

# ENVIRONMENTALLY SPEAKING 10

Summer 2006 Randwick South Ward Enviro News from Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance [www.botanybay.info](http://www.botanybay.info)  
Protecting Environment=Protecting People



Entry to Botany Cemetery, Bunnerong Road

“You wouldn’t treat a dog like this”

At a Senate Inquiry into Fuel Supply and Alternative Energy, the committee heard that traffic congestion in Sydney was costing the NSW economy upwards of \$10 billion a year. In South Ward and Botany, we see that congestion very clearly in the shape of semi-trailers queued to access the Port facilities. On November 29 the queue for the Patrick terminal stretched along Foreshore, Botany and Bunnerong Roads to the entry of Botany Cemetery – 3km plus. At that point, the semis were forced to make U Turns across Bunnerong Road. One driver said to me he hoped there would be no funeral processions! These drivers are sitting in their cabins for up to 4 hours – ‘you wouldn’t treat a dog like this’ the driver added. But they are treated like this and the people who will be impacted when rail and road freight operates 24/7 (24 hours 7 days a week) are to be added to the mounting toll (pardon the pun) of ‘collateral damage’. You might think the solution to a congested and toxic M5 and congestion around the Port would be to rethink the proposal to treble (possibly much higher) container numbers through Sydney. You might think the politicians and planners would get out of the Sydney centric syndrome and look to Newcastle and Port Kembla and beyond to an Australia wide solution. But no, the March of Folly<sup>1</sup> continues.



## Aviation Operational Impacts

**Impact on Aviation Operations at Sydney Airport**  
*C2.21 The Applicant shall ensure that the location of fixed terminal operating infrastructure adequately takes into account the required lateral separation distances to **minimise** the interference to Sydney Airport radar and navigational systems. (from Determination for Port Botany Expansion)*

**Minimise** was the word used by the Minister, Frank Sartor, in the determination on Port Botany. Is a ‘wobbly’ word like ‘minimise’ good enough when talking about air safety? I have written to Airservices and this was the reply: *Airservices has no issue with the wording of the condition, including the word ‘minimise.’ We are confident we can work with that and ensure the safety and efficiency of the airport is not affected. The important thing has been co-operation from the SPC to assist us bring forward development of the new Wide Area Multilateration technologies and their certification by the safety regulator. It is important that we start early to get the project in place and systems introduced and proven. (8/12/06)*

Interested in Shorebirds then here is a great new website: [www.shorebirds.org.au](http://www.shorebirds.org.au)

<sup>1</sup> In her book *The March of Folly*, historian Barbara Tuchman asked the question “Why does intelligent mental process seem so often not to function? and demonstrated her thesis with an analysis which included Troy and Vietnam.

Sydney Ports Corporation (SPC) are paying \$10 million dollars (figure quoted at Commission of Inquiry) to develop this technology.

## PENRHYN ESTUARY CEASES!!

At a recent Orica community meeting, the Groundwater Consultant on the Community's Independent Monitoring Committee stated that he thought that Penrhyn Estuary "ceases" with the expansion of the Port. It was alarming to hear this said as only a few weeks previous the CEO of Sydney Ports was on prime time morning radio saying that the Estuary would be enhanced. Of course, Commissioner Cleland was far more sceptical of the Estuary surviving and success being achieved in containing the main toxic plumes and that was one of the reasons why he recommended against the Sydney Ports expansion proposal.



2011 view of new Port terminal, Boat and Tug Ramp, and Penrhyn

This is what Greg Martin had to say and what the Commissioner said follows on:

**Greg Martin, CEO Sydney Ports Corporation on Virginia Trioli Show ABC Radio 702, 25/8/06**

**Martin:** Virginia, I think a lot of that has been really had a wrong slant put on it. If you look at Penrhyn Estuary right now it is a very degraded estuary. There's substantial beach erosion going on. The water is also not of high quality because of previous sort of chemical spills etc. The reality is our proposal provides an alternative to really improve Penrhyn Estuary. By building the 5th berth what we do, there's still going to be of sufficient area to flush and that's been shown in the studies done but what it does do is actually provides protection from the wave action which sweeps in around there and degrades that beach. So we're going to actually provide a better beach and then inside the protected area where they're going to have less wave action we're going to provide the additional 18 ha of seagrass and mudflats for wading birds and it'll be protected from the wave action so it'll actually be a much improved environmental habitat.

