The Green vote is on the rise and it seems our message is reaching more people. With this in mind, I believe it is of vital importance that we are careful with what we say and do. I am, however, troubled with Adam Bonner's letter (new *Bush Tele* Summer edition 2007) titled 'Iraq Viewpoint'.

While I agree with some of Adam's letter, I find some parts objectionable and not in keeping with the tolerant and humane message of Green philosophy.

Adam states 'But the cost in US lives grows each day thanks to the Iraqi resistance'.

I for one do not wish for young US lives to be extinguished in a sad war already costing so many lives and I don't believe many Greens would think this way.

I also challenge Adam's claim that it is an honourable resistance fighting US Forces, after all aren't these the people placing bombs which indiscriminately kill and sometimes horribly maim many of their own people (including children).

Don't these people only represent some of the Iraqi people?

Adam also states 'The US led invaders continue to murder innocent Iraqi men, women and children'.

Does Adam really mean that all US troops are going around murdering innocent people? This has been the case by some rogue elements in the army, but surely this statement is well over the top.

I do agree with Adam when he says, 'Iraq is a basket case'.

Later in the article we read 'Iran must consider nuclear weapons in order to deter the US and Israeli aggression' and 'Iran must fast track their defensive deterrent capabilities'.

Surely Adam, if you are railing against US led war as being criminal then what you advocate will make the Iraq tragedy look like a Sunday school picnic.

There is no doubting this war is a tragedy of monumental proportions and there are no easy answers. One thing to keep in mind (or is this something we don't wish to talk about) is the murder and torture that will be inflicted on those who have assisted the US locally when those forces do depart.

Norm Webb
St Georges Basin

COMMUNITY

I was discharged from Wol-longong Hospital's Alkira Lodge a few weeks ago. I shall soon be notified if the cancer that is bothering my prostate has been halted.

I am concerned, but not to the degree that you would expect. This is because of the marvellous support that the staff provides to its cancer patients.

It is a support shared by doctors, nurses and general staff and one that goes beyond the excellent medical service provided. It is a support that creates optimism, a great help in coping with this

particular problem. A kind of family has been created that we all feel part of. Why is it that we have to experience adversity before experiences such as this are unleashed? The staff have provided something that if spread to other areas would provide a more caring society.

I feel privileged to have been a part of this and extend my heartfelt thanks to the team.

Donald McHugh
Wandandian.

Don McHugh, the author of this letter, was a merchant seaman, on convoys from Liverpool to Murmansk in World War 2. Murmansk is in the arctic north of Russia. This was the convoy route to provide supplies to the Soviet Union, then allied against Germany. These were convoys where if you blinked the ship next to you might just be gone, sunk.

A survivor in a family in which most children died, in the hard times in Ireland, Don came to Australia from Ireland in the 1950s and had an active career with heavy involvement in union affairs. In the 1980s he sought to build an organic growers group, meeting in the Tomerong Hall. Dennis Argall has wanted to get his history down for several years, but Don is a hard man to keep up with!

HOWARD AND THE ORDER OF THE GARTER

At risk of slowing the move towards a republic, I have written to the British High Commissioner to discourage the Crown from knotting knickers with our former Prime Minister, as below.

Excellency,

I write with concern, reading news that the Crown may admit the former Prime Minister John Howard to the Most Noble Order of the Garter.

I encourage you to ensure that HM Government in the UK be aware and be able to advise

Her Majesty that this 'honour' would in fact do wonders for the republican cause in Australia. Times have changed since any such honour was last bestowed on an Australian. Mr Howard is not to be compared with Sir Ninian Stephen or Sir Edmund Hillary but has come to be reviled by a very significant proportion of the Australian population who in no general respect hold the United Kingdom in disregard.

It is a matter of record that this Most Noble Order of the Garter is allowed "to excel all other institutions of honour in the whole world."

Sir Edmund and Sir Ninian bound their countries together and were commended for their many wonderful acts of generosity and community spirit. By contrast, for a decade under Mr Howard, we followed a path to destruction of community values, disparity in incomes and opportunities and meanness of spirit. I say nothing of making the greatest error of strategic judgement in the history of Australian government in invading Iraq, as your government holds contrary views. But there you have Mr Howard's standing after rejection at the polls: an unhappy and negative and greedy figure who destroyed his own party as well. No matter what regard for the long serving, for the Crown to make a considered judgement to link itself to this figure now would, in the eyes of many here, lower the status of the Monarch considerably, given such contempt for Australian opinion and actual circumstance and for the honourable criteria of the Order.

DW Carter
Bodalla

GETTING THINGS STRAIGHT

The last NBT edition carried an article by Richard Bates about water transfers from the Shoalhaven River.

The details about plans for the water transfers to Sydney, Tallowva Dam infrastructure modifications and downstream water releases were correct, but the claim that this was the outcome of a collaborative approach between the Shoalhaven City Council and the Greens Councillors is incorrect.

The agreement signed last March was about guarantees of water supply to the urban communities of the Shoalhaven. It had nothing to do with fish lifts, a multi-level take-off structure, maintenance of high water levels in Lake Yarrunga or increased environmental flows.

The Greens Councillors did effect some changes to a Council submission about the Government's plans for environmental improvements, but this was only one of

many submissions from the local community. It had nothing to do with the water supply agreement.

It is difficult to identify what credit can be attributed to the Greens Councillors. They played no role in the Community Reference Group (CRG) set up to advise the Government on river management, nor were they evident in the public campaign against the Government's plans for the river.

Specifically, credit must be given to the Southern Bass Fishing Club for the fish lift and multi-level off-take outcome, to the Kangaroo Valley community for achieving retention of high water levels in Lake Yarrunga and to the Shoalhaven River Alliance (SRA) for achieving a better outcome for the environmental flows regime.

The Greens Councillors made a fundamental error by voting for continued water transfers to support Sydney's unsustainable growth – a position that is contrary to the policy of the NSW Greens.

