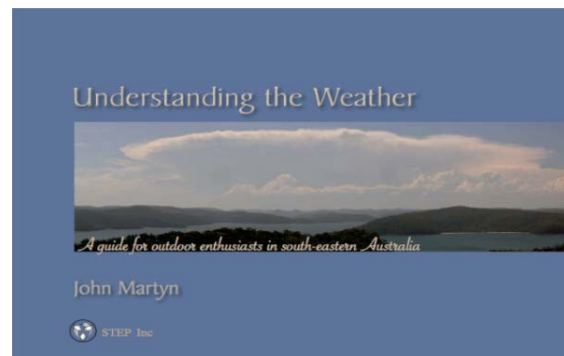




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The purpose of the book is to help you, with the use of photos of spectacular, beautiful and portentous skiescapes, to understand and identify the weather phenomena that may have the power to enhance, undermine or totally derail your planned walk, camping trip or short outing.

At this book launch, John will describe and illustrate highlights from his book.



## DIARY DATES

### 12 May — Walk Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden

Date: Sunday 12 May  
 Time: 1.30 pm start, 3 h duration  
 Place: west end of Kitchener Street, St Ives  
 Grade: medium, total elevation change 160 m  
 RSVP: Andrew Little (9924 7212 after 7.30 pm, aalittle@optusnet.com.au, bookings essential)

A delightful short-loop walk along Ku-ring-gai and Tree Fern Gully Creeks within Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. The noise of suburbia is lost as we pass through tall shady forest and a wide range of vegetation types that characterise the transition from ridge to gully.

### 25 June — Launch of Weather Book

Date: 25 June (NOTE DATE CHANGE)  
 Time: 7.30 pm  
 Place: St Andrews Church Hall, cnr Chisholm Street and Vernon Street, Turramurra

John Martyn has written another fascinating book, *Understanding the Weather: A Guide for Outdoor Enthusiasts in South-eastern Australia*.

**Beat the rush and order your copy now by completing the order form on p11**

### 30 June — Bush Regeneration, Dalrymple Hay Forest

Date: 30 June  
 Time: 9.30 am to 1 pm (registration starts from 9 am)  
 Place: Blue Gum High Forest around Sydney Water reservoir next to 102 Rosedale Road, St Ives  
 Bring: Tools and gloves provided but please bring your own if you have them plus a hat, sunscreen and water  
 RSVP: 8448 0404 or 0419 753 806

This magnificent area of endangered Blue Gum High Forest is being invaded by weeds and needs help. Join Sydney Water, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Ku-ring-gai Council and the Blue Gum High Forest Group for a few hours of work followed by a BBQ lunch.

You don't need any previous experience, we have jobs for everyone including cutting and painting woody weeds (e.g. privet and lantana), hand weeding grasses and groundcovers, asparagus fern, spider plant, vines (honeysuckle, morning glory) and more!

Experienced staff and volunteers will be on site to help with your questions and demonstrate how to knock out these nasties!

## HABITAT STEPPING STONES PROJECT

ARIES is a research, consultancy and education centre at Macquarie University that supports change for sustainable development within government, business and the community.

In 2013 ARIES won a competitive grant from the NSW Environmental Trust to deliver a project called Habitat Stepping Stones, which aims to create an engaging educational tool for Ku-ring-gai Council, including an online map, which shows individual properties and existing wildlife corridors.

Online information will include how property owners can add habitat features to create effective 'habitat stepping stones' between the corridors. Clicking an online pledge to include such habitat will result in the property being highlighted on the map and provided with a habitat stepping stone sign for the property's frontage.

Extensive promotion including social networking initiatives will further increase community awareness and promote long-term behaviour change around urban wildlife habitat.

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## BEROWRA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK — NEW PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

The process of revision of the Plan of Management for the Berowra Valley National Park has commenced. In the first stage NPWS would like to obtain information about the public's views of the park and so they are conducting an online survey which will remain open until 12 May.

The survey aims to find out the community's priorities for the environmental protection of the park and potential recreational usage.

The survey, which also asks specific questions about proposals for the development of Stringbark Ridge as a sporting field and mountain biking facilities, may be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/berowravalle2013>.

There have been several articles expressing our concerns about these proposals in previous editions of *STEP Matters* (in particular Issue 165, June 2012). Please complete the survey to make your views felt.

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## FUNDING FOR EDO NSW

It is a relief to hear that the Environmental Defenders Office, now called EDO NSW, can continue to operate, albeit with reduced funding. Government statements had signaled that the EDO could be at risk of closure.

