



# STEP INC.

Community Based Environmental Conservation

## NEWSLETTER

No 49, February 1991

### HERITAGE BIRDWALK Sunday April 14, 3pm

April 7th to 14th is Heritage Week and we have arranged a bushwalk to be led by noted ornithologist Dariel Larkins. It will start at the Scout Hall, Warrigal Rd Turramurra (near the railway bridge) and will take about 2 hours. See you there.

### THE STORM

The storm in January has brought many reactions from the community. Some have advocated the wholesale removal of tall trees and the dismantling of the tree preservation order (TPO). There is no doubt that the storm was very traumatic for those affected but this is no reason to change the face of Ku-ring-gai in such a way that its scenic attraction & property values will decline. Sensible modifications to the TPO will allow increased safety but total protection from natural disasters is impossible.

Turpentines and redgums did seem to survive total uprooting better than other trees.

### Bushland Important

In any event, this experience reinforces the importance of our urban bushland where there will be no question of

replacing bluegums with roses. While the bush may look devastated in places, the storm was of course a minor event in the context of the millions of years over which the bush has been evolving. The storm is part of the natural scheme of things and is dwarfed into insignificance by the effect of fertilisers and other pollutants which we pour into our bushland every day.

### Cleaning up the bush?

It is perhaps worth emphasising that, apart from the clearing of fire trails and hazard reduction near homes, the bush does not need any "cleaning up". When removing fallen trees near homes remember that bushfire hazard comes from excessive litter and branches under about 10 mm diameter. There should be no wholesale removal of big trees for firewood. They belong where they have fallen.

### THE F-2 FREEWAY

We reported to you last October on the outcome of the Woodward inquiry which recommended that the freeway not proceed. The RTA has engaged consultants Maunsell Pty Ltd to prepare an EIS into transport options for the area from Beecroft to North Ryde.

### Questionnaire

A copy of Maunsell's newsletter and questionnaire is enclosed. We encourage you to fill it in and return it to the address shown. Of course they could more easily establish the community's view by reading the extensive files of the Woodward Inquiry. Perhaps they are looking for a different answer!

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this, committee members Bruno Krockenburger (4491985) or John Burke (4873680) would be happy to assist. Please consider your responses carefully. The issues (other than the obvious ones of bushland destruction, noise etc.) which we think are basic to the whole problem include;

\* The need for the whole of the metropolitan area to be subject to a total transport plan. The RTA is not the body to do this.

\* The need to explain "the Los Angeles Effect" whereby urban freeways increase rather than decrease traffic congestion.

\* The need for a population plan and a design for transport facilities for the proposed maximum population rather than

proceeding ad-hoc.

In other words we see the key issue as being the sort of Sydney which we shall have in 25, 50 and 100 years rather than whether the people at Cherrybrook will be able to get to town faster next year.

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### KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL

Elections for another four year term of Council are to be held in September. It is clearly within STEP's constitution to become involved politically and we shall support those candidates whose position is the nearest to ours on environmental matters. Many of the existing aldermen vote consistently in favour of development because they see it as "progress" and therefore desirable. Very few have a vision of what Ku-ring-gai will look like in 50 years and constantly make short term decisions which respond to the pressures of the day rather than the best interests of future generations.

We shall try to inform you on the performance of the existing aldermen and on the policies of any other candidates as the year progresses.

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### COUNCIL'S SECRETS

STEP has a vital interest in the way that our council functions. Nearly every week there are matters before Council dealing with environmental issues. Council has increasingly been closing its doors to the press and public on matters (such as discussion of the tree

preservation policy) which have no vestige of confidentiality about them.

We believe that all decisions affecting the environment must be made in open council.

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### MONA VALE ROAD

Keen readers of this newsletter will remember that we wrote about the proposals to "develop" Mona Vale Road from St Ives to Terry Hills with initial projects including a crematorium, a bus depot and a commercial vegetation recycling centre.

In November the Department of Lands produced a Draft Land Assessment for public comment and simultaneously consultants, Wellings Smith and Byrnes, acting for the crematorium and bus company interests, produced a "Master Plan for the Mona Vale Road Corridor". We were not so surprised to find that these studies both thought that development was a great idea!