While an improved environmental release regime is needed, it is a short-term measure and no answer to the heavy water demand that Sydney's growth will continue to have. Sydney must solve its water requirements in its own backyard by recycling wastewater and stormwater treated to drinking water standards. Implementation of this sustainable approach is the only way Sydney and the Shoalhaven River can survive in the long term.

Terry Barratt, Chair
Shoalhaven River Alliance



THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH
EDITION 99,

LATE SUMMER 2008

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

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pictures, or contributions to:

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RAMSAR and Lake Wollumbulla •

read and watch Kevin Rudd's Sorry

speech • download Barack Obama's

full policy platform ... and more!!!

John Hatton AO, of Huskisson, was President of the Shoalhaven Shire Council from 1968 to 1973, having been elected Deputy President in 1966 at the age of 33.

He was independent member of the state seat of South Coast from 1973 to 1995, widely respected and also feared for his commitment to public accountability and his pursuit of corruption (matters which he continues to pursue). His pursuit of corruption led to a Royal Commission on the recommendation of which the Police Integrity Commission was established

Shoalhaven Vision

John Hatton

The Natural Environment

Shoalhaven has eighty kilometres of one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world, unspoilt beaches, lakes, estuaries, farmland, valley and gorge country, national parks and reserves. Visitors to Shoalhaven are stunned by the variety of scenery as well as the beauty.

The Built Environment

Nowra and Bomaderry are bisected by the beautiful Shoalhaven river with the unspoilt Cambewarra range as a backdrop together with towns and hosts of scenic villages. Some such as Berry and Milton are jewels of heritage in a rural setting. All provide good shopping services. With retail and wholesale outlets up there with the best.

In the villages of Shoalhaven, small shops, coffee houses, restaurants, cafes, curio shops,

bed and breakfast cottages, heritage buildings excite and entice locals and visitors alike.

The small industries of Shoalhaven are themselves worthy of a visit. In addition to the welding, fabricating, concrete, prefab, chemical and similar industries essential to a growing city, there are the highly specialised niche market, engineering, boat building, aero space and innovative high tech and creative artistic and design industries.

An expert and independent survey commissioned by the Huskisson Woollamia Voice revealed that visitors and locals almost unanimously liked the friendly laid back lifestyle, the village atmosphere, the unspoilt beaches and beautiful foreshores.

Shoalhaven is the number one destination in the whole of NSW outside of Sydney.

What would a series of social and economic surveys tell us

about Shoalhaven. For those in business, where does the dollar come from? The sea change of retirement, the population shift to the coast, urban and light manufacturing, cottage, small factory, town house, office and low-rise tourist development?

Builders, plumbers, carpenters, roofers, electricians, glaziers, concreters, brickies, tilers, landscapers, fencers and a host of related trades and support industries depend on high growth, not high rise. The vast majority of buildings are three storeys or less.

Will high-rise add to the dollar income or be a turn off to tourists and retirees? Of greater importance is the question of where exactly high-rise is to be built. Should such buildings be ugly and prominent, close to the foreshore of lakes, bays and the ocean, on the beautiful Shoalhaven River, or tucked away in "less sensitive" locations, or not allowed at all? At least residents deserve a say.

Ramsar listing would give the lake international recognition and additional protection offered by a Ramsar listing.

Why is Ramsar important?

The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty which was agreed in the city of Ramsar in Iran in 1971. Australia was among the first of the 116 nations to sign this treaty. It is designed to provide strong protection to wetland sites. Of the 1000 or more sites listed as being of worldwide significance, 65 are in Australia. Examples in Australia of Ramsar wetlands include Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory and Moreton Bay in Queensland.

A Ramsar listing for Lake

What is your view?

High growth is a bulldozer. Stand in front of it and get crushed, or try to get into the driver's seat to use its power and energy, but steer it in directions that will produce jobs but not ruin Shoalhaven's beauty and lifestyle. Beauty and lifestyle are the major growth and jobs generators.

Social Climate and lifestyle are The Major

Generally Shoalhaven is a peaceful and safe place to live with a high degree of community involvement. Sport, church, service clubs, social welfare, educational and passive recreational opportunities abound. If other areas in NSW are any guide, inappropriate, ill planned, high density growth will bring with it serious social disruption, higher crime rates and negative health outcomes. Shoalhaven's sense of community is one of its major assets.

Shoalhaven has its trouble spots. Vandalism, crime and other antisocial and destructive behaviour seems to coalesce around certain areas. We need to find out why and develop strategies to overcome or minimise the problems.

Employment

Shoalhaven has high unemployment but a severe skills shortage. Shoalhaven has always

Wollumboola would help protect the natural processes that keep the lake as an important wetland.

What would Ramsar listing actually mean?

"The Ramsar Convention's mission is the conservation and wise use of wetlands by national action and international cooperation as a means to achieving sustainable development throughout the world" (Brisbane, 1996).

The key words here are "wise use". Many human activities are damaging to wetlands, and this is a concern for all the community. The Ramsar Convention has developed guidelines for the wise use of wetlands. The guidelines seek to ensure that there is continuous benefit to present generations, while at the same time, sustaining natural systems for the benefit of generations to come.

Ramsar guidelines still allow for many activities to occur on wetlands, such as fishing (including commercial fishing), swimming, boating or the collection of resources for traditional or cultural purposes. Activities can continue, provided they are sustainable and do not damage the wetland or the processes that keep the wetland healthy (for example; water quality or the flow of water into the wetland).

Who can I talk to about this idea?

DECC will provide further information meetings for community to discuss the Ramsar nomination of Lake Wollumboola. You can phone Greg Tedder on 44286300.

had a high growth rate. Hand in hand with this is high unemployment. This does not appear to make sense! We need to know why. Could it be that if a hundred jobs are created, a hundred and fifty people are seeking them simply because Shoalhaven is the attraction, a beautiful place to live. Job seekers continually relocate here.