The EDO is a not-for-profit community legal centre financed from a share of interest earnings on the Public Purpose Fund of the Law Society of NSW plus donations.

The EDO needs certainty in funding in order to continue its regular program of providing the NSW community with accessible, expert, public-interest legal advice on planning and environmental management. This work is an absolutely vital service for the public of NSW at a time when major mining and infrastructure developments are occurring as well as the review of major planning and environment legislation.

Funding has been confirmed to the end of the 2013–14 financial year but with a cut of 27%.

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## CHECK OUT STEP ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!



<https://www.facebook.com/STEP.Inc.Sydney>

Trish Lynch kindly volunteered to set up and manage our Facebook page — and she's been doing a great job. Visit us, 'like' us, post messages and check out some of John Martyn's terrific photographs.



[@STEPSydney](https://twitter.com/STEPSydney)

We've also set up a Twitter account, so follow us and join in our Twitter conversation. John Burke and Helen Wortham have been busy making pithy comments about current developments and events relating to STEP and the environment.

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## KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL REZONING OF COMMUNITY LAND

Ku-ring-gai Council has been seeking to sell three parcels of land previously classified as community land. The funds would be used to help finance the West Pymble swimming pool upgrade. The three sites are 21 Calga Street and 90 Babbage Road, Roseville Chase and 4 Binalong Street, West Pymble.

STEP made a submission opposing the rezoning of the Babbage Road and Binalong Street sites because of the damage to the ecological values that is likely to occur with residential development and private ownership of the land.

A public hearing was held on 11 April. The chairperson heard passionate statements from some 25 concerned residents, all opposing the rezonings. We have to wait until later this year to hear the final decision.

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## **DRAFT KU-RING-GAI LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PLAN 2013**

Ku-ring-gai Council is seeking comment from the community on the Planning Proposal for the Draft Ku-ring-gai Local Environmental Plan 2013 (KLEP2013).

This new plan maps the land uses, zones, objectives and provisions for Ku-ring-gai for all areas outside the six local centres (which are covered by the recently completed Local Centres LEP 2012). Submissions close at 5 pm on Monday 6 May.

The planning documents and supporting material may be downloaded from [www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/I\\_want\\_to/Ask\\_discuss\\_or\\_comment/Have\\_my\\_say\\_public\\_exhibitions/Draft\\_Ku-ring-gai\\_Local\\_Environmental\\_Plan\\_2013](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/I_want_to/Ask_discuss_or_comment/Have_my_say_public_exhibitions/Draft_Ku-ring-gai_Local_Environmental_Plan_2013).

The KLEP documentation will be followed by the Development Control Plan (DCP). The draft DCP will provide more detailed guidance for the siting, design and assessment of new development.

The Planning Proposal is based on a standard state government document with alterations made to suit the particular circumstances of Ku-ring-gai. The zoning descriptions are all changing.

**Open space** is classified as:

- RE1 — public recreation;
- RE2 — recreation private land, e.g. school land;
- E1 — national parks and reserves; or
- E2 — environmental conservation land outside national parks.

**Residential land** is classified as:

- R2 — low density;
- R3 — medium density;
- R4 — high density;
- R5 — large lot residential;
- E3 — low density but adjoining E1 or E2 land and with ecological attributes requiring environmental management and bushfire protection measures; or
- E4 — residential development in areas with special environmental values.

Ku-ring-gai Council has provided further detail on the intentions for the application of the E3 zone. It applies to sites with bushfire-prone vegetation located within high bushfire risk evacuation zones such as along Bobbin Head Road, North Turrumurra, north St Ives and areas near the Comenarra Parkway. The majority of these areas have existing residential development. Land use that is incompatible with bushfire risk, such as child care centres and seniors living, are prohibited.

These areas are also to be managed in ways that will protect and restore the special ecological, scientific, cultural and aesthetic values. It is pleasing to see that the beautiful bushland qualities of these areas that are a special feature of the Ku-ring-gai environment are to be preserved.

### **Plans for the St Ives Showground and Wildflower Garden Areas**

There is one area that is cause for concern — St Ives Showground, the Wildflower Garden and the land in between that currently is used as Council's Community Nursery. These areas are all zoned as RE1. Many parts of these areas contain special environmental qualities and were previously defined as the equivalent of E2.

