

## President's Report October 2002

It is with pleasure that I present the President's Report for the year to October 2002. It has again been a busy and successful year for the committee and members. A major event for STEP has been the employment of a Project Officer, through the NCC. Since February, Kate Read has been employed to work on STEP's campaign on the proposed F3/M2 link road. She has been very active in researching and producing STEP's Position Paper (which was distributed in July), developing a web page, attending meetings and lobbying, writing press releases and designing and printing a brochure that will be distributed next month. STEP could not have been nearly as effective on this issue without Kate, although we still have a long way to go, with road options due to be released in the next month or so before the final consultant's report by the end of the year. Kate has also been lobbying on behalf of STEP for the rezoning of the B2/B3 corridor – the development of a rezoning application of the abandoned freeway corridor by Planning NSW has been moving slower than snail's pace for the past 3 years. STEP regards the rezoning as a matter of urgency.

STEP's major stormwater mitigation project at Fox Valley, funded by EPA's Stormwater Trust, has been largely completed. A very successful Open Day was held on May 26<sup>th</sup> and only some minor water quality testing remains to be done, along with continuing bush regeneration by the Fox Valley Bushcare group. This has been a very successful partnership with Lane Cove National Park.

We have reprinted John Martyn's Field Guide to the Lane Cove Valley and continue to sell steady numbers of both the Field Guide and Map of the Walking Tracks of the Lane Cove Valley. Work is continuing apace by a small band of volunteers under the guidance of John Martyn to map the walking tracks of Middle Harbour. This is an ambitious project which will result in the production of two maps, stretching from Garigal National Park in the north to the bushland reserves of the northern side of Sydney Harbour. At the moment we expect the maps to be ready for sale by Christmas 2003.

We made a submission to the NSW Joint Select Committee on Bushfires. STEP has also continued to support environmental education through the Pam Morse Bequest Fund. This year we awarded grants to Turramurra North and Pymble Public Schools to support their environmental initiatives – planting native trees and establishing a worm farm. We are also again supporting the Intel Young Scientist Awards, organised by the Science Teachers' Association of New South Wales, through the provision of prize money for the best environmental project.

### Activities

This year's activities program has been very successful. As usual, STEP ran a Clean-Up Australia site in March. We have hosted well-attended talks by Dr Damian Gore (Department of Physical Geography, Macquarie University) on the health and sustainability of the Lane Cove River, by Nicola Mason (NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service) on the fox control program in Sydney's urban bushland, and tonight by Dr Richard Major (Australian Museum) on birds in our backyards. We also ran three

bushwalks (STEP Track in April, Cowan track in August and Wild Rivers walk in September) which were very popular. Finally, we had displays at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Festival, Turramurra Food & Wine Fair and Turramurra Library.

#### Newsletters

We published five newsletters (nos 111-115) as well as a monthly contribution in the Ku-ring-gai Observer, thanks to Bruno Krockenberger who continues to do a fantastic job as our newsletter editor and KO writer.

#### Committee

The committee met monthly to deal with the business at hand. We are very sorry that Hugh Roberts has decided to stand down as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Hugh has done a marvelous job for six years. We have been very confident that our accounts and records have been exceptionally well looked after during this time. However we are pleased to welcome Therese Carew to the committee – she has very kindly offered to take over the Treasurer's position. I would like to thank all committee members of 2001/2002 for their hard work and enthusiasm, particularly Jenny Schwarz for Publicity, Neryle Sheldon for Secretarial work and Helen Wortham for web page maintenance. Thanks also to John Burke and Bruno Krockenberger who have been very active on our Transport sub-committee. We are always looking for new committee members so please think whether you have some spare time that you would like to offer to help STEP.

#### Representation

STEP has been represented on Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushland Conservation Advisory Committee (now called the Natural Areas Advisory Committee). We have also remained as a member of the Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists, although we have not been able to attend every meeting.

#### Finances

STEP's financial position is detailed in the Treasurer's Report. Sales of the map and field guide have declined but still contribute substantially to STEP's finances. Costs of providing services to members (such as the Newsletter and web page) as well as insurance costs have risen so that Membership Fees no longer cover these costs. Consequently we will be putting forward a resolution to the members at this AGM for a fee rise. We believe that membership fees still remain modest and offer good value for money.

#### The coming year

The major issues for STEP in the coming year are likely to be the F3/M2 link road proposal – this has important implications for traffic and quality of life for Ku-ring-gai residents, and the rezoning of the B2/B3 corridor. We will continue to be active in bushland management issues and environmental education and will strive to be effective advocates for Ku-ring-gai's environment.