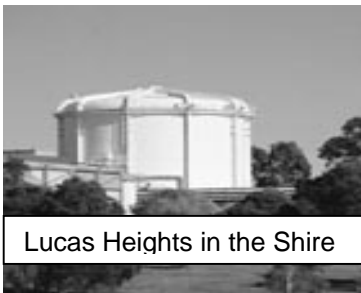


# ENVIRONMENTALLY SPEAKING 5

## DESALINATION & NUCLEAR POWER

At the Ordinary Council Meeting of Randwick Council, held 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2005, members agreed to the motion: "that the Mayor writes to the Premier and Frank Sartor stating Council's opposition to the construction of a desalination plant on the Kurnell Peninsula and any such plant in the Randwick Council area. The letters would outline Council's concern for potential negative environmental impacts the plant may have on the marine ecology of Botany Bay and the Pacific Ocean, and in particular the coastline and beaches of Randwick City South and Central wards. Council calls on the Premier to immediately undertake a feasibility study on Sewerage and storm water re-use."

Two Labour councillors requested that their names be recorded as opposed to the resolution. One of these councillors stated "I'm a true believer in desalination....I support the Premier and the Minister, Frank Sartor for their proposal to build a desalination plant at Kurnell." The other councillor went much further. "I'm actually in favour of desalination and in fact....I reckon that we should go further and stop these greenhouse gases ..... we should use nuclear power. They've got a nuclear power plant over in the Shire let's build another one....let's stop the coal, let's stop the natural gas....let's support nuclear power."



This sentiment was echoed earlier in the year by the The Rev Fred Nile MLC, leader of the CDP, when he said that "Sydney urgently needs a

new nuclear power station to meet its future power needs", (6<sup>th</sup> May, 2005, Christian Democratic Party Media Release). In June Mr Carr had also suggested the need for debate on the Nuclear issue. Coincidentally, on July 27 less than 24 hours after the Randwick City Council debate on the Kurnell Desalination Plant Mr Carr resigned.

**The nuclear option is not cheap, supplies of uranium are finite, greenhouse gas is produced, used fuel has to be disposed of and threats from accidents and terrorism are significant.**

- Nuclear Power Stations (not including military, research and medical) produce over 8,000 tonnes of used nuclear fuel each year.

- A complete lifecycle analysis of the nuclear process reveals that the average nuclear reactor produces 20-40% of the CO<sub>2</sub> of a gas fired power plant.
- In France, if the nuclear industry were not exempt from paying full accident insurance, the premiums would increase the costs of nuclear generated electricity by 300%.
- If all the world's existing fossil fuel based power stations were replaced by nuclear, there would only be enough uranium for 3-4 years.
- Since the Chernobyl disaster there have been at least 22 major accidents at nuclear power stations of which 15 involved radiological release.

With the Desalination Proposal recycling is not being considered and the same goes in the Nuclear debate. The big options are being favoured over the small, the community-based, the self – sufficient. If we can harness our own water and energy supplies we don't need to be dependent consumers of large corporations such as Sydney Water.

*(Source for Nuclear Statistics (many more available) New Internationalist, September 2005).*

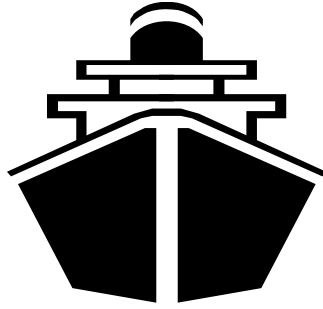


## CARS ARE NOT THE ONLY PRODUCERS OF POLLUTION

**A responsible reason for letting the grass grow!!!!**

In postcode 2036 motor vehicles account for 11.3% of pollution emissions and **motor mowers for 11.8%**.

*(Source: National Pollution Index – www.npi.gov.au)*



**GAMBLING WITH  
BOTANY BAY – GAMBLING WITH THE FUTURE  
OF NSW**

**10 MYTHS SURROUNDING THE  
PORT BOTANY EXPANSION**

**MYTH 1:** *It is to meet the needs of the consumers living in Sydney.*

No. The growth of imports into Sydney outstrips the population growth by 12 to 1. This development is about turning Sydney into a mega freight hub – a city of trucks, warehouses, freight trains, container terminals.

**MYTH 2:** *If goods have to be shipped back to Sydney it will add costs to the consumer.*

The average cost would be less than \$20 per person a year for ALL the current imports – higher for the big consumers of imports and lower for most of us. Stack that up against the congestion, the health costs of noise and air pollution, the loss of recreation in Botany Bay, the destruction to fish-breeding grounds in Botany Bay, the use of prime inner-city suburban land for stacking empty containers, the billions of \$ to upgrade and maintain road and rail freightways in Sydney, the higher costs for regional exporters, and the lack of employment opportunities in regional NSW.