Areas of particular importance are:

- The wildlife corridor linking Garigal and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Parks. If large areas near the nursery are converted to sporting fields this linkage will be lost.
- Vegetation areas identified as Duffy's Forest Ecological Community (an endangered ecological community that is protected under state legislation) near the Wildflower Garden entrance and near the Showground. Some of these areas are degraded but should be regenerated with proper management.
- The gently sloping drainage areas north-west of the nursery provide important water filtration services for runoff from Mona Vale Road and ensure high water quality to Tree Fern Gully Creek, a pristine riparian area leading to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

The RE1 zoning includes objectives covering recreational uses but also aims 'to protect, manage and restore areas of high ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values'. However we will be asking Ku-ring-gai Council to release the Plan of Management for the area to confirm that adequate measures will be in place to ensure the preservation of these areas.

STEP is also concerned about the future of the Community Nursery which plays a vital role in providing stock for bush regeneration programs. The nursery has been without a manager for some time and the level of stock has been run down. If the area is to be taken over with sporting fields the nursery will need to be relocated. This would require significant expenditure. Bushcarers don't want to lose this valuable resource.

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## NSW GOVERNMENT NEWS

*NSW Government plans are being released thick and fast. First there was the draft Metropolitan Strategy and now, five months after they were first promised, the White Paper on the new planning system and the draft Planning Exposure Bill were released on 17 April.*

*You are invited to comment on both reports. The deadline for the Metropolitan Strategy is 31 May and for the White Paper is 28 June.*

*The documents describing these plans are available at:*

- <http://strategies.planning.nsw.gov.au/MetropolitanStrategyforSydney.aspx>
- <http://engage.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/newplanningssystem>

### Draft Metropolitan Strategy

It is expected that by 2031 Sydney will have 1.3 million more people, 545 000 more dwellings and 625 000 more jobs. The Metropolitan Strategy describes the NSW Government's plan defining the regions of Sydney where the additions will be made in infrastructure, housing and employment to accommodate this growth. It provides only an overview of the types of development. The development in the northern Sydney region will be centred around North Ryde, Epping and Macquarie Park.

### New Planning System

It is still early days in developing an understanding of the new planning system just released by the NSW Government. The basic principle of the system that has been the cause of most concern is that community consultation will occur only at the early strategic stage of planning. Once the plan for an area has been finalised the community will not be able to comment or object to a local development that complies with the new plan.

It is very difficult to get communities to engage in high level decision making. It is not until they see the type of development that will happen in their neighbourhood that they can fully understand its implications.

Two community organisations STEP is affiliated with, the Better Planning Network and the Nature Conservation Council are currently studying the White Paper closely and will be releasing commentary. Further details will become available on [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au) and <http://betterplanningnetwork.good.do>.

Local community groups have also asked local councils to organise local forums that will explain how the new system will operate so people can be well informed and consider

whether to make a submission on the legislation. We will email STEP members with details of any local forum.

We are disappointed that the period available for understanding the proposals and making submissions is only about 2½ months. Community groups have been requesting 6 months.

### Key Aspects of the Reforms

The Better Planning Network has so far provided an overview of the major changes in the planning system. In brief these are:

- Changing the planning culture by preparing the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and other planning practitioners for the change in focus to strategic planning and community participation.
- Facilitate community participation by developing a plan describing how the community will be given adequate information and be actively engaged at all levels of plan making including regional and sub-regional plans that will set where growth and infrastructure will occur.
- Strategic planning will be a four levels starting at the regional level covering housing, employment, environment and infrastructure and then addressing sub-regional plans for implementation of the regional plans, followed by local plans with detail similar to the current local government area plans. The fourth level will be enterprise zones with minimal controls apart from environmental requirements.
- There will five types of development assessment. The intention is that 80% of developments will not provide for community submissions, only advice given to neighbours.
- Measures to speed up the provision of new infrastructure.

A key concern is that there is no mention of climate change in the document. There is no explanation of how the environment will be protected at the strategic level or even a budget or timeframe to conduct the sophisticated mapping required for this protection. There is no explanation of how the 80% of development applications that have to be approved in 25 days will consider impacts on threatened species and ecological communities.

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## RECREATIONAL HUNTING IN NATIONAL PARKS

The controversy over the NSW Government's legislation allowing amateur hunting in 77 national parks, nature reserves and state conservation areas just won't go away. Here is an update on the latest developments.

The cartoons are from The Sydney Morning Herald



More adverse news has emerged over the past two months over the program described by the NSW Government as the Supplementary Pest Control Program. As a result the implementation of the program has been postponed until at least June. The delay is caused by the need to carry out a thorough risk assessment and to do a governance review of the Game Council.