Later in the day and in reply to criticism, based on what Commissioner Cleland had said about Penrhyn Estuary, the Planning Minister (Frank Sartor) said that the Commission of Inquiry Report was

**just the view of one man.** Full transcript:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200608/s1724218.htm>

**This was what the Commission had to say:**

**Page 102, Commission of Inquiry (May 2005 released October 13, 2005)**

*The Commission acknowledges that SPC's assessment of potential impacts on water quality in Penrhyn Estuary indicates that individual ambient water quality parameters would remain within ANZECC guidelines. Installation of stormwater quality improvement devices as proposed by SPC would be effective in improving certain water quality parameters such as nutrient levels as well as reducing sediment loads entering the Estuary. Nevertheless, there would be an overall deterioration in water quality. In these circumstances the Commission has not been convinced that ecological impacts could be assumed to be not significant. A precautionary approach is necessary. Furthermore, there remains a level of uncertainty as to the likelihood of substantial success in preventing the contaminated groundwater plumes from discharging to Penrhyn Estuary. The effect of concentrations of volatile halogenated compounds discharging to the Estuary if the interception of the plumes is not highly effective could only be detrimental. Despite the fact that any discharge of contaminated groundwater would occur whether SPC's proposed development occurred or not, SPC's proposal would reduce tidal flushing in the Estuary and could not be considered precautionary with respect to volatile halogenated compounds. There would be reduced dispersal of concentrations of volatile halogenated compounds from within Penrhyn Estuary with SPC's proposal.*

More details about the Penrhyn problems, including a report from the Independent Monitoring Committee consultant, are available at <http://www.oricabotanygroundwater.com/independentmonitoring.htm>.

## A PLAN FOR NSW

The State Plan was released mid-November. Copies (multiples if required) are available by submitting the form located at:

<http://www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan/sp14.aspx>

As you might expect a few months out from the State election the document presents good news statements along with smiling faces. Public consultation supposedly underpinned the development of this document and there are plenty of pictures of citizens being 'consulted'. For instance page 12 carries a full page photograph of Dr Fred Bell, a long-term and active campaigner for the Botany Bay environment. Pages 18 through 21 contain the section headed "Acting on the feedback". One of the 10 changes to priorities is "Cutting red tape". *This priority replaces the draft priority 'A higher productivity economy'. We received clear feedback that in order to grow the level of business investment and increase productivity, Government needed to focus on reducing complexity and increasing predictability and speed across its regulatory regime.*

Environmental Legislation has been enacted to protect the environment and hence the health and welfare of citizens. It is there to impede those who would diminish our lives. One wonders whether this 'cutting red tape'

approach is being introduced to appease the likes of Meriton boss Harry Triguboff who only recently announced that there should be more grey and less green in Sydney and that people could go to Katoomba if they wanted to look at trees. Harry's vision for Sydney is a population of 20 million by 2050 (Sydney Morning Herald, 11/10/06)

People in South Ward and Botany know very well what happens when there is insufficient regulation and lack of will on the part of the government to ensure compliance under the regulations that do exist. The emergency situation created by the main Orica toxic plumes of ethylene dichloride heading for Botany Bay bear testimony to this.

Cleanups are costly, social and health dysfunction is costly, and it takes a long time to overcome the loss of goodwill. Cutting corners, pretending our environment and amenity is less important than the profit that benefits a few is short-sighted – bad for business and bad for community.

## REGULATION IS THERE TO ENSURE THAT THE MARKET FUNCTIONS PROPERLY

Impacts have to be fully costed to ensure there are no distortions in the market. In the Chair's Foreword to the Legislative Council's Report into *Health impacts of air pollution in the Sydney basin*, Robyn Parker states that: *The health impacts of air pollution are disturbingly widespread, and it contributes to between 600 and 1400 death every year in Sydney alone.* Under the heading *Rail Freight Emissions* the Committee noted: *that the de-electrification of Sydney's goods lines means that all rail freight in and out of Port Botany is moved by diesel-powered engines but that there is no regulatory framework in place to control hazardous emissions from those engines. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the NSW Government immediately investigate and implement a system to regulate diesel emissions from freight train engines.*<sup>2</sup> The committee also noted the lack of monitoring of fine particulate matter which is mainly associated with diesel emissions from trucks.