High tech and tertiary education [e.g. TAFE and Shoalhaven Campus of Wollongong University] and home based computer driven industries are all rapid growth areas.

When, in 1970, Jervis Bay was under the shadow of the multi-million dollar Armco Steelworks proposal, many people said 'Great!' 'Look at the jobs!' Yet Newcastle and Wollongong Steelworks did not prevent high levels of unemployment. Not to mention the social problem in high-density heavy industry towns.

CoffsHarbour, PortMacquarie, Tweed Heads and the Central Coast are some examples to study. The Central Coast has big problems with massive growth, thousands commuting daily to work in Sydney, gridlock in peak hours in the heart of Gosford.

At the Crossroads

Shoalhaven needs investment, innovation, growth, jobs and careful planning. What are your suggestions?

One class of investment overlooked by many is your home, your lifestyle. Collectively, the citizens of Shoalhaven have billions of hard-earned dollars invested in their homes and gardens. For example, five thousand houses represent a value of one billion dollars if each home is valued at \$200,000. Surely then, the residents must be given or demand a say in their future, their lifestyle and the development of their neighbourhood. The Huskisson survey also revealed that many people come here because visitors feel that the Central and North Coast have been ruined.

Shoalhaven is at the crossroads. Hundreds of millions of dollars are driving rapid change along the entire NSW coastline. The bulldozer is at Shoalhaven's door. Do we lie down in front of it and be crushed? Hop on it and try to steer it? Worse still pretend it's not happening?

We can as a community develop strategies to take advantage of high growth create jobs protect natural beauty, heritage and retain a sense of community.

Milton, Berry, Kiama, Berrima, Bowral are places of high growth and yet are still places of beauty, charm and pleasant to live in. I believe together with energy and imagination Shoalhaven City can develop a vision.

So the bottom line is, why do you live where you live? What is your vision for your town or village, for the whole of Shoalhaven City? If you had the power what would you change and what advantages and disadvantages would your changes bring?

We can make it work but hurry the bulldozer is here...

Lake Wollumboola

Is it a wetland of international importance?

Alison Curtin

What are we talking about?

The Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), is considering nominating Lake Wollumboola in Jervis Bay National Park for international recognition under the Ramsar Convention.

In Australia, important wetlands are nominated to the Ramsar Convention by the

Australian Government at the request of the State Government. In NSW, DECC is the responsible agency for assessing and submitting proposals to the Australian Government. The local community are consulted about all proposed Ramsar nominations on DECC lands.

DECC believes that Lake Wollumboola is important and it has been found to meet 5 of the 9 criteria for Ramsar listing.

Sand spit walk. PHOTO: NARELLE WRIGHT



Rudd–Gillard, Obama, Shoalhaven: antagonism or inclusion?

Dennis Argall

JULIA Gillard, the Deputy Prime Minister, is Minister for Social Inclusion. What does this mean? In a speech last November Ms Gillard said:

"The concept of social inclusion in essence means replacing a welfarist approach to helping the underprivileged with one of investing in them and their communities to bring them into the mainstream market economy. It's a modern and fresh approach that views everyone as a potential wealth creator and invests in their human capital."

Several Koori people in the Shoalhaven have been talking privately about this kind of thing, through the past year. A world beyond Noel Pearson's visions.

The old antagonism and enemy focusing of the Howard era simply vanished – at least for now. We seem to have a muddled pause in community expression. We need now to find our voices again, to find positive voices, rather than critical, divisive voices. Inclusion seems a good basis for moving forward.

Barack Obama is clearly

an advocate of inclusion and asserts a new path. He speaks of a United States, but there is little reported here in Australia of thought behind such rhetoric. The ABC's North American correspondent seems to stay in the press lounge lounging. A caller to Illawarra local radio recently said: "How can Obama, an American, say 'We can make the world right?'" What Obama is saying is that American power has been exercised wrongly, that America will remain powerful and needs to be a force for good in many areas.

A younger Obama wrote an extraordinary book about his search for his identity in 1995: his Kansas wife's brief marriage to a brilliant Kenyan student, his father, in Hawaii; his primary years with his Indonesian stepfather in the poorer quarters of Jakarta, his struggles with substances and perspectives as a student; his pull away from corporate employment to work on community capacity building in the worst corners of Chicago; his finding of extended family in Nairobi and rural Kenya.

In the introduction to the 2004 reprint he reflected on the impact of September 11, 2001.

"...History returned that day with a vengeance... This past, directly touches my own. Not only because the bombs of Al Qaeda have marked, with an eerie precision, some of the landscapes of my life—the buildings and roads and faces of Nairobi, Bali, Manhattan; not merely because, as a consequence of 9/11, my name is an irresistible target of mocking websites from overzealous Republican operatives. But also because of the underlying struggle—between worlds of plenty and worlds of want; between the modern and ancient; between those who embrace our teeming, colliding, irksome diversity, while still insisting on a set of values that binds us together, and those who would seek, under whatever flag or slogan or sacred text, a certainty and simplification that justifies cruelty towards those not like us..." [emphasis added]

We watch from a distance the way his inclusive perspectives and policies are widening support – the whole world seems to take great interest in what will come after the destructive years of G.W.Bush. Even if Obama does not secure the Democratic Party's nomination for the election in November, these policies will now be a force in America. In a speech in Iowa in November Obama said:

"I won't just ask for your vote as a candidate; I will ask for your service and your active citizenship when I am president of the United States. This will not be a call issued in one speech or program; this will be a cause of my presidency."

This combination of social inclusion and of service goes further than currently articulated Australian policy. But if it happens in America, we will see

it here... though we seem to be trapped now in a mood of self-focused consumption: I struggle with my bills, um, excuse me, I can't talk, I have to get back to my X-Box.

