

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
TO THE 17TH ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING,
19TH OCTOBER, 1995.**

I am pleased to be able to report to you that STEP has again had a very active year during 1994/95.

The following is a summary of the efforts, which were undertaken during the last twelve months by the Committee, the activities in which you, the members, participated, and finally a look ahead to the year 95/96.

ACTIVITIES

The Committee was pre-occupied with the preparations for the launch of The Field Guide during the early part of the year, and with the launch itself in February and the subsequent sales efforts, but:

We managed two bushwalks, the Autumn Bushwalk on 23rd April, 1995, through Blackbutt Reserve, Gordon.

This was enjoyed by almost twice as many members and their families, as the normal turnout, and the Spring Bushwalk on 20th August, 1995, from Maxwell St., Turramurra, to Conghams Creek, along the Great North Walk and return to Maxwell St., on a very warm day, with a good turnout. We supported the Clean-up-Australia Day again, although for various reasons it was not as productive as in the past.

We set up our information display and sales stand at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Festival, and at various other public occasions to spread our message about conservation, and to promote the Field Guide.

FIELD GUIDE

The publication of John Martyn's "A Field Guide to the Bushland of the Upper Lane Cove Valley" was the major event of this past year. With the help of Ivor Beatty, of Surrey Beatty, the production went through smoothly to make the book available in time for pre-Christmas sales. The pre-launch sales drive at a preferential price worked well for members and STEP's finances and the launch by the ABC's Robyn Williams was an outstanding success.

I am happy to report that our sales to date exceed 800 copies and we have now ordered a reprint of 500 copies. The book has been acclaimed as being of the highest standard and has been selling well outside the immediate

area. The credit for its outstanding success goes to John Martyn for the pains-taking preparation of the material, his expert computer graphics skills and his dedication in nursing it through the formative stages over the last few years.

It cost John many hours, weeks, without financial reward, and STEP members have benefitted not only through the enjoyment provided by the Guide, but also through the financial benefits to STEP. We thank John for his marvellous effort.

NEWSLETTERS

Six Newsletters, starting with No. 67 in August, 1994, and finishing with No. 72 in June, 1995, were published this year, and we trust that you enjoyed reading them. We have included a variety of articles in the Newsletters to help achieve our objectives to enhance the level of awareness and information about conservation issues, as well as to provide enjoyment to our readers as a celebration of the beauty of our environment.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

STEP did not support any candidates at this election, since it was felt that the public debate had shifted considerably since 1991, towards recognition of the environment as a major issue. We did, however, send a questionnaire to all candidates to elicit their responses to issues regarded as important, and publicised the results to our members in a Newsletter to allow members to form their own conclusions about whom to entrust with their vote. We congratulate the successful candidates and trust that they will discharge their duties with care and responsibility.

COMMITTEE

The Committee has again met regularly every month to deal with the business at hand. Unfortunately, Judy Meacham was forced to resign from the Committee by pressures of other responsibilities, and I thank her for her efforts during her tenure of the Secretaryship. I would also like to thank all other Committee members for their contributions during the year. During the year the Committee invited Hugh Roberts to join it, and he has now offered himself for re-election. The Committee has operated part of this year without a Secretary by spreading the tasks of the Secretary

among several members.

There are opportunities in the Committee for people who are keen to contribute to the activities of STEP in various capacities. The Committee works in a collaborative fashion, giving plenty of scope for members to contribute in ways which suit their time and talents.

PAM MORSE BEQUEST

During this year STEP received a bequest of \$5000 from the estate of Pam Morse, a past Secretary and longtime member of STEP. This will be invested in an interest bearing deposit, the real interest of which will be used to make an annual award to promote the objectives of STEP, and which will ensure that Pam's interest in the environment will be carried into the future.