At an Orica community meeting recently the community's Independent Monitoring Committee's consultant for stack emission control was speaking about toxic dioxins in the air. He suggested that the people in Botany and South Ward had more reason to be concerned about the amount of toxic dioxins being emitted by semi-trailers than from the Groundwater Treatment Plant.

## YOU MIGHT THINK TAXIS ARE CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN CARS BUT THINK

One of many interesting presentations in the NSW State Plan is on Page 59. These are bar graphs 16 and 17, the first depicting the proportion of trips by various transport modes to and from the Sydney CBD and the

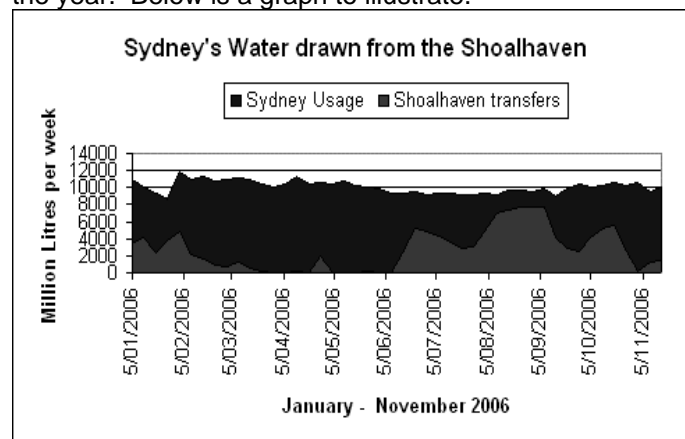
second depicting journeys to work across Greater Metropolitan Sydney. In each graph there are 3 bars: one bar for public transport, one bar for cars and one bar for cycling, walking and taxis. So who decided that the impact of taxi passengers could be ranked with that of walkers and cyclists?

## WHERE ARE THE KID FISHERS TO GO

'Afloat' is a free monthly magazine that deals with all things marine. It can be collected from many fishing/boating outlets as well as La Perouse Museum and Yarra Bay Sailing Club. The October issue carried a story about the lack of jetties for kids learning to fish. With the expansion of Port Botany we are losing the only jetty on the north of Botany Bay and there will be no compensation for the lost jetty.

## DESALINATION

On 16 November, 2006, Minister Sartor approved the construction of the Desalination Plant at Kurnell. Work will commence when dams levels are around 30%. Dam levels have been maintained over the past year by massive transfers of water from the Shoalhaven. In any one week, up to 80% of Sydney's weekly water supply comes from the Shoalhaven and has averaged 27% for the year. Below is a graph to illustrate.<sup>3</sup>



## Who Cares About the Environment 2006

The Department of Environment and Conservation report for 2006 has recently been released. Some of the key points:

- Water related issues are the top enviro issues, nominated by almost 3 times more people than any other
- Climate change and energy issues are growing rapidly in importance
- Environmental knowledge and understanding has grown market since the first survey in 1994
- Most people are taking a range of actions to contribute to protection and improvement of the environment.
- There is strong support for government action and regulation to protect and improve the environment

The full report can be seen at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whocares/](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whocares/)

<sup>2</sup> The report was released on November 16, 2006 and a copy can be obtained by telephoning 92302641 or emailing [gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gpscno2@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> This graph came from [www.alternateroute.com.au](http://www.alternateroute.com.au)

## BOTANY BAY CABLE

It appears that Sydney Ports was first cab off the rank for consultation on the Botany Bay Cable. Energy Australia will run a high voltage cable from Kurnell. The route for the cable will take it under the bed of Botany Bay through the Botany Bay National Park at La Perouse, along Anzac Parade and Bunnerong Road to the Bunnerong Sub Station. The obvious question is why can't impacts on the National Park, residents and visitors to La Perouse be avoided by taking a route along Sydney Ports land on Prince of Wales Drive.