The Game Council is the state body with responsibility for issuing hunting licences, hunter education and hunting administration. The Game Council's role as the guardian of ethical hunting has been damaged after a senior manager and a long-time volunteer were charged with a total of 17 offences relating to illegal hunting and trespassing on private land. In response the NSW Government is reviewing the management of the Game Council.

### Risk Control Measures

Issue 168 of *STEP Matters* (October 2012) described some of the risks of hunting in national parks identified in the review carried out by the Office of Environment and Heritage. Some details have been released of the administration measures being developed designed to control these risks.

The parks where hunting is permitted will be zoned A, B or C:

- Zone A will apply to high visitation areas. Hunting will only occur when initiated and will be directly supervised by NPWS staff.
- Zone B applies to sensitive environmental or Aboriginal cultural heritage sites. Close supervision of operations and high competency standards of shooters will apply.

- Zone C applies to remaining areas that will be more remote and have lower visitor use. Note that we understand this applies to areas such as Barrington Tops and the Watagans.

Licensed shooters will obtain permission to hunt in defined areas of a park through the Game Council online booking system as applies currently to shooting in state forests. We understand that only 48 h notice is needed.

General controls that have been announced include:

- no shooting at night;
- no target practice;
- no use of dogs
- no shooting from or across public access roads or trails, or from vehicles.

Insurance companies have noted the risk assessment made by the Office of Environment and Heritage. As reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the insurance broker to the states 55 biggest bushwalking clubs confirmed that public and private liability costs would inevitably rise as a result of the added risk — confirmed by the NSW Government's own risk assessment. The broker, Marsh, said insurance companies would think twice about offering cover or 'load the premium' for walkers.

### Cost of Administration

The NSW Government announced a new five year \$19.1 million funding package to ensure that the hunting program is properly resourced.

In a press release the Environment Minister, Robyn Parker said the money was required to bolster strict safety measures. The money will include funding for 14 new regional NPWS co-ordinators, safety and regulatory signs, staff training and participant education programs. She also said:

The package will also fund other compliance and education staff positions and includes additional resources for monitoring and review to ensure the program has a positive impact on feral animal populations in our protected areas.

One wonders how many professional pest control programs could be completed with this \$19 million.

### Research on the Effectiveness of Amateur Hunting

The Invasive Species Council has carried out extensive research on the efficacy of hunting as a conservation measure. A critique by Dr Carol Booth, ISC Policy Officer published in 2009 concluded that:

The Invasive Species Council agrees that feral animal control is very important, but concludes that there is no evidence to support the claims that recreational hunting is an effective or low cost option. 'Outsourcing' control of feral animals to ineffective recreational hunters will see populations increase, particularly if governments use it as an excuse to not fund professional control efforts. There is also the very serious risk that governments are unwittingly creating incentives for maverick hunters to move feral animals into new areas and worsen feral animal problems.



### Public Opinion

A Fairfax Media/Nielsen poll shows that 60% of voters oppose the program, with 38% in favour. In Sydney, 68% are opposed and 30% are in favour but, in the rest of NSW, 52% support the plan compared with 46% against.

STEP is a member of a group of organisations led by the National Parks Association that is coordinating efforts to see this legislation repealed. Other members are WIRES, the Public Service Association (union that covers park rangers) and Wildwalks.

For more information: <http://nohunting.com.au>.

### Invasive Species Council (ISC)

ISC campaigns for better laws and policies to protect the Australian environment from weeds, feral animals and exotic pathogens.

ISC was formed in 2002 and is the first environment group in the world to focus solely on invasive species.

ISC's website, [www.invasives.org.au](http://www.invasives.org.au) has many interesting reports.

### PROTECTED PEST: DEER IN AUSTRALIA

*This article has been reproduced with permission from The Conservation (12 February 2013). The author is Rohan Bilney PhD Graduate, School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University*



Deer are arguably the most charismatic of Australia's invasive species. Long considered a welcome addition to the Australian environment, primarily as a highly valued hunting resource, deer populations have flourished under legislation providing for their protection. However, perceptions are changing, and deer are now recognised as among Australia's greatest pest threats.

Like rabbits and foxes, all six deer species with recognised wild populations (Fallow, Red, Sambar, Rusa, Hog, Chital) were released into Australia for aesthetic and recreational hunting purposes during the 19th century. In recent decades their populations and distributions have increased dramatically, in some cases due to natural population expansion, and in others through human agency.

Many individuals were released or escaped into the wild following the commercial rise and collapse of deer farms between the 1970s and 1990s. This period also coincided with an increase in hunters deliberately and illegally releasing them into 'deer free' areas (especially Fallow, Red, Chital). Together, these activities are considered responsible for over 90% of current deer populations in Australia.