REPRESENTATION

STEP was again represented on the following permanent bodies: Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushland Management Working Party, Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden Subcommittee, The Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists, and has retained observer status on the Lane Cove Valley Total Catchment Management Committee, until such time as this body is reconstituted as was foreshadowed last October. We have also continued participation in: a committee set up to search for a solution to the problems caused by the Canon Rd. netball courts to the local residents, as well as to the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association, (*also in*) the Coalition Against Lane Cove Valley Freeways, the advisory committee for the access to the UTS campus at Lindfield, to play our part in the eventual successful resolution of those issues.

STEP is a member of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, which is a peak conservation organisation, and has continued membership of the Coalition for Urban Transport Sanity. STEP has made formal submissions to Ku-ring-gai Council regarding significant development proposals, which threaten to affect, detrimentally, the surroundings which form the basis of the locality's attraction, e.g. the Sanctuary Glen development at Roseville, Government Ministers regarding traffic and transport matters, regarding useage of the Lane Cove River, and regarding

rezoning of surplus road reserve, Council and State Government regarding the proposed Bus Depot in the Mona Vale Rd. corridor.

We have promoted our views through the press on issues of transport and development to counter the detrimental pressures often generated by uninformed comment.

ISSUES

The issues, as always, arise through pressures for development either from developers with profit motives, or from inappropriate policy adopted by Government. They were

Dual Occupancy

This was a constant concern, because it set incentives for residents or outside developers to derive individual profit from the attractive characteristics of a site, while degrading that site and its surroundings by overdevelopment and loss of tree cover etc. Since the change of Government the immediate threat has subsided, but unless Kuring-gai develops an appropriate housing strategy during this window of opportunity the pressure will reappear in due course.

Freeways and Other Traffic Issues

The road lobby and its cheersquad continues unabated to promote road development, regardless of common sense, in contradiction to good planning, and ignoring public outcry. We have therefore continued to take a part in the debate over road developments, and participated in various ways to promote public understanding and opposition to such developments.

UTS Access Road

STEP made a crucial contribution to the achievement of a win-win outcome on this project. The agreed solution for the campus access road ensures, through a **Conservation Agreement**, that the majority of the valuable bushland within the UTS property boundaries will be preserved in perpetuity, while relieving the traffic problems in the local residential streets and giving the University a second access. The consultative committee will continue to monitor the progress of this solution to its final implementation.

The Conservation Agreement is an important concept, which will find application in other situations.

Netball Courts

The matter of the Canoon Rd. Netball Courts has not yet been satisfactorily resolved, and there are ongoing discussions relating to the long term relocation. Since there are so many factors involved in reaching a solution it will take considerable time to achieve.

Mona Vale Rd. Corridor

This has been a matter of major concern to STEP, as it also is for the community at large.

The potential development of a Bus Depot would irrevocably change the nature of this corridor, because of its own impact on the traffic and on the amenity of the area, and because of the inevitable consequential pressures for other developments.

Since the bushland in the corridor adjoining the road forms the last remaining link between the bushland of Garigal National Park, on the Sydney Harbour catchment side, and Kuring-gai National Park, on the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment side, it has very special significance for the future of both those Parks.

Consequently STEP has strongly supported the efforts of those opposing the proposed development, and will continue to do so, as Council prepares to defend its refusal of the Development Application in court.

Local Government

Development Control Plan
During the past year DCP6, the residential development control plan, has given rise to considerable debate, with some effect on the recent Council elections. STEP has in the past actively participated in the Dual Occupancy debate, and has also entered the discussions about DCP6, since it is an important control mechanism to enable Council to ensure reasonable preservation of the built environment.

FINANCES

STEP's financial position has further strengthened due to the successful publication of the "Field Guide", and contrary to my report last year regarding the financing of the publication, the pre-launch sales went so well that we were able to meet the costs without taking recourse to external bridging finance.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

The challenges, which will confront us in the coming year will fall into

three categories, viz. transport issues, Mona Vale Rd. and residential development control. We see these as follows:

Transport Issues

The effects of the M2 on the adjacent road system is now being revealed in the West Chatswood and Lane Cove areas, with the RTA releasing selective "studies" to cause maximum confusion and division among the affected community. The pattern is well known, and we have been predicting it over the last few years. It will inevitably lead to the next step in road development, with all its detrimental consequences.