Perhaps this, in Obama's *Blueprint for America* sounds a bit like our recent past:

"Under the Bush administration, foreign policy has been used as a political wedge issue to divide us – not as a cause to bring America together. And it is no coincidence that one of the most secretive administrations in history has pursued policies that have been disastrous for the American people. Obama strongly believes that our foreign policy is stronger when Americans are united, and the government is open and candid with the American people."

It is worth looking at that *Blueprint* (link to download from our website) in its details. The foreign policy content includes this:

"Not talking [to people we don't like] doesn't make us look tough – it makes us look arrogant, it denies us opportunities to make progress, and it makes it harder for America to rally international support for our leadership. On challenges ranging from terrorism to disease, nuclear weapons to climate change, we cannot make progress unless we can draw on strong international support."

And it is valuable to see the detail of policies to reduce petroleum consumption by 30% by 2030 and carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, to spend \$150 billion on clean energy technology development.

Oh dear, how far this is from our cat-fighting Shoalhaven political scrums, enmired in manipulation and craftiness and narrow vision.

As the great John Hatton notes we are endowed with extraordinary natural riches and human potential. John asks questions. It would be good to have lots of ideas for NBT 100, deadline April 10.

The Shoalhaven can go forward and up, or just slump. We can be a positive community and a great regional centre, or be bogged in social problems. What, for example, will we do about the families that will arrive here with the 500 inmates of the new gaol? Run from expanding ghettos or work for social inclusion? Lock up the chooks and put out the dog, or open our hearts and minds?

Why is our local government persistently stuck in mucky states, chewing its way through big issues without vision. Where are the younger people with vision, integrity and imagination to sweep all that away and enable us to become a leading, intelligent region which others might follow?

We seem stuck in a situation where thrills are secured by pettifoggery and mob-leading. That era is ending in the wider world. We will be left behind without new leadership that sees broader issues and builds community, rather than working constantly to divide.

Do you have the courage to pursue change? Send us ideas for our 100th issue? Can you get people together to consider what is the way to change the council. Do you have the vision and strength and integrity to organise to be a candidate – to nominate by 27 August, to be elected to Shoalhaven City Council on 27 September? Your party affiliation is not the main thing, the question is how to lift accountability, integrity and vision.

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Apathy - a time for action

Patrick Thompson

Like ostriches with heads buried in the sand human kind continues to procrastinate while our planet draws closer to the great abyss.

It is now 40 years since I first wrote a piece on climate change. It was a university essay and in it I quoted the then president of the Australian Academy of Science. He had pointed out that whilst global temperatures had been steadily rising since the start of the industrial revolution there appeared to be a reversal due to dust in the upper atmosphere caused by supersonic jets. How wrong these observations have proven.

In about 1980 my own observations taught me how finite a world we live in. I was travelling with a group of people on the South Island of New Zealand and there was a heavy haze that severely reduced visibility. All day the sun was seen as a red ball. On inquiring from a local as to the cause, I was told it was due to bush fires in Oz. Indeed there had been severe bush fires back home that had at the time threatened many Sydney homes. The western side of the Southern Alps in NZ is always covered with ash and red dust from its neighbour across the Tasman.

We live in a beautiful land. For 40,000 years Aborigines have lived essentially in harmony with their environment. No doubt they brought about significant change on their arrival but an ecological balance returned. When Europeans arrived the Aboriginal people lived relatively happy and healthy lives. We changed all that for them. We also changed the land. We set about clearing the vegetation and mining the soils and minerals of our continent. It is a process that continues unabated today. Indeed it is a process that continues to accelerate.

In global terms for the first time in human history we are threatening the stability of our planet. You know it. I know it.

What can we do about it?

It is a depressing scenario. Recognition of the problem is one thing, but doing something about it is another. Currently it is business as usual. World energy needs are predicted to double in the next few decades. This is not only due to the emergence of China and India as major contributors to global output. Australia also wants to grow and double its energy use. South Australian's are the biggest users of air conditioners in Australia. Around 90% of their homes are air conditioned. Most of them use older, low energy output models and will no doubt along with the rest of us move to 'more efficient' but higher energy using types.

Ross Gittins recently wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald how it is predicted that energy use will cost us more in the future but incomes will grow faster and so the relative cost of energy will fall. The problem with the modern market economy is that it works in terms of growing people's incomes. It is supposed to work also in regulating a scarcity of global resources. It is supposed to be a magic wand that as a mechanism makes all things 'sustainable'. But, of course, it doesn't.

No price can ever be put on the health of the planet. The market economy does not work as a mechanism to sustain the atmosphere and the oceans. True the price of fish will increase as they become scarce, as will other natural resources, but this does not lead to sustainability. It is a cursed word. It has been abused and misused.

Who then will save us? Who then will take responsibility and force change? Will it be our leaders - a word of caution.

Last year, listening to parliament I heard the Hon Senator Nick Minchin rabbiting on about 'greenies' and how they all wanted to us to live in caves or go back to the dark ages. It made me think about the vast majority of human kind who continue to live relatively

simple lives and whose ecological imprint is only slight. I then thought of the 10% of the world who enjoy incomes that allow us to do as we please. We can fly to Europe and land at Heathrow, the world's busiest airport, which is currently doubling its capacity. On arrival we can take advantage of the cheap airfares to go on to any European city for as little as one cent with Laker. (Yes, the climate change conscious Europeans are in no hurry to bring about change.) Then lastly, I thought about our leaders. They have most to lose, but they are going to be the hardest to shift. It is the 1% of the world - our leaders - the rich and famous, who are having a massive ecological impact. Just going about their daily work and

leisure, their ecological imprint is to the planet what a herd of elephants is to a rice paddy.

None of this is to say there is no hope. There is hope. As is outlined elsewhere in this issue, there is a mood for change. In Australia, and more importantly in the United States, there is a new breed of leader emerging. Barack Obama, a young Presidential hopeful, is talking about an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. It can be achieved. The only thing to fear - to quote from another US President - is 'fear itself'.