Both thought preserving bushland was OK so long as it didn't get in the way of development and both recommended measures which will ensure the degradation of the remaining corridor bushland. This degradation will of course enable future developers to point to it as justifying more development. Eventually, by this process, the whole Mona Vale Road bushland corridor will be replaced by commercial buildings and look like Pennant Hills Rd or the Pacific Highway. Is this what we want?

### Comment difficult

Although the Department of Lands had previously assured in writing that three months would be allowed for comment the period was restricted to one month, the busy period just before Christmas. We regard this as a blatant attempt by the State Government to restrict considered public comment. Comment was made more difficult by the Master Plan being available only upon payment of \$100 at the city offices of the consultants. The chances of the community generally having a chance to comment were effectively nil.

STEP made submissions on both documents. Any member wishing a copy of these or wishing to discuss any aspect please call John Burke on 487-3680.

If you are unhappy with the way the community is being treated on this issue why not let someone know. Nick Greiner, Tim Moore or your ward aldermen would be a good start. (Tim Moore is probably sympathetic but needs some support).

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### ARTERIAL ROAD

Some years ago Ku-ring-gai Council embarked upon the widening of Secondary Road 2043 from St Ives to Roseville, which is generally known as the Arterial Road, from two lanes to four. While the benefits of this massive expenditure are open to question (turn lanes at intersections etc would probably have given the same improvement in traffic flow) we have been particularly concerned about

the effect of the works on the bushland sections around Rocky Creek at Gordon and Gordon Creek at Lindfield. Council's Bushland Management Working Party, on which STEP is represented, took this matter up and as a consequence has been assured that the bushland verges, batters etc. will be fully restored to RTA standards. Council has also authorised a traffic study to be done by Lyle Marshall and Associates to determine the need for the isolation and alienation of over a hectare of bushland north of Koola Avenue.

#### Houses Would be Safe

The existing design calls for a dangerous corner to be corrected by cutting a new road through bushland. We believe that there are other ways of correcting the curve - ways which would be employed without question if the road was lined with expensive houses rather than bushland.

We shall report on the outcome in a future newsletter.

#### STEP ON NCC

STEP member Caron Morrison has been elected to the executive of the Nature Conservation Council. The NCC is the peak body for groups such as STEP and has considerable influence. Caron's main interests are in the area of transport and the urban environment.

#### THANK YOU ROBIN

Mr Robin Grimwade was appointed Manager of the

Parks and Landscapes Division of Ku-ring-gai Council in 1986 and resigned late last year to take up an appointment as Director of Centennial and Moore Parks. Robin has made a tremendous contribution to the management of Ku-ring-gai's open space and of bushland in particular. We wish him well.

#### KU-RING-GAI COLLEGE

Once again the question of putting a road through bushland to Lady Game Drive from the College (now part of the UTS Campus) has been advocated. The road would pass through land owned by the Lane Cove SRA and by Ku-ring-gai Council. So far we understand that neither has given their permission for the DA which the College has submitted to Council.

This road will damage the untouched catchment of College Creek, bring weed invasion and of course will restrict wildlife movement across it. The College has been sited in a position where access by public transport is difficult. This was obviously a mistake for which the bush is now being asked to pay. STEP believes that other options such as providing adequate public transport and restricting further development at the site in favour of better located sites should be implemented before yet another piece of urban bushland is destroyed.

If you agree, why not let the College, Council and Tim Moore (Minister with responsibility for the SRA)

know about it.

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#### \$30,000 FOR COUNCIL

A year ago STEP participated in the formation of the Urban Runoff Committee under the chairmanship of Elaine Malicki, secretary of the Ku-ring-gai Ratepayers Association. Also members are KUBES and the Union Of Lane Cove Valley Conservation Societies. One of its activities was to submit an application to the Water Board for funding trial catchment protection drainage. The purpose of this is to limit the ingress of nutrients and excess moisture into bushland.

We were successful in that \$30,000 has been awarded for works at Quarry Creek, West Pymble. The money has gone directly to Council. We must particularly thank Elaine and STEP member Ralph Pridmore who put an enormous amount of work into the submission.

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This newsletter was written by John Burke.

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