Feral populations are now scattered throughout all states and territories, particularly in south-eastern Australia, where there are few areas unoccupied by deer. Bioclimatic modelling suggests that all deer species currently occupy a fraction of their potential distribution in Australia and have great capacity to expand, especially into northern Australia.

Deer are among the least studied mammal species in Australia and our understanding of their ecology in the Australian environment is in

its infancy (only two papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals during the 20th century).

Several more recent studies have been conducted, including the first investigations of the ecological impacts of deer. Evidence is revealing that some native plant species and ecological communities are being seriously damaged, primarily by browsing/grazing and antler rubbing. In the worst cases deer are altering the structure and composition of vegetation communities and disrupting ecological processes (especially in rainforest).

Additional impacts of deer include:

- facilitating access for introduced predators by creating paths in dense vegetation;
- maintaining elevated populations of wild dogs (which feed on carcasses dumped by hunters);
- competing with native herbivores;
- causing erosion, which affects water quality;
- trampling sensitive areas (such as alpine bogs, mossbeds, wetlands);
- spreading weeds;
- hindering revegetation efforts; and
- potentially spreading pathogens affecting agriculture (such as foot and mouth disease) and human health (including Leptospirosis and Cryptosporidium).

Early evidence suggests that deer are causing serious damage to native plant species and ecological communities.

Deer also consume and damage agricultural and horticultural crops, consume stock feed (silage/hay), compete with livestock, damage fences and are known to kill and injure livestock (directly — stags with their antlers, and indirectly — by spooking).

Farmers are frustrated by deer, especially when control efforts are limited and illegal hunting is rampant (livestock shot and spooked at night, fences cut, trespassing). Some farmers are shooting up to 100 deer per year. Deer are increasingly a nuisance in urban areas, damaging gardens and causing road accidents.



Very little is being done to manage the abundance of deer and their environmental impacts. The main management option used, albeit rarely and patchily, is targeted shooting. Recreational hunting does not provide population regulation and only marginally reduces the rate of population increase. This is despite an estimated legal harvest of 41 000 deer — including 34,000 Sambar — in Victoria in 2011.

Another option is deer exclusion fencing, which has been erected around some populations of threatened plant species.

However effective control measures don't exist on the scale warranted (especially in forests), which is concerning when ecological and agricultural impacts of deer continue to increase.

Despite the serious effects of deer in Australia, the legislation and management of these introduced species is highly inconsistent across the continent. Some states and territories consider feral deer to be pests (WA, SA, QLD, NT, ACT). But states with the largest deer populations (VIC, NSW, TAS) give deer full or partial protection status and manage deer primarily for recreational hunting. This is in spite of recognition under environmental legislation that deer and Sambar are threatening processes to biodiversity in NSW and Victorian jurisdictions, respectively (see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/FeralDeerKtp.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/FeralDeerKtp.htm)).

These states require hunters to possess game hunting licences and impose various restrictions and regulations (such as bag limits, seasons, spotlighting bans), while farmers must obtain destruction permits to cull deer. These impediments to appropriate management of deer stem from the pressure of vocal hunting organisations that advocate for deer conservation and increased hunting opportunity, e.g. the Australian Deer Association.

Effectively, the three south-eastern state governments hold that the desire of some citizens to shoot deer on public land for sport is of greater value than the conservation of our natural heritage and the burden imposed by deer on farmers.

Maintaining deer as protected is a major hurdle preventing the implementation of effective control measures in the parts of Australia where these measures are most needed.

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## UPDATE ON POPULATION

As explained on p4, the NSW Government recently released a draft Metropolitan Strategy that describes the proposed plan for developing Sydney to cope with anticipated population growth through to 2031. This article looks at the assumptions used in this projection and the latest trends in population growth. Sadly the rate of growth remains unsustainable.

The projection underlying the Metropolitan Strategy is that Sydney's population will grow from the current level of 4.6 million to 5.6 million by 2031. The Australian Bureau of Statistics last issued detailed projections of Australia's population in 2006. These were based on three scenarios for the major components that determine population changes, fertility, life expectancy and net overseas migration.

The assumptions used and the approximate current experience are summarised below.

Series	Fertility rate*	Life expectancy by 2056 male / female	Net overseas migration
A	2.0	93.9 / 96.1	200 000 pa
B	1.8	85.0 / 88.0	180 000 pa
C	1.6	85.0 / 88.0	160 000 pa
Recent experience	1.9	79.7 / 84.2 over 2009–11	198 000 pa over past 3 years

\* Average number of babies per woman

In recent experience the hardest assumption to predict is net overseas migration but the Australian Government is able to control many aspects of migration. This will be explained later but firstly let's look at projected population numbers.

