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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SOUTH TURRAMURRA ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (S.T.E.P.)

HELD 26TH. JUNE, 1980 AT ST. PHILLIPS CHURCH HALL, SOUTH TURRAMURRA.

THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN SO EVENTFUL FOR S.T.E.P. THAT I HARDLY KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN.

OUR FIRST EMERGENCY AROSE WITHIN A FEW WEEKS OF OUR NEW TERM OF OFFICE. AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS SUGGESTING THAT KU-RING-GAI DISTRICT SOCCER ASSOCIATION HAD BEEN OFFERED AN AREA OF BUSHLAND IN THE CANOON ROAD VICINITY FOR THEIR PROPOSED SOCCER OVAL. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE ADRENALIN BEGAN TO FLOW. WE ASKED OUR WARD ALDERMEN TO QUICKLY CLARIFY THE POSITION, AND WITHIN DAYS S.T.E.P. HAD A LETTER STATING THAT NO OFFER BY COUNCIL HAD BEEN MADE TO K.D.S.A. REGARDING THE USE OF BUSHLAND IN SOUTH TURRAMURRA, AND THIS WAS PUBLICLY CONFIRMED AT OUR REQUEST BY LETTERS SENT TO THE LOCAL PAPERS FROM ALDERMEN LENNON AND LEE. WE BEGAN TO BREATHE A LITTLE EASIER.

SOON AFTER S.T.E.P. WAS ACCEPTED AS A MEMBER OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL. THE PRACTICAL AND MORAL SUPPORT THE N.C.C. HAS SINCE GIVEN US HAS BEEN EXTREMELY VALUABLE.

IN AUGUST S.T.E.P. BEGAN TO SERIOUSLY EXAMINE ITS ROLE IN THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT, AND AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHERS WHO HAD ESTABLISHED SIMILAR GROUPS TO OURS, THE MESSAGE CAME THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR. WHAT WE NEEDED WAS A "PLAN OF MANAGEMENT." THIS WOULD ENABLE US TO SPEAK ABOUT OUR BUSHLAND WITH AUTHORITY, TO SHOW COUNCIL HOW SERIOUS WE WERE IN OUR AIM TO PRESERVE IT, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO ESTABLISH OUR CREDIBILITY AS A BONA FIDE CONSERVATION GROUP. HAVING AGREED TO PREPARE A PLAN, WE THEN HAD TO FIND A QUALIFIED BIOLOGIST TO DIRECT US IN OUR EFFORTS. WE DIDN'T HAVE TO LOOK VERY FAR. ROBIN BUCHANAN WHO WORKED SO HARD WITH US ON THE NETBALL COMPLEX ISSUE, WAS WILLING TO ASSIST. SINCE ROBIN HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE PREPARATION OF A PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR PENNANT HILLS PARK - THE BUSHLAND ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE LANE COVE RIVER - HER HELP SEEMED MOST APPROPRIATE. WE SET OURSELVES A DEADLINE - THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN JUNE, 1980. MANAGEMENT PLAN MEETINGS WERE HELD IN MANY PLACES, AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT. THE MOST MEMORABLE ONE, WAS I THINK, A MEETING WHICH FINISHED AT 1 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, AND WAS FOLLOWED BY A DRIVE TO MT. KU-RING-GAI IN TEMING RAIN TO SEE OUR BIOLOGIST SAFELY HOME.

WE HAVE HELD TWO VERY SUCCESSFUL GENERAL MEETINGS - THE FIRST IN OCTOBER WHICH WAS ON THE BARRIER REEF, WHEN OUR GUEST SPEAKER WAS ALAN CATFORD WHO GAVE AN INFORMATIVE TALK ACCOMPANIED BY SUPERB COLOUR SLIDES OF THE REEF.

ELEVEN S.T.E.P. MEMBERS ATTENDED THE NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL'S ANNUAL DINNER IN OCTOBER, AND HEARD AN INTERESTING TALK FROM PAUL LANDA, THE THEN MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT, NOW MINISTER FOR EDUCATION.

ON S.T.E.P.'S BEHALF I ATTENDED A SYMPOSIUM ON "WEEDS IN URBAN BUSHLAND" AT THE HOTEL BOULEVARDE ON 28TH. NOVEMBER. APPROXIMATELY 300 PEOPLE ATTENDED FOR THE FULL DAY. THOSE PRESENT HEARD REPRESENTATIVES OF LANE COVE COUNCIL EXPLAIN THE METHODS THEY USE TO REPAIR BADLY WEED INFESTED AREAS OF BUSHLAND. LANE COVE COUNCIL IS ONE OF THE MOST ENLIGHTENED MANAGERS OF URBAN BUSHLAND. MOSMAN COUNCIL IS ALSO AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY WEED INVASION AND BOTH COUNCILS EMPLOY TEAMS IN THEIR MUNICIPALITIES WHO ARE QUALIFIED IN THE BRADLEY BUSH REGENERATION METHOD. THEY HAVE RECENTLY BEEN JOINED BY NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL, AND HOPEFULLY KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL WILL SOON ADD ITS NAME TO THE LIST.

