

SUSTAINABILITY SPEAKING

No 12 Spring 2013

VALE NANCY HILLIER



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Nancy Hillier will be remembered as a great champion for Botany Bay. She was involved in environmental campaigns since the 1970s, notably against the construction of Port Botany container terminals and the environmental and human health impacts of major industries, such as Orica. In 1985 Nancy was named Botany Bay Council's *Citizen of the Year*, and in 2006 she was awarded an OAM for her services to conservation and the environment.

Nancy was born in Waverton, North Sydney in 1924. She moved to Matraville in 1933 with her mother and sister after her father's death. A few years later the family moved to Botany where Nancy remained for the rest of life. Nancy worked in the paper mills, married Ernest Hillier in 1944 and had two sons. In a documentary made in 1979 Nancy explained how she became an environmental activist:

*I came over to this side of the harbour in 1932 when I was eight years of age. It was a mixture of country and sea. It was a child's paradise. There was a beach there the children could go to with no fear of drowning. You'd see the cows being driven home of an afternoon and the vegetable gardens were widespread all over the area and it was a treat to go down and get our vegetables from the Chinamen.....**at this time, the tanneries and the wool washers were beginning to move out of Botany and this indeed was progress, but we didn't know that they were moving out to create room for worse industry to come.***



So I have been active in the district for a number of years. I was very concerned about the way industry was spreading through the municipality with total disregard to people and I had written many letters to council and these friends had been interested in what I was doing but not interested enough to act on their own accord. But when I spoke to them about the coal loader they said, 'Well, alright, we'll give it a go. We'll back you.' And from four people – my husband and two friends – we gathered another six,

which was ten people and we did that petition for the coal loader and we were successful in getting 1,400 names. (photo above: Nancy campaigning c.1976 courtesy City of Botany Bay Library and Museum)

Nancy was subjected to personal threats and intimidation, but refused to be silenced. She rallied local residents and continued to battle both industry and Government. Her contributions to victories were many, including preventing the coal loader from being built and stopping Orica's stockpile of Hexachlorobenzene(HCB) from being destroyed in Botany.

Nancy had no time for those who would cover up the truth. In 2002, on her 78th birthday, ABC Radio broadcast a major report titled *Chlorine Capers - The Mayor, The Minister, the planner and the chlorine plant: a 20 year gamble by the authorities that nothing would happen, despite the risk of illness injury, or death.* In that interview Nancy argued for residents' *right to know*:

Well they used to think that you'd panic people by doing things like that, and I don't think that would be the case. I think there'd have been a better understanding in the community of the area that they lived in and that would make them more cautious. And this alarming people, I think a little bit of alarm, a little bit of panic, makes people activated and they'll stand up and see that the right thing is done by them.

From Ron Hoenig's *Tribute to Nancy Hillier* in the NSW Parliament, 10th September 2013:

*In many respects, Nancy epitomised our community. Nancy was hard, tough and uncompromising when she needed to be, but she also had compassion and love for our community and its residents. Like our community, she went through good times and bad. She not only witnessed the renaissance of our community but was one of the driving forces of that renaissance. It is not trite to say that the City of Botany Bay would not be the place it is today were it not for Nancy. It is my privilege to say that Nancy was my friend and mentor. When I was elected Mayor of the City of Botany Bay at the age of 27, Nancy Hillier was one of my greatest influences. Nancy was never afraid to pick up the phone and tell the young mayor that he had messed up, that he was off track or that he needed to do something. Equally, she would quietly let you know when you had done something well. **Nancy Hillier was and always will be an amazing lady. She was a "diminutive giant".***

FISHING ON NORTH BOTANY BAY



Several years prior to any action being taken it was known that Penrhyn Estuary was contaminated and Botany Bay Council erected warning signs. In the Port Botany Expansion Environmental Impact Statement(EIS) of 2003/4, Sydney Ports noted that fishing would be prohibited in the area because of issues related to marine and aviation safety. However, it wasn't until August 2004 that the NSW Department of Primary Industries considered restrictions following results of tests on oysters. Their Advisory Council on

Recreational Fishing recommended a closure north of a line drawn from the south-eastern extremity of the third runway to Molineux Point (see line on map). However, this was reduced to Penrhyn Estuary itself, the bird habitat area now enclosed by the third terminal. After a recent request to reconsider banning fishing from around the Foreshore Boat Ramp, Fisheries (in June 2013) determined that the ban would extend to the bridge across to the new terminal. The area is restricted already so this effectively did nothing.