## Future Population Outlook

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is forecasting net overseas migration to increase from 228 000 pa in 2011–12 to close to 250 000 in 2015–16 (see [www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/immigration-update/nom-sep12.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/immigration-update/nom-sep12.pdf))

It looks as though we are following series A but we will look at series B as well. Projections by the Australian Bureau of Statistics of Australia and Sydney's populations are:

	Population in millions			
	2012	2031	2056	2101
Australia series A	22.7	30.9	42.5	62.1
Australia series B	22.7	28.8	35.5	44.7
Sydney series A	4.6	5.8	7.2	
Sydney series B	4.6	5.7	6.7	

The assumptions being used by the NSW Government are realistic or, maybe, on the conservative side. It looks as if the Sydney Basin will need to accommodate, feed, water and transport an extra 1.2 million people in the next 20 years and then another 1.4 million in the following 25 years. Of course the situation may be different if people decide to live elsewhere because Sydney has become an unbearably congested and expensive place to live.

## Net Overseas Migration

Net overseas migration is higher than levels in the past as shown in Figure 1.

Why has there been such a dramatic increase in net migration since 2004? There are three main aspects of the migration figures. This information is drawn from the report published by CEDA in March 2012 called *A Greater Australia: Population, Policies and Governance*.

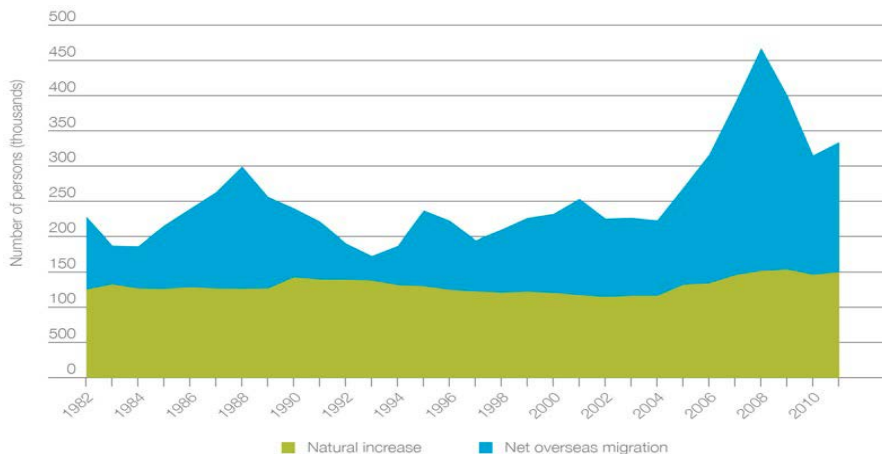


Figure 1. Components of Australia's population growth 1982–2011



Firstly we need to consider how the population numbers are counted. The official statistics are of people who are 'usually resident' in Australia. Additions are defined as arrivals who have lived here for at least 12 out of the last 16 months. Conversely, those who leave Australia and stay away for at least 12 months in a 16 month period are counted as departures. This definition means that temporary residents are counted in the population figure. This is fair enough. These people need housing and all the usual basic living requirements.

Migrants can be grouped into three broad categories:

- permanent migrants with visas granted on the grounds of skill, family reunion or humanitarian reasons;
- temporary migrants such as students, 457 visa holders and working holiday tourists; and
- Australian or New Zealand citizens moving in or out of the country.

Limits are set for new permanent residents but there is no limit applied to the temporary category. Economic factors are cited as being the driving force behind temporary migrant numbers. The Australian Government has been swayed by business to allow a massive increase in migrants without any controls.

For the year ended 2009 the breakup of migrant numbers is shown in the table below.

Category	Arrivals (000s)	Departures (000s)	Net migration (000s)
Permanent	88.5	8.9	82.8
Temporary	238.8	92.2	146.6
Citizens	119.8	99.3	20.5
Total	478.8	231.9	246.9

The growth in visas granted to students arriving from outside Australia doubled in four years, from 117 400 in 2004–06 to 226 900 in 2008–09. This was not matched by growth in students departing having completed their course. Many remained to do further courses or applied for permanent residence as a skilled migrant and remained pending the outcome of their application. As a result the number of arrivals has increased but there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of departures.