To achieve big reductions in carbon emissions, our leaders must act. Carbon trading will work as a mechanism and the market economy will bring about the adjustments needed.

It will lead to a greatly changed world. Our younger generation must be equipped for it. It means more than a computer for every child. The classroom and the family will undergo a philosophical shift, one based on humanity's place in the natural world.

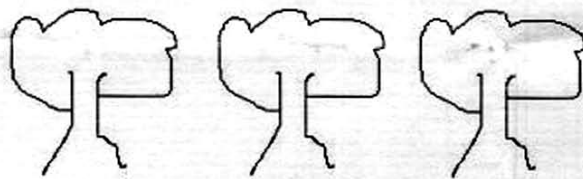
And what of Aboriginal people, they have much to teach us. We can learn from them the trick of 'living ecologically'. The Hon Nick Minchin and the other skeptics are wrong. We can live in a sustainable and beautiful world but to achieve these ends there can be no room for apathy. We the people must apply the pressure from the grassroots up, if the changes from the top down are to occur. We all have a part to play.

Irish Maths Test

An Irishman applied for a job on a construction site, but the foreman wouldn't hire him until he passed a simple maths test.

Here is your first question, the foreman said. "Without using numbers, represent the number 9."

"Without numbers?" The Irishman says, "Dat is easy," and proceeded to draw three trees.



"What's this?" the boss asked.

"Ave you got no brain? Tree and tree and tree make nine," said the Irishman.

"Fair enough," said the boss. "Here's your second question. Use the same rules, but this time the number is 99."

The Irishman stared into space for a while, then picked up the picture that he has just drawn and made a smudge on each tree. "Ere you go."

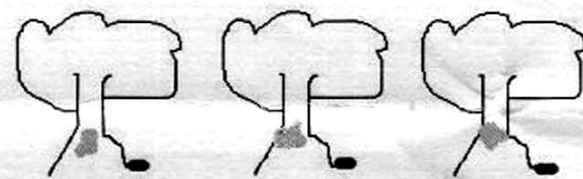


The boss scratched his head and said, "How on earth do you get that to represent 99?"

"Each of da trees is dirty now. So, it's dirty tree, and dirty tree, and dirty tree. Dat is 99."

The boss was getting worried that he's going to actually have to hire this Irishman, so he said, "All right, last question. Same rules again, but represent the number 100."

The Irishman stared into space some more, then he picked up the picture again and made a little mark at the base of each tree and says, "Ere you go. One hundred."



The boss looked at the attempt. "You must be nuts if you think that represents a hundred!"

The Irishman leaned forward and pointed to the marks at the base of each tree and said, "A little dog came along and crapped by each tree. So now you got dirty tree and a turd, dirty tree and a turd, and dirty tree and a turd, which makes one hundred." "So, when do I start?"

Stand made for last rock wallabies on the Shoalhaven

A brush tailed rock wallaby, 'Roxy' by name, is the last female in a shrinking colony on the Shoalhaven River (*Telgraph*, 21/11/07). The southern rock wallaby is considered a sub-species. The situation is desperate, so another female and two males were brought in from Cessnock to build up the colony numbers, despite the impact on the genetic diversity.

The Shoalhaven colony has been the subject of a recovery program for three years but this has not stopped the loss of numbers from foxes, dogs, hunters and competition from goats.



We hope that the introduction of new genetic stock and the flush of growth with all the summer rain will give this colony a fighting chance.

Picture: Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby.
PHOTO SHANE RUMING

NEXT...

continued from page 1

ask this Aboriginal man and that Aboriginal woman if they would like time to explain their world, their needs, first of all to each other, to us later if they wish, with some expectation of a future different?

Aboriginal Australia exists here in the Shoalhaven, there will indeed be more of it with a gaol and the following families coming to Nowra. Aboriginal Australia exists around us in depressed and traumatised lives, in a raped civilisation, a denied Dreamtime. It will not become detraumatized or given place or space by hastening the assimilation of small children, any more now than in the past.

To all Koori friends we say "Sorry" and say "Have audacious courage, faith and hope. Work it out brothers and sisters, tell each other your dreams, your fears, your needs and jokes. Take your time, this is too urgent to bugger up. Tell us when you want us to come up your road to learn your understanding."

To Gubba [white] readers we ask: find a dark hand, shake it, mean it.

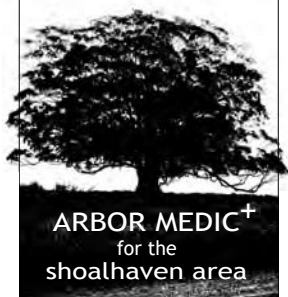
...we see our indigenous brothers and sisters with fresh eyes, with new eyes, and we have our minds wide open as to how we might tackle, together, the great practical challenges that Indigenous Australia faces in the future. Let us turn this page together: indigenous and non-indigenous Australians...

Kevin Rudd,
13 February 2008

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COMING EVENTS

LA TRAVIATA will be performed at the Ulladulla Civic Centre, Saturday 19th of April 2008, doors open at 7pm and the show will start at 8pm, (three hour production including the interval).

The tickets will be sold by IGA Milton, Travelscene at the Ulladulla Plaza and Issa Shalhoub 0414 553 574.

The cost is \$45.00 per seat and \$40.00 concession.

It will be Cabaret Style with Bar Service and BYO Nibbles ONLY.

This event is a fund raiser for Rotary and follows the success of last year's production of Kiss Me Kate

BUNDANON'S 15TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

WHEN: From 10am Sunday 20 April. Main event kicks off at 1pm.

WHERE: Boyd Education Centre, Riversdale. Off the Illaroo Road to the west of Nowra.

COST: \$15 for singles, \$25 for doubles/families, children under 15 free.

