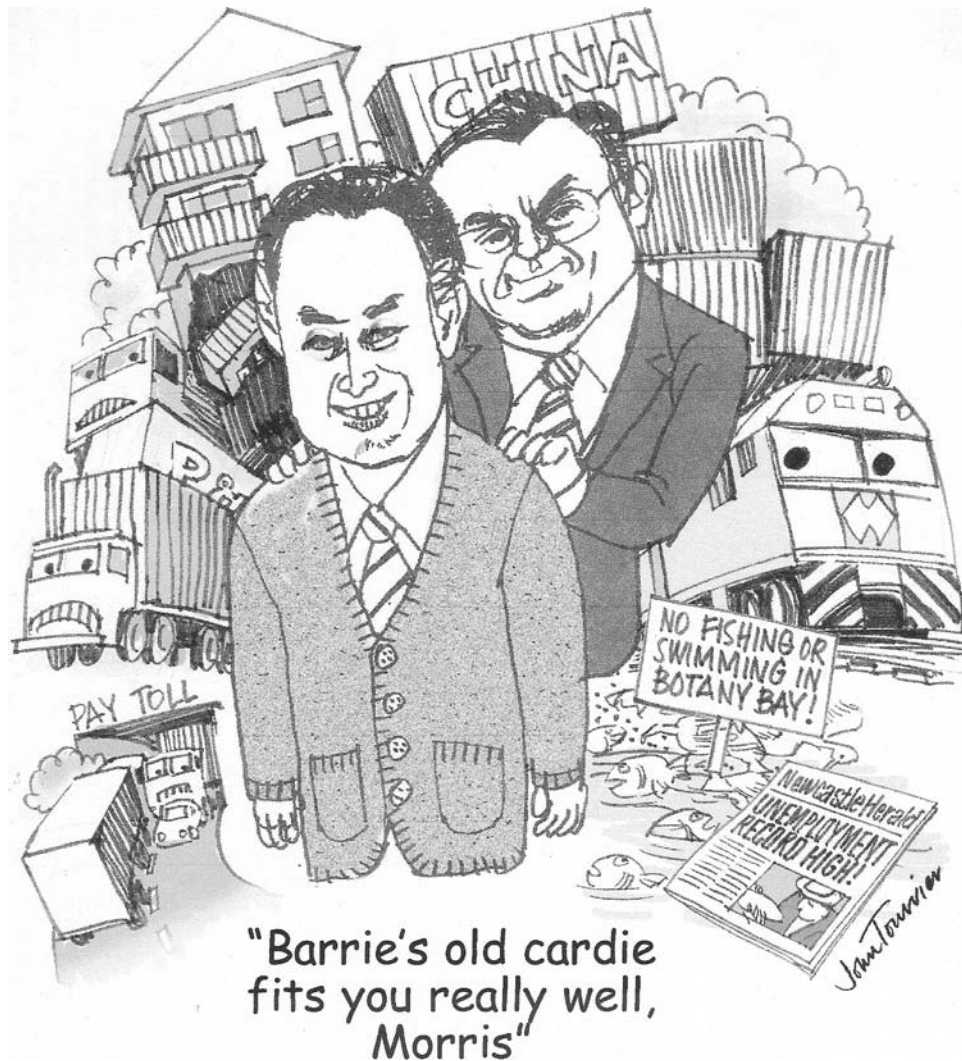


ENVIRONMENTALLY SPEAKING 6



"Barrie's old cardie fits you really well, Morris"

On the day the State Government announced the Port Botany expansion, it also released Kevin Cleland's Commission of Inquiry report and Laurie Brereton's *Railing Port Botany's Containers Report*. Commissioner Cleland recommended:

*Sydney Ports Corporation's proposed development at Port Botany **not** be approved; and A smaller expansion of the container handling facilities at Port Botany be approved.*

This smaller expansion incorporates a public boat ramp and parking facilities along with

tug boat and emergency facilities into a smaller terminal. The impact on Foreshores Beach and Penrhyn Estuary would be reduced. The Commissioner stated in his summary recommendations:

Port Botany is clearly limited as to its ultimate physical expansion by the third runway and by environmental impacts. It simply does not have the potential to be expanded in a similar way to the Port of Melbourne or the Port of Brisbane.

The Department of Planning (DOP) assessment of the project notes that of the 1159 submissions received, 89% objected to the proposal, 10.6% stated no position and 0.4% were in favour.