Of course growth does not stop in 2056. STEP's *Position Paper on Population* called for the Australian Government to set a sustainable population goal and take action to achieve it.

The extra infrastructure required by future new citizens has to be paid for by the whole current population on top of the cost of renewing or updating existing infrastructure. No wonder the state budget is so stretched.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT IN NSW

*There is some action happening aimed at improving waste management in NSW. Here's hoping it will make a significant difference to the amount of waste going to landfill and littering our streets. However it will be difficult to change the attitudes of our throwaway society.*

In 2008–09 a total of 46.8 million tonnes of waste was generated in Australia and approximately 51% of this was recycled. This equates to 2140 kg/person. The quantity of waste generated has increased by 40% since 2002–03 while our population has increased by only 9.8%.

In NSW the story is a little better with a higher recycling rate; 2290 kg was produced per person of which 940 kg went to landfill and 1350 kg was recycled, a rate of 59%.

Back in the late 1990s it was realised that Sydney was going to run out of landfill capacity. The creation of new landfill sites within or close to Sydney would basically be a waste of land that could be used for better purposes. Besides, no one wants to live near a landfill site. The decomposition of waste material is a major source of methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. Toxic waste in landfill can also lead to soil and groundwater contamination. Clearly something had to be done.

In 2001 a new act was passed, the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act. The objectives of the Act were:

- **avoidance** to reduce the amount of waste generated by households, industry and all levels of government;
- **resource recovery** including reuse, recycling, reprocessing and energy recovery; and
- **disposal** in the most environmentally responsible manner.

A state government agency, Resource NSW was created to develop and implement a strategy for waste reduction. The basic strategy had a target date of 2014.

On the avoidance front the aim was to keep the amount of waste generated each year steady. The major incentive for avoidance is the waste levy paid by local councils and other waste collectors for each tonne of waste sent to landfill. At the residential level the cost of the levy is passed on through council rates. The charge is usually a flat rate per household regardless of the quantity of waste generated so there is no incentive for individual households to reduce waste.

The main action is on the recycling front where the aim is to increase recycling rates in the major waste sectors as shown in the table below.

Sector	Target for 2014	Actual rate for 2002–03	Actual rate for 2008–09
Municipal	66%	30%	44%
Commerce and industry	63%	34%	52%
Construction and demolition	76%	64%	73%

Significant progress has been made but we clearly have more work to do especially at the municipal level.

Since 2002–03 waste disposal to landfill has increased by a modest 3.5% because recycling has absorbed almost all of a 38% increase in materials entering the waste management system.

The other aspects of the strategy are to reduce toxicity in products and materials and to reduce litter and illegal dumping.

### Recent Developments

The latest review of the waste strategy, *Reducing Waste: Implementation Strategy 2011–15* published by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/warr/110147implementstrat2011-15.pdf](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/warr/110147implementstrat2011-15.pdf)) identifies five focus areas for action:

1. Make it easier for households to separate and recover waste.
2. Make it easier for business to separate and recover waste. Examples are bin systems for small business and better infrastructure at shopping centres and offices.
3. Remove problem waste, improve resource recovery and produce environmentally safe recycled materials. Examples of materials where more action is required are gas bottles, batteries and e-waste. These items can be removed from general waste streams through product stewardship schemes and more accessible waste collection centres. See p10 for local information.
4. Encourage investment in waste treatment and recycling technologies and greater collaboration to develop markets for materials.
5. Reduce litter and combat illegal dumping.

### Household Waste Reduction

The recycling rate for households has improved over the past ten years but it is still too low. Analysis of general waste bins (red lid) reveals that about 40% of waste is food waste that could be added to garden waste that can be composted. However food waste is often disposed of in plastic bags that compromise recoverability. The report recognises the need for compostable bin bags. Note that plastic bags were banned in South Australia in May 2009.

There is still a significant proportion of recyclables (23%) in the general waste bins. Council practices need to be made more consistent and systems for apartments need to be improved.

The report proposes that permanent local waste collection centres be set up for small quantities of toxic waste such as paint and batteries. The aim is to have a centre for every 50 000 residents. The centres would be free of charge but should operate on a cost recovery basis in order to be financially viable. This will be a major improvement on the current system of annual free drop off arrangements in Ku-ring-gai that are easy to miss out on and often involve long queues.

### Beverage Container Deposit Legislation

The report makes no mention of container deposit legislation (CDL) a vital requirement for real action on the final focus area — litter. Current proposals for a CDL scheme were described in *STEP Matters* (Issue 167, August 2012).