**MYTH 3:** *The dredging of over 10 million cubic metres from Botany Bay will have no impact on the movement of the toxic EDC plume and remediation of the Botany Aquifer being undertaken by Orica, nor the spread of contamination already in Penrhyn Estuary and the surrounding area.*

People in Banksmeadow and Botany have been ordered to disconnect their bores which supply them with water from the Botany Aquifer, yet the consulting firm which undertook studies for both the

Port expansion and the Orica remediation works believe the dredging will have no affect. This opinion is shared by the Department of Environment and Conservation. The Patrick Terminal is embargoed from the extraction of water from the Botany Aquifer yet only a few metres away Sydney Ports propose to dredge. The expansion option preferred by the Department of Planning extends Brotherson Dock into the embargoed area. The Department of Environment and Conservation, in the form of the Environmental Protection Authority, have displayed their lack of understanding of the Orica Plumes before this. They were supposed to be monitoring the plumes over the past decade but they sat back and let the situation get to the emergency we now have. They are prepared to gamble again.

**MYTH 4:** *There are no issues with the protected airspace of Sydney Airport.*

Air Services Australia presented Sydney Ports Corporation with caveats at the Commission of Inquiry in October 2004. Sydney Ports will be paying at least \$10 million to assist in the development of new technology which is hoped will allow the next generation of larger container ships to dock at the proposed new terminal. There is no guarantee that this technology will meet CASA certification standards but Sydney Ports Corporation is prepared to take this 'commercial risk'. Sydney Ports is a State-Owned corporation so the risk is being taken on behalf of the very citizens whose health and lifestyles are being compromised.

**MYTH 5:** *There will be serious economic and social consequences if the proposal does not proceed.*

For whom? If Sydney does not continue to expand there will be less need to build more Meriton apartments, more Macquarie tollways, more Westfields.....How many retirees would seek a simpler lifestyle in regional NSW if health services were comparable to those offered in Sydney? How many families would also make the move if employment and educational opportunities were available for their children in the regions?

**MYTH 6:** *There are no viable alternative locations which would provide the necessary capacity for long-term growth in the container trade.*

Port Kembla. Newcastle and the Hunter Economic Zone (HEZ) at Kurri Kurri. The HEZ is comparable in size to an area from Mascot to Bondi, closer and cheaper for our northern exporters. NSW is increasingly losing business in Northern NSW to Port Brisbane because Sydney is more expensive and congested.

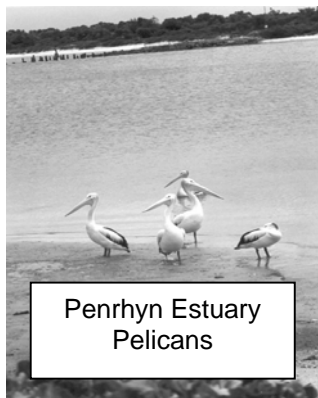
**MYTH 7:** *Shipping Owners do not want to go to smaller ports.*

Why should Shipping Owners dictate Planning Policy in NSW. Shipping Owners are only one group in the freight chain. If they had to pay the real cost of doing business in Sydney – the costs that are now externalised to the hundreds of thousands of citizens affected – there would be incentive enough to go elsewhere.

**MYTH 8:** *The recreational value of Foreshores Beach, Penrhyn Estuary and the surrounding area will be enhanced.*

Under the expansion, a fishing exclusion zone will operate between the Port and the Airport. Windsurfing and other non-motorised water activities will not be possible. Those in boats will have to access Botany Bay via a narrow channel between the 3<sup>rd</sup> Runway and the mega container ships. It is likely that the security exclusion zones could be increased to a point where accessing the Bay from the new boat ramp became impossible.

**MYTH 9:** *The ecological value of Penrhyn Estuary will be enhanced.*



Penrhyn Estuary Pelicans

Even the Pelicans will be discouraged. Barriers will hinder the flight of rare and threatened wading birds. Penrhyn Estuary, itself, is set to become a gross pollutant trap.

**MYTH 10:** *It will provide prosperity for NSW*

Will we be prosperous if we continue to favour our importers over our exporters\*? Do we need to import ice-creams, bananas and similar products? Do we need to subsidise those imports by externalising the associated health and loss of amenity costs to communities in Southern Sydney, in addition to placing the burden of the supporting infrastructure costs on all NSW citizens while denying regional NSW critical infrastructure investment? Is it wise to bundle our critical infrastructure – oil, gas, airport, port, chemical stores – together? Are our political and bureaucratic leaders considering our future or are they simply treading a path they say themselves was marked out in the 1970s - a time when our balance of trade figures were in the black and terrorism was not considered a threat.

