

ENVIRONMENTALLY SPEAKING 16

Winter 2008 Randwick South Ward Environment News www.laperouse.info
Social Change not Climate Change

TRANSFORMING ORICA'S SOUTHLANDS RECLAIMING A SMALL CORNER OF BOTANY



It's hard to believe that 10 years ago this tranquil and highly biodiverse wetland was a toxic wasteland. But it was. This unique and totally man made wetland system demonstrates what can be achieved when traditional bushland managers, scientists, engineers, business leaders, planners and politicians work together to establish something rarely seen anywhere in Australia.

***Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.***

Margaret Mead had members of the South West Enviro Centre in mind when she uttered these words. Ten years ago this small group saw a government body in the creek bed of the Cooks River at Chullora with earthmoving equipment and they stopped to ask these people if they had a license to do what they were doing.

The initial confrontation led to many onsite meetings and frustration on both sides. Months passed and the two groups began to understand what each needed and wanted and finally a compromise was reached. Today, this 5.8ha wetlands is an established feature of the Chullora Industrial Estate. As well as functioning as a stormwater detention basin it captures pollutants entering the Cooks River.

The same transformation model could be applied to the Southlands site in Botany.

A wetlands could be incorporated into the transformed Southlands Industrial Park with **State Government WILL and Orica's cooperation**. What Australian environment and community deserves an offset more than Botany?

Those who remember the road to Botany in years gone by are not surprised at the name given by the first discoverer (James Cook)... We know most of the wild flower regions of the colony, but none to compare in variety and richness with Botany, as it was.

(An Illustrated Guide to Sydney 1882)

**It is time to give back to Botany after decades of
abuse and neglect.**

TURNING AROUND THE QUEEN WHEN BIGGER IS NOT BETTER



23/11/07: ABC's AM "It's very difficult to turn the Queen Mary around...."

3/2/08: Press Conference "You can't turn the Queen Mary around overnight..."

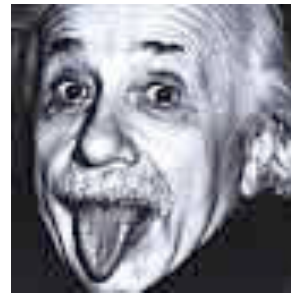
16/4/08: The Australian "Turning the Queen Mary takes a long time."

19/5/08: 7.30 Report "It takes a while to turn around the Queen Mary...."

References to the difficulty of turning the Queen Mary are sprinkled into interviews and speeches by the Prime Minister on a regular basis. But has he stopped to consider what he is saying.

The Queen Mary is a symbol for the 'bigger is better' approach to planning and service delivery where economies of scale are valued but the externalities are ignored. It is this approach that has brought us centralized Health Services where patients and their families are obliged to travel long distances for the basics. It is the reason why we have monster shopping centres but don't have shops which we can walk to. Why the Port and Airport are overscaled and the surrounding roads congested with trucks. Why the State Government will be dredging the shipping channel in Botany Bay to accommodate Mega Container Ships. And despite the State Government's promise in the Metrostrategy for a City of Cities, why we still have one super-serviced CBD with southern and western Sydney residents forced to commute long distances for employment, university education, specialist health and cultural services.

Any fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction. (A.Einstein)



Yes, Prime Minister, it takes time to turn around the Queen Mary but don't be seduced into supporting the NSW State Government when it asks for Federal funds to build more 'Queen Marys'. With the challenges ahead it is time to downscale and concentrate on lean, green and flexible solutions.

GREENS OR GRAVES



The Heritage Listed La Perouse Market Gardens, adjacent to Hill 60, are under threat. Botany Cemetery wants them incorporated and the 7ha used for graves. You can download the report from the Department of Lands at www.lands.nsw.gov.au

This report is on exhibition from **19 June 2008 to 17 July 2008. Further enquires: (02) 8836 5300**

You can send comments to: Team Leader – Land Management, NSW Department of Lands, PO Box 3935, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

NEW STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY(SEPP)

To fast track developments and bypass Botany Bay and Randwick City Council, the State Government is introducing a SEPP for the Port and Airport area. Details are available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au

Plan to turn back Botany Bay's tide of neglect

In December 2002 the Sydney Morning Herald carried a story by it's Urban Affairs Reporter, Claire O'Rourke, which outlined the Government's plans to address the environmental damage done to Botany Bay.

"The strategy, announced in September by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Andrew Refshauge, placed an effective moratorium on development in the bay. Details of the strategy have not yet been publicly released.

It will concentrate on three areas: the assessing and management of Botany Bay; a transport strategy for North Botany; and a land-use plan for the Kurnell peninsula..... In the first year "non-negotiable" outcomes will be signed off by the Government, and a computer model of the bay will be developed.

In the second year, a route will be selected for a walking trail that will hug the waterway, beginning at the Botany Bay National Park on the Kurnell Peninsula and finishing at La Perouse.....

Estimated costs for the strategy are at least \$2 million. The basic plan will be completed by June (2003) and will be final by 2006."