It demonstrates to us that nothing has really changed, in spite of pre-election promises by the new Government, and the RTA carries on being the de-facto planning Authority, supported by the new Minister.

The Chatswood proposals, if they are allowed to proceed, will profoundly affect the environment generally in that area, as well as the amenity of the Lane Cove National Park, which is an irreplaceable natural asset.

The threat of a link between the F3 Freeway at Wahroonga and the M2 Tollway at North Ryde, as the B3 or whatever form, is clearly in the background and must be high on the agenda of the M2 consortium to boost its takings at the toll gates.

The problems of heavy traffic on the Pacific Highway's northern section will continue to cause residents and commercial interests to agitate for solutions. Since the problems are caused by overreliance on road transport, the solution will not be found in further road development.

However, the kneejerk reaction always seems to be to call for road works, and the RTA is ever ready to bring us more of the same.

The challenge for STEP is to continue to provide information so that the public can appreciate the detrimental effect of further road development on our local and metropolitan environment, and to support efforts to change the planning culture.

Mona Vale Rd. Corridor

The Development Application for the Bus Depot has now been brought before the Land and Environment Court, where Council is defending its refusal of the DA. STEP will be able to play a part in this with its previously

lodged submission opposing the development, and if necessary supporting this submission in court, as representative of its membership in particular and of the community in general.

STEP regards this as the most significant issue confronting the Ku-ring-gai community at this moment, and the community is rightly concerned about the potential effects
Residential Development Control

Council is in the process of setting up an advisory committee, the Ku-ring-gai Residents Environment Advisory Committee (KREAC), to

assist in the formulation of a Development Control Plan, which will act as a guide to residential development in keeping with the community's view of the character of Ku-ring-gai. STEP has requested a place for its representative on that committee, so that the views of our membership can be reflected in its deliberations.

The challenge is to achieve a DCP, which is just prescriptive enough to result in acceptable outcomes, without being so restrictive as to stifle creativity and produce repetitious stereotype outcomes.

In all these issues we see our role as

being proactive and forward looking and reactive only as necessary . Whereas this past year we have concentrated heavily on the publication of the Field Guide, we are determined to ensure that in the coming year our members will also be offered the enjoyment of our environment through bushwalks and through informative speakers' evenings etc.

I thank you for your support in the past year, and look forward to sharing another year with you in meeting our challenges and in our pleasurable activities.

Bruno Krockenberger

SENDER

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AGM Entertainment

The Annual General Meeting was followed by a short talk and a display of her paintings by Yvonne Langshaw, giving people a chance to view the paintings, while John Martyn set up the screen and projector for his talk about the history of the Lane Cove Valley and adjacent areas in geological terms. His bar chart of prehistory served to illustrate the relatively insignificant time span during which *Homo sapiens sp.* has been around in comparison with the eons during which the geological structures were formed, the latter in turn influencing the evolution of the flora and fauna of the region.

He followed this up with some slides of magnificent wildflowers from the West.

Yvonne's paintings were in a variety of different styles and materials, and showed her love for the Australian environment, capturing the mood and beauty of North, West and Interior scenery, with some evocative local post-bushfire themes in a more abstract manner.

John managed to present information to us in terms which a layman could understand, and his enthusiasm for nature in all its manifestations was infectious. Many thanks to Yvonne and John. Unfortunately only about twenty

people attended the meeting and were able to enjoy the paintings and talks, which is a pity.

AUDITED ACCOUNTS

At the AGM an unaudited statement of income and expenditure and balance sheet were presented. The audit has now been completed, giving us a clean bill of health (financial of course).

The auditor required the inventory and tax treatment to be changed, adding \$3161 to the surplus before tax, adding \$306 to the tax liability, and resulting in an increase in accumulated surplus of \$2855.

The audited accounts are available for inspection by any member by contacting the Treasurer, 449 1985.