Highlights will include:

- ✱ A welcome to country by the local indigenous community featuring a dance and didge performance with participants drawn from four local high schools,
- ✱ International didge playing star William Barton,
- ✱ The band CODA with their theatrical mix of classical, far-eastern, rock and electronica musical styles,
- ✱ Circus Monoxide amazing the crowd with their daring, skill and comedy,
- ✱ Wire MC bigging it up with guitar, rhythm and rhyme with his crew 'Cuzco',
- ✱ Jimmy Little returning to the estate where came with his dad, to milk the cows as a boy, to perform the highlights of his five decades as one of Australia's leading performers,
- ✱ Indie-pop sensation Kate Miller-Heidke bringing her explosive soprano trained, ARIA nominated act to this astonishing setting.

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e: valleyorganics@westnet.com.au

The ICE Message

Message from the NSW Ambulance Service

WE all carry our mobile phones with names and numbers stored in its memory but nobody, other than if we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending us would have our mobile phone but wouldn't know who to call. Yes, there are hundreds of numbers stored but which one is the contact person in case of an emergency? Hence this 'ICE' (In Case of Emergency) Campaign.

The concept of 'ICE' is catching on quickly. It is a method of contact during emergency situations. As cell phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should

be contacted during emergency under the name 'ICE' (In Case Of Emergency).

The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients, but they didn't know which number to call. He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognized name for this purpose. In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital staff would be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialling the number you have stored as 'ICE'.

Please tell people about this. It really could save your life, or put a loved one's mind at rest. For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3, etc.

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BOMADERRY CREEK BUSHLAND A Secret Garden

Terry Barratt

BOMADERRY Creek Bushland is the home of many unique plant and animal species, with a scenic rainforest filled gorge as its main feature, providing a great place for locals and visitors to get away from it all. It is the largest urban bushland reserve in the Shoalhaven offering an outstanding opportunity for residents of the growing urban communities of Bomaderry, North Nowra and adjacent villages.

The Bushland should be better known and valued than it is, yet the Shoalhaven City Council does nothing to promote it for its recreational and tourism values and is hell bent on destroying these values in the interests of urban expansion.

For many years the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), the Friends of Bomaderry Creek and Bomaderry Creek Landcare

have worked hard to protect and promote the Bushland against the entrenched attitudes of our Councillors.

We had all expected that the main battle was over when the Government dedicated the Bomaderry Creek Regional Park in 2002 over one third of the Bushland. Since then, to their great credit, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has invested time, skills and dollars (\$150,000+) in the upgrade and management of their one third, while Council has belatedly played catch-up in the land they own with some limited weed control and track improvements.

At the same time, our local state member and Minister for Tourism, Matt Brown, has joined in an unholy alliance with the Council to promote a road through the Bushland with the aim (as publicly stated by Mayor Watson) to facilitate

major urban growth in North Nowra.

So, once again it's up to the local community to get things back on track!

The ACF and the Friends have approached the State Government strongly opposing the road and seeking expansion of the regional park to take in the remaining two thirds of the Bushland. The Landcare Group is producing a film promoting the Bushland which will present the viewer with an insight into the many fascinating features of the Bushland, and how it can best be enjoyed and looked after. It will complement the popular Bushland walks book produced by the Group in 2001. They are also continuing with their work on weed and rabbit control particularly in order to protect the habitat of the threatened Bomaderry Zieria. They have recently completed a detailed survey of the distribution, condition and threats to this unique plant. Anyone interested in helping or just keeping in touch with the ongoing work of ACF, the Friends or the Landcare Group please give me a call on 4422 1211.

If the community is prepared to commit so much time and resources to the cause, surely Council can take a fresh look at its promotion of urban-development-at-any-cost and put in a greater effort in promoting and protecting this marvellous recreational and educational resource.

And surely it's not expecting too much of our State Government and its Tourism Minister to protect the very asset it established in 2002.

Phil Atkinson, Terry Barratt, Jim Walliss and Robin Moyes discuss their plans to produce a film on the Bushland



You mean there's a restaurant at Orient Point?

Dennis Argall

We had heard about it from Paul Greene – the Olympic sprinter and indy muso, not the one with the Brylcreem teeth. So we went to Orient Point, where few venture. A spectacularly beautifully placed little village, facing across the estuary of the Crookhaven and the Shoalhaven. Where the Jerinja Aboriginal community has the best view .. but no one living there personally owns a house, so no one can borrow for business development – the terrible poverty niche of Aboriginal community, which must be fixed.

The central business district of Orient Point turns its back to the sea and faces a community notice board. It is a small building, with a post office in the middle, the size of a goodly laundry, a shop on one side and a bit of a take-away on the other. "Can't be" we said. But it was... the Orient Point Cafe.

We do this review so you can run over to Orient Point and keep this show on the road. Max was an Istanbul chef, better at cooking than money, according to

Max's wife Cathy, Australian born Turk, who met Max selling carpets when she was visiting family in Turkey years ago. Max spent 12 years away from professional cooking, before this venture towards new culinary fame, starting out in Orient Point. How do we keep him there?

The menu is not big, the tables are few, as you would expect of a take-away where Max puts his elbows on the counter to have the kindest conversations with the smallest girls from the Aboriginal community, buying the smallest bag of chips.

The fish has hardly left the sea before frying gently in olive oil in a pan and being served with utterly fresh side items. The delicate ravioli hand made... and so on. Only fitting of course that the arrival of the ravioli saw the Three Tenors replaced by Andrea Bocelli to sing Besame Mucho. At lunch. Ev drove home, I was bowled over by Max's secret formula herbal tea!

Can we organise a special NBT group dinner sometime – maximum 16?

Give us a call 4443 4499

ENVIROSCENE

Deadly Acid Rain – Acidification

Bernie Clarke

THE year 2007 has flown the coop and left us with a warning. Planet earth is having a heart attack. Prognosis, climate change. If surgical procedures suffer further delays the damage will be irreversible.