Construction for the Port expansion has commenced on the North; construction of the Desalination Pipe to cross the Bay from the South to the West has commenced causing environmental damage from Day 1; and early next year the Engery Australia Cable will be laid between Kurnell and La Perouse, impacting one of Sydney's premier dive sites, Bare Island. It is June 2008 and still no sign of the Strategy promised in 2006.



Paving Paradise to Put up a Parking Lot – Penrhyn Jetty disappearing soon.

It takes on average 2.5 litres of water to produce a litre of petrol.

BOTANY BAY GOING CHEAP



Does the Government place much value on Botany Bay? Is the Bay worth as much as the \$2 billion* Desalination Plant? Is it worth as much as the \$1billion* 3rd Port Terminal? Well, actually the answer is NO.

The value placed on the Bay is around \$950 million.

As part of the conditions of Minister Sartor's approval for the Port Expansion in 2005, he required the Penrhyn Estuary and the area off Foreshore Beach to be 'valued' for 'offsets'. This was in anticipation of the loss of Penrhyn as bird habitat and loss of seagrasses and saltmarsh. The 3.4ha of bird habitat at Penrhyn has been valued at \$340,000; the 1.4ha of Saltmarsh at \$980,000 and the 6.5ha of Seagrass at \$900,000. Using these values and government figures on the size of the Bay and the extent of remaining Seagrass and Saltmarsh, and allowing the Penrhyn habitat valuation to cover the remainder, we end up with \$954,345,000.

(*These are minimum costs, expected to escalate. The Port terminal up until 2007 was expected to cost half of the 2008 estimate.)

Australians throw away more than \$5billion food a year.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

May 26, 1974 – Botany Bay hits back to destroy the Paragon and La Perouse jetty.



PORT CONSTRUCTION BEGINS 28 MAY

The Sydney Morning Herald announced the commencement of work on the Port Expansion with an article about the shorebird monitoring being undertaken by Birds Australia. "Ideally, at the end of the day we'll end up with a much-improved habitat," said the representative from Birds Australia. This prompted a reply which not surprisingly was not published in the Herald:

Your article on shorebird habitat at Penrhyn Estuary (Herald 29/5/08) touches on a situation that environmental groups may find themselves in when dealing with billion dollar developments - particularly Government developments. Over six years ago, when the Port Botany expansion was first proposed Dr Crawford, the then head of the Healthy Rivers Commission identified offsets for environmental losses. Crawford anticipated the government's final decision well ahead of the findings of a mandatory environmental impact statement let alone the various inquiries which followed. Obviously out of step with the government's ultimate intention, Commissioner Cleland in his report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Port Expansion, published October 2005, recommended that Port Botany should not be expanded in the configuration proposed by Sydney Ports Corporation because of environmental impacts and Sydney Airport. Cleland suggested a smaller expansion that left Penrhyn Estuary, and the adjoining recreational facilities, basically in tact. There has traditionally been tension between bird watchers and other recreational groups in this area. Measures to maintain the area for everyone, at the same time enhancing environmental values, could have been put in place. However, given the intention to expand the Port it no doubt suited the NSW government, through it various agencies such as Maritime and Ports, to allow the area to decline and the conflict to continue. Many people have assumed, regardless of the economic arguments against this expansion, that there would be no fighting the government. It was not surprising then that some special interest groups decided very early against openly opposing the project to instead take what they could get in compensation as well as enjoy the rewards which may accrue from being a government 'team player'. Last year the Ports released a project offsets package and in this stated that "in the event of failure of the shorebird element of the project, \$340,000 would be made available for appropriate offsets." Effectively the current shorebird habitat which hosts rare and threatened species protected by international agreements is valued below the average building block in neighbouring suburbs. The compensation is also a small fraction of the sum that Sydney Ports agreed, at the Commission of Inquiry, to pay Air Services to ensure that appropriate technology will be available to allow container ships to dock at the new berths. There is a chance that the new 'enhanced' bird habitat will be successful but because of recent cost-cutting on the terminal design that chance, slim enough according to evidence produced at the Commission of Inquiry, has diminished. The government and the project supporters have the benefit of time and short memories on their side, as according to Sydney Ports the success or otherwise of the Penrhyn Shorebird Habitat cannot be called until 2017. In the meantime Hazel Watson and others ignorant of the economic impacts and struggles

to save Botany Bay, get to enjoy a "great ' Sydney beach job'" and in their innocence promote Sydney Ports as being environmentally concerned.

SYDNEY PORTS CORPORATION PORT BOTANY NEIGHBOURHOOD LIAISON GROUP (PNLG)

I have been appointed as a community member on this committee. Any items you want raised please send to lyndanewnam@hotmail.com or leave them for me at Kooloora.

COMING EVENTS

July 27 - National Tree Day

August 16-24 - National Science Week. This year's theme is 'Planet Earth – Planet of Change'.

September 1-7 Weedbusters Week

September 6 – Weed Walk: leaves Snake Pit 9am



Botany 'BITOU' Bay National Park - Bitou Bush is the single greatest threat to NSW coastal ecosystems and biodiversity with 80% of the coastline impacted.



Entry to National Park covered in Cape Ivy Weed.

September 7 – National Threatened Species Day

October 4-10 – World Space Week

October 16 – World Food Day

Lynda Newnam June 2008