(\* exporters of products originating in Australia not composite products re-labelled/repackaged to be Australianised).

## POLLUTION A THREAT TO ELDERLY

By Jacqueline Maley Medical Reporter  
September 6, 2005 (with courtesy of the Sydney Morning Herald)

Air pollution is a trigger factor for stroke and heart attack in the elderly, according to new research.

The research, from the NSW Department of Health, showed a 10 per cent rise in admissions of over-65s to emergency departments for cardio-vascular problems on days when pollution is high.

One of the study's authors, Dr Vicky Sheppard, said the findings underlined the importance of controlling air pollution "because of the effect it has on population health". "If you look at sensitive groups, like the over-65s, you are more likely to find an effect if it's there."



## AIRCRAFT NOISE POLLUTION EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

In the largest study of its kind to date, Stephen Stansfeld (Barts and the London, Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of London, UK) and colleagues, assessed the effects of aircraft noise on children's cognitive development and health. Over 2800 children, aged 9-10 years, from 89 primary schools located near

three major airports-Schiphol in the Netherlands, Barajas in Spain, and Heathrow in the UK-took part in the study.

**Pooling the data from the three countries, the researchers found exposure to aircraft noise impaired reading comprehension.**

In another study, 326 German school children were followed up progressively as the old Munich airport was replaced by a new international facility. Children attending schools near the airport improved their reading scores and cognitive memory performance as the airport shut down, while children going to school near the new airport experienced a decrease in testing scores. (from *The Lancet*, June 2005)

## **EX-PLANNING MINISTER ON KURNELL**

"No one lives in this area. There is an oil refinery, a carbon factory down the road, a brick pit across the road ... if it is a desirable place to live, they can have it. But I suggest you would not get many takers," said Mr Knowles.

(Quoted in Desalination plant 'too important to debate', Wendy Frew, Environment writer, Sydney Morning Herald)

## **HAPPY 1<sup>ST</sup> BIRTHDAY INSIDE GOSSIP**

In the first issue of Environmentally Speaking I wrote a piece called Twenty Thirty Six where I listed some of the environmental ills of South Ward. In that article I quoted from a Sydney Morning Herald letter (published 28/11/2003) written by Mr Llewellyn Mead of Mosman. Mr Mead in reply to one of the many readers who supported the continuation of container shipping on Sydney Harbour, said: "Why don't you move to Port Botany and leave the harbour for those of us who would like it as a place for people."

Mr Mead and those who support him are happy to enjoy the goods brought in by the container ships but the impacts of container freight should, they argue, be dumped on Botany Bay and the citizens of Southern Sydney.

Now it appears that the citizens of Mosman have been living well beyond their 'environmental' means:

*Rightly or wrongly, Mosman residents have always been suspected of having big cars, big houses and big incomes. Now the local council has revealed*

*that they also have bloody big feet. Ecological feet, that is.*

*A council survey shows that the average Mosperson has an ecological footprint - a measure of the area required to supply the resources to support a particular lifestyle - of 14.7 hectares. That is almost twice as big as the Australian average and more than six times the global figure of 2.3 hectares per head.*

***If the resources to support the Mosman lifestyle had to be found locally the municipality could support only 58 people, she said. Its population is 28,000.***

***"Similarly, if everyone on the planet had the same lifestyle as in Mosman, we'd need to find another seven Earths to support us all."***

extract from *Bigfoot alive and thriving on the North Shore*, August 1, 2005, author John Huxley, Sydney Morning Herald

## **LET THE RAPTORS FLY FREE – NO CHOPPERS AT CAPE BANKS**

We have requested that questions be raised at this month's Budget Estimates committee regarding the Helicopter Base at Cape Banks. Cape Banks is an unsuitable site for the very critical Rescue Helicopter Service which is now located at Sydney Airport. The land was excised from Botany Bay National Park and given 'free' for development to Landcom. When Mr Lemma was Health Minister there was a review of emergency services – what has become of the recommendations? Helicopter bases are major infrastructure around the Port and need to be absolutely secure - that is achieved where the helicopter is located now but it won't be at Cape Banks unless more money is used for additional security. Up until last week there were three signs on Anzac Parade, at the entry to Botany Bay National Park, for the NSW Golf Club, The Sydney Pistol Club and The Cape Banks Scout Ground. The signs for the adult activities – golfing and shooting – remain but the sign for the scout ground – for the children – has gone.

### **FOR THE DIARY:**

**Great Australian Bushwalk - "Walk across Australia in a day" 16 October 2005**

[www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au](http://www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au) or call (02) 9290 2503.

*Lynda Newnam September 2005*