Federal and state ministers are meeting this month to review regulatory impact statements and consider a detailed proposal developed by the Boomerang Alliance, a collection of 22 environmental groups, and the recycling industry.

This scheme would be run by an independent coordinator unlike the South Australian scheme that is run by the beverage companies. Automated reverse vending machines would be placed in shopping centre car parks. The machines would accept glass, aluminium, steel and plastic containers and would issue retail vouchers for ten cents per container. Containers would be sorted by material rather than brand enabling reduced handling and transport costs.

To find out more and make your views known to your MP go to [www.boomerangalliance.org.au](http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au).

### NSW Government's Response to the Report

This month the NSW Government announced that \$465 million will be spent in the next five years to implement the recommendations of the report. The money will come from existing environment and waste levies.

## TELEVISION AND COMPUTER RECYCLING SCHEME

This recycling scheme is now in operation. You can recycle up to 15 items for free at:

- Kimbriki Resource Centre, Kimbriki Road off Mona Vale Road Ingleside/Terrey Hills;
- Sita, Wicks Road, North Ryde; and
- Sita, Crozier Road, Belrose.

Any household or small business can drop off their items in a car, ute or trailer in the designated television and computer recycling areas. Customers must unload their own waste. Items:

- **accepted** are televisions, computer monitors, personal and portable computers, printers, scanners, peripherals and parts, cords and cables.
- **not accepted** are toner cartridges, DVD players, video recorders, radios, game consoles, appliances, mobile phones and power tools.

**Toner, ink cartridges and mobile phones** can be dropped off at post offices.

Check out [www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au) for general recycling information.



2 May 2009, a massive bank of cumulonimbus calvus cloud along the Sydney coastline where an upper trough and cold pool met with moist coastal air (p102, *Understanding the Weather*)

## ORDER FORM

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Understanding the Weather <b>(due out late May — order your copy now)</b>	\$20		
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Donation (donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible)			
		Total cost	\$

## STEP INFORMATION

### STEP Matters

The editor of *STEP Matters* for this edition is Jill Green, who is responsible for all information and articles unless otherwise specifically credited. The STEP committee may not necessarily agree with all opinions carried in this newsletter, but we do welcome feedback and comments from our readers, be they STEP members or not.

All issues (from when we began in 1978) can be viewed online, usually with full-colour illustrations.

### Feedback

Send complaints, praise, comments or letters to [secretary@step.org.au](mailto:secretary@step.org.au). Please feel free to share your copy of the newsletter with friends, neighbours and business colleagues.

### New Members

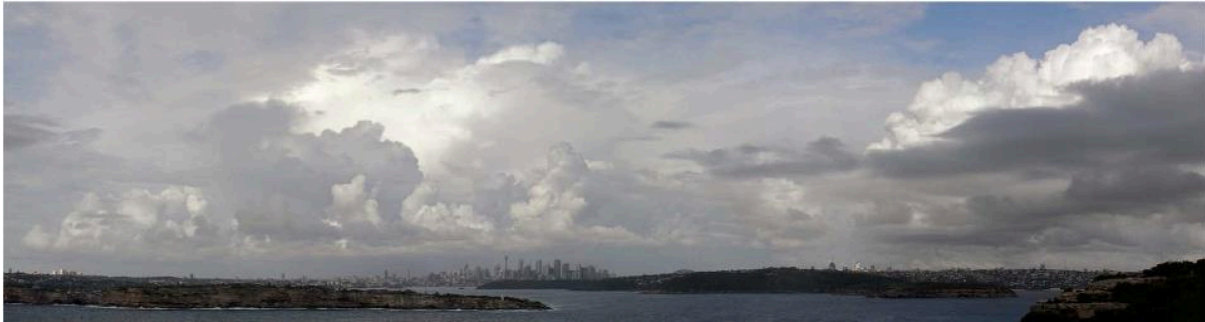
New members are always welcome to join STEP and to make themselves available for the committee should they wish to do so. The effectiveness of STEP is a factor of the numbers of members we have, so please encourage your like-minded friends and neighbours to join.

### STEP Committee

Jill Green — President  
Robin Buchanan — Vice-president  
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Helen Wortham — Secretary  
Andrew Little  
John Martyn  
Don Davidson  
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## ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!

John Martyn's latest book, *Understanding the Weather: A Guide for Outdoor Enthusiasts in South-eastern Australia* is due out at the end May. Use the form on p11 to place an order.



Sydney from North Head, cumulonimbus clouds dwarfed Sydney on 11 February 2007 (p74-75, *Understanding the Weather*)



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