The DOP states that:

The Commissioner did not seem to specifically comment on the significance itself of the population of shorebirds currently using the Estuary nor weigh this up with the State-wide and national, social and economic benefits of the proposal.

With the support of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) the DOP goes on to say that the Sydney Ports preferred footprint would not appear to have a

significant effect overall on any of the species.

DOP holds a similar opinion of the human species who use the area and enjoy the scenic views from Sir Joseph Banks Park. Yet another concern of the Commissioner dismissed by the Department!

In case DEC are wrong in their assessment they will be proposing suitable 'offsets' and one assumes issuing clear guidelines on how to reach such "offset" sites to the birds affected. The human species are meant to find their own way to alternate sites and one may assume expensive and congested beaches such as Bondi would be deemed suitable.

The more scathing commentary for Commission Cleland's report comes in the Section headed "Competition" on page 8:

*During the primary session of the COI, the (then) Treasurer submitted a letter to the Commissioner that clearly articulated the NSW Government's policy position with regard to the need for the introduction of greater competition at Port Botany.....**Not withstanding the Treasurer's advice**, the Commissioner found that he was not satisfied that SPC had provided sufficient evidence to support its claim that a third stevedore would commence operations at the port in the short to medium term.....*

The Department's conclusion is that the Commissioner's recommendation is fundamentally inconsistent with Government policy regarding competition as well as potentially facilitating a monopolistic situation.

Apparently the Commissioner was meant to agree with the Treasurer. If you thought the Commission of Inquiry was intended to be independent you were wrong!

The Freight Infrastructure Advisory Board headed by Laurie Brereton had no community representation. Its members were Mr Llew Russel from Shipping Australia, Mr Greg Martin the CEO of Sydney Ports, Ms Lisa Hunt of Transurban, a company that holds a 40% share in the M7 (a further 40% is held by Macquarie Infrastructure), Mr Vince Graham from Rail Corp, Mr Tony Sheldon of the TWU, Mr Mal Peters of the NSW Farmers Association, Mr Neil Matthews, logistics expert and the architect of the report, and Mr Paul Forward of the RTA. The report recommends a series of intermodal terminals where containers brought by rail are stored and then trucked out to warehouses. Intermodals are planned for Enfield (300,000) Eastern Creek (500,000), Minto (200,000), Ingleburn (54,000), Moorebank (500,000), and Menangle. Rail freight volumes are recommended to rise 450% over the next 15 years. If this is achieved road freight will also double. Various freight and road corridors will be 'enhanced' and will impact many thousands.

The General Holmes Drive level crossing is to close as will the pedestrian crossing at Banksia Street in Botany where a pedestrian overpass will be built. Some of the recommendations are long overdue and needed to support the current volume of containers but overall the report over scales the freight task for congested Southern Sydney.

The current port footprint, according to the Stevedores, is capable of supporting the movement of 3 to 4 million containers. Commissioner Cleland's recommendation could see that rise to 4 to 5 million containers. The State Government's determination will scale the port to a possible 5 to 6 million operation. The consent is for a cap of 3.2 million containers

but that can be increased subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment(EIA). (The term Environmental Impact Statement has been replaced by EIA.)

The 'thin end of the wedge' for Southern Sydney will be the expanded Port and expanded Sydney Airport. These operations will drive the Southern Sydney freight hub with thousands of truck movements in and out of each of the intermodal terminals and the millions of square metres of warehouse space. It is true that 85% of containers will be unpacked within 40 km of Port Botany but the goods from those containers will be warehoused in Southern Sydney for distribution by air, rail or truck along the Eastern seaboard, the South Pacific and Australia-wide. Sydney competes with Brisbane and Melbourne for centralized inventories for major corporations.