Our ailing planet is being bombarded with millions of tonnes of hydrocarbons and particulate matter every day. Smoke stacks emit sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, when mixed with water vapour it forms sulphuric and nitric acid, or as dry particles that latter mix water to form acids. Such emissions change chemically and return to earth as acid rain, snow or particles.

More than 6000 of Sweden's lakes have been killed by airborne acid, their fish wiped out. Twenty thousand more lakes are dying due to sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides from smoke in far away Britain, Germany, Poland and other countries, carried long distances on the prevailing westerly and southerly winds. Scientist say more than 1000 tonnes of sulphur compounds fall on Sweden every day, wiping out fish life.

Norway's Prime Minister had called for measures to combat acid rain which had wiped out entire fish species in thousands of Scandinavian lakes. The acidity attacks fish in several ways. It hinders reproduction, it depletes the calcium content of bones, deforming the fish and it leaches aluminium and other dangerous metals from the soil forming metal deposits on the gills that slowly asphyxiate the fish.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS KILLING THE OCEAN'S LUNGS

We are treating the Ocean with contempt, as if it were infinite. The entire ocean surface is now contaminated with billions of small plastic particles. Millions of tonnes of military munitions have been dumped into the ocean. Human pollution adds another 22 billion extra tonnes of carbon to the atmosphere every day, great quantities descend on the ocean as acid rain. Famous ocean explorer Jacques Yves Cousteau's lament before he died, 'The sea is the universal sewer'.

The ocean contains 90% of the planet's biomass and more than 90% of all its water, which covers 70% of the earth's surface. Acid caused by greenhouse gases is ravaging marine life, according to scientists who warn of an 'Ocean time bomb'.

Sewage treatment is unable to keep pace with the world's rowing population and is the most serious area of concern. Two hundred years ago there were one billion humans on planet earth, today we boast six and a half billion.

Sewage can kill seagrasses, deoxygenate water and poison plankton. Low dissolved oxygen concentration is a common cause of fish kills, stress and disease in fish.

20,000 aircraft adorn our skies every day discharging toxic hydrocarbons and particulate matter, most of which descends on our ocean. Carbon dioxide from industry and cars is carried skyward and ultimately ends up in our ocean where it dissolves in a process called ocean acidification.

Nutrient-rich waste kills huge areas of the ocean. A recent United Nations survey put the number of such 'dead zones' at 147 and increasing by 10 every decade. Teaming shoals of cod have disappeared off the Atlantic coast of Canada and never returned. Ninety percent of our stocks of large fish have disappeared during the last 50 years. We are killing life more quickly than it can reproduce.

Acidification of our seas threatens to ravage marine life. 'This problem will continue to affect our oceans', according to Australian marine biologist Dr Will Howard. Acidification has already been set in motion on our Great Barrier Reef, says coral scientist Dr Charlie Vernon, who has studied one quarter of the world's coral species, and warns 'If we continue producing carbon dioxide at the rate we are now, by mid-century coral reef in this world will stop growing. They will be going backwards'.

Through photosynthesis of phytoplankton our Ocean produces the oxygen for every second breath we take. If the ocean were to cease to function as it does, human life would come to an end.

REFERENCES: Acidification, Jes Sammut, UNSW; Planet Ocean, New International. 2007; see also, NBT web resources page.

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Grand Final Day 1970

John Holschier*
Sanctuary Point

I MET my mates, Campbell Spence and Tony Trist, out on the main road and we set out on our bikes for a day around Rushworth. We had been told about the Phoenix Gold Mine and wanted to explore it. I had taken a rope with me because we knew it would be needed if we were to get down and, more importantly, back out again.

Rushworth is about 10 miles or 16 kilometres from the farm and very flat until you are nearly there. Even though our bikes didn't have gears it was pretty easy riding.

The Phoenix mine was down a track off to the right of the main road just as you come into Rushworth. We found it pretty easily and started exploring. First there were the sheds. They were made of timber and corrugated iron and contained a lot of old machinery, the most interesting of which was the stamper battery. This machine was used to crush rock so that gold could be more easily extracted. It was run by a huge diesel motor, a modern addition to gold mining as the Phoenix was the last mine to operate in Rushworth closing in the 1930s due to water in the mine.

The mine itself was really interesting. It had a poppet head over the main shaft. This was a wooden tower with a wheel at the top of it for lowering and raising a basket containing ore or men between the surface and the bottom of the mine shaft.

* John is a teacher at Falls Creek writing his memoirs for family. Here is an excerpt, about the lows and highs on Grand Final Day 1970.

Right beside the main shaft was a smaller, narrow shaft that had a ladder going right down to the bottom, or so we had been told. The only problem was that the first ten feet had rotted away as it was exposed to the weather. That's what the rope was for.

Of course we may have been teenage boys and invulnerable but we didn't want to climb straight down without having some idea of how deep the shaft was. How to find that out? Easy! Drop some stones down the shaft. We only managed a couple because people were already down there and yelled up to us to stop it. We could tell by their voices that those blokes were older than us so we bolted and hid behind some bushes. A few minutes later a few guys, who looked about eighteen or nineteen emerged from a side tunnel. We stayed hidden until they were well gone.

Dropping stones down the mine didn't really give us an accurate picture of what the shaft was like so we decided to dip some sticks into one of the diesel drums, light them and drop them down. Hopefully we'd be able to see the shaft all the way down as the flaming stick fell. As it was we couldn't get the sticks to light. Diesel does not just catch fire like petrol would. The sticks may not have caught fire but the drips of diesel did and they fell down the shaft as little red beacons of light, whistling like a mortar does, without the explosion at the bottom. Luckily we hadn't tried that trick first when those guys were down there.

The rope we had was just long enough for us to tie it to a tree and lower it down so it reached

the first solid rungs of the ladder. This was the first time any of us had abseiled but we didn't know what we were doing, we just climbed down the rope until we got to the ladder.