OUR RESIDENT ORNITHOLOGIST, DARIEL LARKINS, ATTRACTED A CROWD OF 55 PEOPLE TO SOUTH TURRAMURRA IN FEBRUARY. THEY CAME FROM SUBURBS BETWEEN LANE COVE AND HORNSBY TO HEAR HER SPEAK ON BIRDS AND BIRD-BANDING, AT S.T.E.P.'S GENERAL MEETING.

ALSO IN FEBRUARY, S.T.E.P. DISCOVERED THAT CONTROLLED BURNING OF THE LOCAL BUSHLAND WAS IMMINENT. BECAUSE OF THE KNOWN HARMFUL EFFECTS TO BUSHLAND OF "CONTROLLED" OR "SLOW BURNS", WE IMMEDIATELY OPOSED THE PLAN AND SUGGESTED TO COUNCIL A MORE ENLIGHTENED APPROACH TO PROVIDING FIREBREAKS FOR RESIDENTS LIVING ALONG THE BUSH VERGES. SUPPORT FOR OUR ALTERNATIVE METHOD CAME FROM DR. PETER MYERSCOUGH OF SYDNEY UNIVERSITY, ELIZABETH ELENUS OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION COUNCIL, DR. STEPHEN CLARKE OF MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, THE SOCIETY FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS AND OTHERS. RESEARCH INTO CONTROLLED BURNING AND ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF FIREBREAK CLEARANCE INVOLVED US IN TWO MONTHS OF HARD WORK. MARGARET BOOTH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING AND PRESENTING A PETITION TO COUNCIL, WHICH INDICATED THAT 90% OF RESIDENTS LIVING IN THE PROPOSED BURNING AREA IN SOUTH TURRAMURRA DID NOT WANT CONTROLLED BURNING TO GO AHEAD. BOTH WARD ALDERMEN ON THIS OCCASION SUPPORTED S.T.E.P. AND THE REWARD FOR OUR EFFORTS CAME ON THE EVENING OF 14TH. APRIL, WHEN SOUTH TURRAMURRA BUSHLAND WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE CONTROLLED BURNING PROGRAMME FOR KU-RING-GAI. S.T.E.P. MEMBERS AND AFFECTED RESIDENTS HAVE WORKED EACH FINE WEEKEND SINCE APRIL TO HAND-CLEAR FIREBREAKS. WORK IS GOING AHEAD WELL, AND WE HAVE MADE MANY NEW FRIENDS AS A RESULT.

MARCH SAW US INVOLVED IN FUND RAISING, AND OUR EFFORTS MET WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS. THE MIXED STALL RAISED APPROXIMATELY \$360. MY THANKS GO TO JANET CATFORD, MARGARET BOOTH AND YVONNE LANGSHAW WHO ALL WORKED SO HARD, AND TO THE COMMUNITY ON THE WHOLE WHO SUPPORTED US SO GENEROUSLY. A FURTHER \$150 WAS RAISED RECENTLY BY YVONNE LANGSHAW DURING A WINE-BOTTLING AFTERNOON AT HER HOME. THESE FUNDS WERE ESPECIALLY WELCOME DUE TO OUR INCREASED EXPENDITURE THIS YEAR ON MAPS, PLANS ETC. ASSOCIATED WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT.

ON 19TH. MAY A KU-RING-GAI WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP WAS FORMED - KU-RING-GAI BUSHLAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY. ITS CONVENOR, JANET FAIRLIE-CUMINGHAME, PAID S.T.E.P. A COMPLIMENT WHEN SHE WROTE AFTER THE INAUGURAL MEETING, " I FEEL MOST GRATEFUL AND INDEBTED TO YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP - FOR YOUR MORAL SUPPORT AND FOR ALL THE PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE THAT YOU GAVE. I AM SURE WE WILL BE ON THE RIGHT TRACK IF WE TAKE S.T.E.P. AND THE MOWBRAY PARK SOCIETY AS OUR MODELS. YOU HAVE ACHIEVED SO MUCH AND WITH SUCH GOODWILL."

ON A PERSONAL NOTE, I BEGAN TRAINING IN BUSH REGENERATION WITH JOAN BRADLEY FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO, AND AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT I AM NOW A TEACHER AT THE BUSH REGENERATION SCHOOL, WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY THE NATIONAL TRUST.

THE ONLY DISAPPOINTING ASPECT OF THE YEAR'S WORK WAS THE POOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS BY SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. TWELVE MEETINGS WERE HELD AND ATTENDANCES WERE AS FOLLOWS:-

H. PETERSEN (CHAIRMAN)	12	J. CATFORD (SECRETARY)	12
J. RUYTS (VICE CHAIRMAN)	11	M. BOOTH (ASS. SECRETARY)	10
A. CATFORD	10	S. LEECE-ROBERTS	3
S. CSENDERITS (TREASURER)	2	M. DARRAGH	2
J. KOHLER	1	J. GABRIELE	-
G. HESTER	-		

CLEARLY S.T.E.P.'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT HAS BEEN THE PUBLICATION OF OUR PLAN OF MANAGEMENT. TO ROBIN BUCHANAN AND TO THOSE MEMBERS WHO GAVE SO MUCH OF THEMSELVES IN THE PROCESS, I GIVE MY HEARTFELT THANKS.

  
HELEN PETERSEN  
CHAIRMAN