## SIX ARTIFICIAL REEFS IN BOTANY BAY

Six small artificial reefs have recently been placed in Botany Bay by Fisheries staff of the Department of Primary Industries to improve fish stocks. The six reefs are made up of 180 concrete reef ball modules, which can be easily moved, or removed completely, if necessary.

The locations are: Yarra Bay (3 reefs), Astrolabe Cove (1 reef) and Congwong Bay (2 reefs), in depths ranging from 9.6 to 14.1 metres.

## THE NEW LOOK UNSW – BACK TO 'CORE' BUSINESS IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING AND FENCING OUT THE COMMUNITY



This is a very sad picture which heralds a new era for the UNSW. The Ecoliving Centre and Permaculture Garden at UNSW(Arthur Street)has been closed and the community volunteers have been locked out after more than 10 years. The Centre was an icon of sustainability education in the eastern suburbs of Sydney and featured on TV shows, including Gardening Australia, and at events such as the Royal Easter Show. It appears that the University, after being the benefactor of many generous donations from members of the community, is turning its back on community.<sup>4</sup>

At Little Bay the UNSW is selling former public land that was donated specifically for the purpose of building a Medical School. The area could have become a unique Permaculture Village incorporating the Solarch Centre, community open space(including the playing fields) and best principles in Sustainable Living, but the project was

<sup>4</sup> More information about the Garden

[http://www.communitygarden.org.au/news/nsw/unsw\\_photos.html](http://www.communitygarden.org.au/news/nsw/unsw_photos.html)

mysteriously scuttled a few years ago. Perhaps it didn't fit with the neighbouring designs at Prince Henry where Little Bay Beach and the adjoining golf courses are promoted as "THE GAMES ROOM".<sup>5</sup> UNSW makes a lot of noise about being a leader in Sustainability – check out the advertisements for graduates and undergraduate courses – but when it comes to so called 'business' it is back with the pack. There will be nothing to add to the community just more townhouses.

This is what the University has as one of its priorities in the UNSW Strategic Plan 2005 – to develop:

*'networks, systems and spaces to encourage collegial and social interchange, collaboration and partnerships between ourselves and the wider community'*

If you would like to provide feedback to the Vice Chancellor of UNSW, Professor Fred Hilmer<sup>6</sup>, you can do so by emailing [F.Hilmer@unsw.edu.au](mailto:F.Hilmer@unsw.edu.au)

## NEWSFLASH

Lloyd's List Daily, 7/12/06, has reported that the CEO of Sydney Ports, Greg Martin is likely to be sacked. This news comes less than a week after Sydney Ports chairman David Field left the organisation after being told by state government ministers not to re-apply for the position. Perhaps Sydney Ports have not been impressing their shareholder Treasurer Michael Costa and their Minister, Joe Tripodi.

## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 4 MARCH 2007

Please join with the La Perouse Precinct Committee in their clean-up of Congwong Bay. Meet at the Snake Pit, La Perouse, anytime between 8am and 12 noon. Closed in shoes, long trousers, long sleeves, sunscreen, hat and water.

For more information about any of these items please contact Lynda Newnam  
[chairperson@botanybay.info](mailto:chairperson@botanybay.info)  
December, 2006

<sup>5</sup> Other advertisements depict the location by including: CBD Sydney Airport, Coogee and Bondi but places within walking distance such as Yarra Bay and La Perouse are omitted. Perhaps not the 'right' image.

<sup>6</sup> Professor Hilmer prior to becoming Vice Chancellor was the CEO of Fairfax. He is reported to have referred to journalists as 'content providers'. Professor Hilmer many years prior was head of the Australian Graduate Management School and as a Management 'teacher/consultant' wrote a few books. These include *Management Redeemed: Debunking the Fads that Undermine Corporate Performance*. Some observations in his book include: "The whole business process re-engineering(BPR) movement carries with it a conviction that massive reconstructive surgery needs to be visited on many organizations.".....and perhaps communities!