On later climbs we measured how deep it was but on this first climb we discovered that there were three landings. The first was just a little rest stop (it was about 50 feet below the surface). I was glad to reach that stop as I was pretty scared and my legs were shaking. It was good to have a rest before going on.

At about this time two football teams, some say the most traditional of rivals in footy, were running onto the MCG in front of a huge crowd of over 100,000 people. I imagine that their legs would have been shaking too. Collingwood, coached by Bob Rose, were the favourites and were trying to win their first premiership since 1958. Ron Barassi's Carlton had won two years before but weren't considered to be in the Magpie's class.

As the two teams charged through the massive "run-throughs", erected by their adoring fans, the three of us climbed further down into unknown territory. Another 50 feet down was the second landing. This one actually had a tunnel which we carefully explored by torchlight. We followed this tunnel for a while until we came to another shaft which went straight down too far for the torchlight to see how deep it was. There were a couple of planks down there which we carefully tested for strength before putting them across the shaft and crawling across. From there the tunnel went around a curve before it ended with

another angled shaft. This shaft went both up and down from where we were at an angle of about 45 degrees. It had loose rubble on its base and we weren't stupid enough to follow it any further.

Back down the ladder we went to the bottom of the mine, another 50 feet down. By this time we were all used to the climbing and the initial fear had gone. Also we were at the bottom so we couldn't fall anywhere. The bottom tunnel was amazing. It went for perhaps a kilometre and it had not only trolley tracks along it but also the trolleys themselves. We took turns giving each other trolley rides along tracks that hadn't been used for 40 years. What an amazing place. We found no sign of the water that had halted mining and the tunnel was really solid.

The climb back out was not nearly as scary but it was quite a haul. Once we were out of the mine our interest turned to what was happening in the footy. We certainly had mixed loyalties that day. Tristy was a Richmond supporter, I naturally followed the Bombers and Campbell was a Magpie fan. In those days Collingwood was more hated than Carlton, so Tony and I were hoping the blues would win. Campbell was deservedly confident of a Maggies' premiership.



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We headed into Rushworth and called in at one of the cafes to buy some drinks and get an update. It was half time and Collingwood were 44 points in front. Enough said. We took our drinks and rode and walked our bikes up Growlers Hill, the highest point in Rushworth. There we ate our lunches and climbed the tower which was used in summer for spotting bushfires. It is a great view over the ironbark forests and also a great place to get a fast start to the journey home.

What we didn't know whilst we were doing all this was that Ron Barassi was giving one of the greatest half time talks of all time. He was also telling his team about a tactic which was to change the way footy was played forever.

SUB-EDITOR REQUIRED

fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too

Cna yuo raed tihs? Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can.

i cduolt blveiee taht l cluod aulaclyt yuesdhatnrd waht l was rdanieg.

The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdnrig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oedr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh and l awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!

Council Doings

Patrick Thompson

PUBLIC interest in the activities of Council should be a priority. The NBT aims to keep its readers informed on civic matters. This year in September Council elections will occur. Council is elected for a four-year term.

The NBT 97 reported that the position of Threatened Species Officer was under threat. Council has decided on maintaining the position but it will be subject to a six monthly review.

In the last year NBT has also reported on a number of development issues that are shaping the future of our fair city. We have reported that the overwhelming majority of people when surveyed are opposed to high rise development in our coastal villages and towns. Sadly – a majority of Council – has other ideas. Development proceeds a pace.

Recently, the Ulladulla & Districts Community Forum

expressed its concern and disappointment at the approval of a 5-story development at 90 South Street, Ulladulla despite community opposition and prior to the finalisation of the review of DCP 56. The forum believes this approval further, 'Undermines confidence in the DCP 56 review process and further demonstrates that the 6 storey development in Wason Street, Ulladulla has now set a precedent for high rise buildings'. It is an outcome the forum says: 'the Mayor assured the community would not occur'.

Development at Huskisson continues with the approval of the Beach Street DA with only the Greens & community groups opposing. The sale of Council's Huskisson carpark is also proceeding.

A majority of councillors also voted against councillors having to provide a written report after they have been on a rate payer funded trip to attend a conference.

The coming agenda

Here are just some items...

■ The Apology has been spoken. The binding of wounds and building of communities must follow. And we must have concerted action in the Shoalhaven to link with the Koori communities, help them bind wounds and strengthen their own culture and lore as well as find their places in the economy of the twenty first century.

■ The problem of the homeless has been highlighted. We await government ideas – there will be appointments to the "Australian Social Inclusion Board" which may deal with this and other social disadvantage.

■ There will be more Community Cabinet Meetings – it would be good if these acquire constructive meaning.

■ We must seek to feature in the review of infrastructure

planning, as a dispersed 'city' on the fringe of a large capital city. The future is not fixed by constant widening of the Princes Highway.

■ The Australia 2020 Summit will be held in Canberra on 19-20 April, dealing with 10 areas of policy concern. The Prime Minister has said that if six good ideas come from it, it will be worthwhile. Anyone can make a submission. Do it. (Link to background and submission form at our web site)

■ Ross Garnaut delivers a report to government on climate change in August (see our web site for link to the interim report). Ross is no ordinary economics professor, having cut his teeth as advisor to the PNG Government in its negotiations with Rio Tinto over Bougainville in the 1970s, shaped the Hawke Government's collaboration with China on China's core need for development

of steel industry and having been ambassador to China in a critical phase. He has been conscious of the environmental impact of China's development (from a situation of per capita steel consumption about 6% of Australia) since then. If his climate change report is not creative and constructive and supportable, it will be a surprise and a disappointment. It looks likely to be a challenge to government.

■ The climate change issue and argument about it tends to obscure the inescapable facts of diminishing energy supplies – unless and until there are sane renewable energy policies.

Links to these matters at www.newbushtelegraph.net

Be part of all this, this is a turning point in history – if we choose to make it that. Forward movement needs positive ideas, not just criticism. Be 'in community', not 'out of sorts'.

Dennis Argall