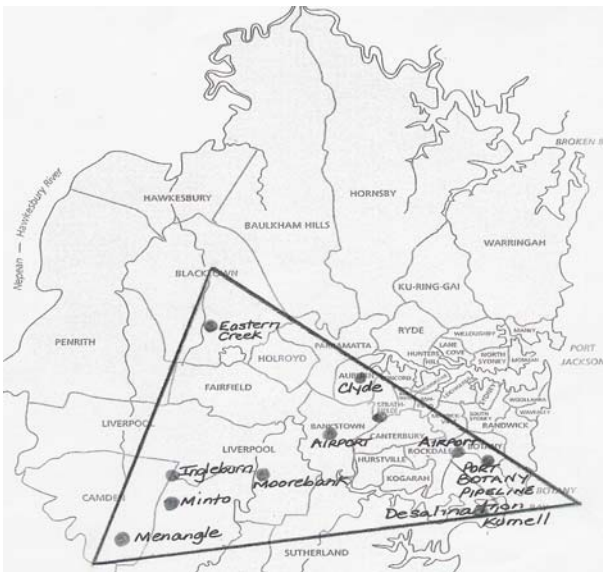
wants big projects and centralized activities in Sydney. It is cheaper for the government to provide centralized services and the returns, via stamp duty on property, are greater in Sydney. Labour electorates are traditionally grown in Sydney not in the regions! Meanwhile regional centres will be denied infrastructure and opportunities to grow.

DRAFT LOWER HUNTER REGIONAL STRATEGY

(from the Hunter Business Chamber website: 28/11/05)

Last week Minister Sartor, as the Planning Minister for NSW, released the long awaited Draft Lower Hunter Regional Strategy. Considering that the Lower Hunter is the second largest population base for the state and the region is clearly a major economic driver for NSW, the released Draft strategy was disappointing because it lacked vision, leadership and detail.

The business community has long advocated that growth should be planned rather than occur randomly. The key driver for growth, appropriate investment in infrastructure, should play a major role in any strategy however the Draft strategy is absolutely silent on this part of the jigsaw. We now have a document that a team of planners have worked on for two years that forecasts the future of our region and thankfully fits neatly into 16 pages, 8 of which are for pictures. So the State Government's vision for the future of the Lower Hunter can be detailed in less than 8 A4pages.



The map above shows Sydney's **TOXIC TRIANGLE**. It includes the Kurnell Oil Refinery, the Chemical complex on North Botany Bay, the proposed Desalination Plant, the Clyde waste station at Auburn(Sydney produces over 4 million tones of waste for landfill each year), Bankstown airport (already at 250,000 movements a year and expanding).

Freight and warehousing are critical sectors of the economy but they should not be driving the economy of Sydney and NSW. There are no alternative freight models offered. It appears that Treasury has been reluctant to do the analysis. Big business

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AUTHORITY
BEACHWATCH RESULTS FOR
THE 2004-2005 SUMMER SEASON
IN BOTANY BAY**

Yarra Bay still fails to comply a third of the time for faecal contamination. Frenchman's Bay is a little better.

CONGWONG BAY



As for previous years, Congwong Bay is the cleanest area of Botany Bay.

Congwong Bay is also one of the most historic and culturally significant areas in Australia. In 2000 it was the site chosen for the opening of the Olympics Arts festival and above is a photograph taken during that spectacular opening ceremony.

Each year hundreds of thousands of tourists come to walk in the footsteps of Cook, Banks, Laperouse and Phillip. The rock pool and platform walk around Congwong Bay to Henry Head is a particular winner and very popular with fishers and walking groups. The area has great potential for school groups because of its unique historical and natural attractions.

With the Port development at Foreshore Beach the Peninsula becomes the only recreational area on North Botany Bay and there will be pressure for more facilities to be provided by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

**Compliance and Ranking of Botany Bay
Sites during Summer 2004-2005**

Site	Compliance (%)		Overall ranking (out of 23)
	Faecal Coliforms	Enterococci	
Ramsgate Baths	100	81	9
Monterey Baths	100	91	4
Brighton-le-Sands Baths	84	69	17
Kyeemagh Baths	84	84	12
Foreshores Beach	94	81	11
Yarra Bay	100	63	15
Frenchmans Bay	100	78	10
Congwong Bay	100	100	1
Silver Beach	100	91	4

**SYDNEY DESALINATION PLANT
TO RECYCLE EFFLUENT**

Sydney has been the slowest of the Australian cities to recycle water, but the city's proposed desalination plant may hurry its citizens along the recycling path faster than they realise. Peter Fagan of the Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering points out that the intake pipe at Kurnell would sit between the Malabar and the Cronulla effluent outfalls. The irony is that cleaning effluent for reuse is far cheaper than desalination. "It costs considerably less, both in terms of dollars but also in terms of energy and hence greenhouse gas emissions," Mr Fagan said. *The Australian* 7/11/05