Earlier this year Fisheries had indicated their willingness to fund the construction of a fishing platform at Molineux Point. The water quality at Molineux is good, it is popular with fishers, artificial reefs have been installed to encourage fish into the area and access is excellent. The proposed platform would have been wheelchair accessible. Instead of pursuing this it appears they will now support the construction of a platform at the Foreshore Boat Ramp where the water quality is recorded as Very Poor, access is focussed on boat trailers, and there is potential for elevating the risk of bird strike.

MALABAR TERRACES



William McKell was the Member for Botany 1920-27, Premier of NSW 1941-7 and Governor General 1947-53. A recent publication from the McKell Institute recommends meeting Sydney's housing demands by building terraces. In *Back to the future - the Sydney Terrace* the authors suggest that the NSW Government hold a design competition to

develop different models which replicate the success of the terrace:

Once a new pattern book is developed the NSW Government should encourage small lot, terrace or semi-detached housing within 600-800 metres of an existing train station or other transport node. Eight hundred metres is less than an 8 minute walk. This could be achieved by exempting such housing from needing planning approval for a sub-division or development application, so long as it complied with the standard in the pattern book..... The updated NSW Government Metropolitan Strategy for 2036 released in December 2010 called for a total of 699,000 new homes to be delivered from 2006-2036. This equates to an average delivery of around 23,000 homes annually during this 30 year period. This was, and continues to be, a conservative figure of the number of new homes that should be built within the Sydney region. NSW Treasury estimates that up to 50,000 homes must be built annually across Sydney. The National Housing Supply Council put Sydney's housing shortage at 73,700 in 2010 and predicted that under a medium household growth scenario, Sydney would face demand for an additional 516,300 houses by 2030.

One of the suburbs identified as suitable for terrace construction is Malabar.

SELF PROVISIONING

Earn less, spend less, emit and degrade less. That's the formula. The more time a person has, the better his or her quality of life, and the easier it is to live sustainably. A study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research estimated that if the United States were to shift to the working patterns of Western European countries, where workers spend on average 255 fewer hours per year at their jobs, energy consumption would decline about 20 percent. Nations with shorter working hours have considerably smaller ecological and carbon footprints.



A French study found that households with longer working hours increased their spending on housing (buying larger homes with more appliances), transport (longer hours reduced the use of public transportation), and hotels and restaurants. A recent Swedish study found that when households reduce their working hours by 1 percent, their greenhouse gas emissions go down by 0.8 percent. One explanation is that when households spend more time earning money, they compensate in part by purchasing more goods and services, and buying them at later stages of processing (e.g., more prepared foods). People who have more time at home and less at work can engage in slower, less resource-intensive activities. They can hang their clothing on the line, rather than use an electric dryer. More important, they can switch to less energy-intensive but more time-consuming modes of transport (mass transit or carpool versus private auto, train versus airplane). They can garden and cook at home. They can meet more of their basic needs by making, fixing, doing, and providing things themselves.

Doing-it-yourself, or self-provisioning, is now on the rise, both because of a culture shift and because in hard times people have more time and less money. Most people who practice it don't self-provide everything. They find some productive activities they prefer, are more skilled at, or can do more easily. They trade or sell what they're best at producing.



LA PEROUSE CHINESE MARKET GARDENS

Last month executive members of the NSW Farmers Association visited the Gardens along with Daphne Lowe-Kelley and organic farmer, Fred Haskins. Robert Teng, the remaining market gardener and now a proud member of the Association, has done extensive works since taking over the Ha Brothers' allotment.

(L-R: David Clarke, Fred Haskins, Robert Teng, Peter Darley, Daphne Lowe-Kelley)

listen.

We pay careful attention every step of the way.

Discover Us >>

think.

We put the best minds to work to create the right total solutions.

Insights >>

deliver.

We bring you start-to-finish services: plan, design, build and operate.

Solutions >>



listen. think. deliver.

EPA MERCURY REVIEW UPDATE

CDM Smith were successful in winning the tender for the first stage of the EPA's mercury review. As part of their investigations they want to talk to everyone who has knowledge about ICI/Orica practices. If you do know something please contact Loek Munnichs, Senior Environmental Scientist at (02) 89188800 or fax (02) 89188899 Level 11, 90 Arthur Street North Sydney email: munnichsl@cdmsmith.com mobile: 0448062136

BOTANY AND THE BAY



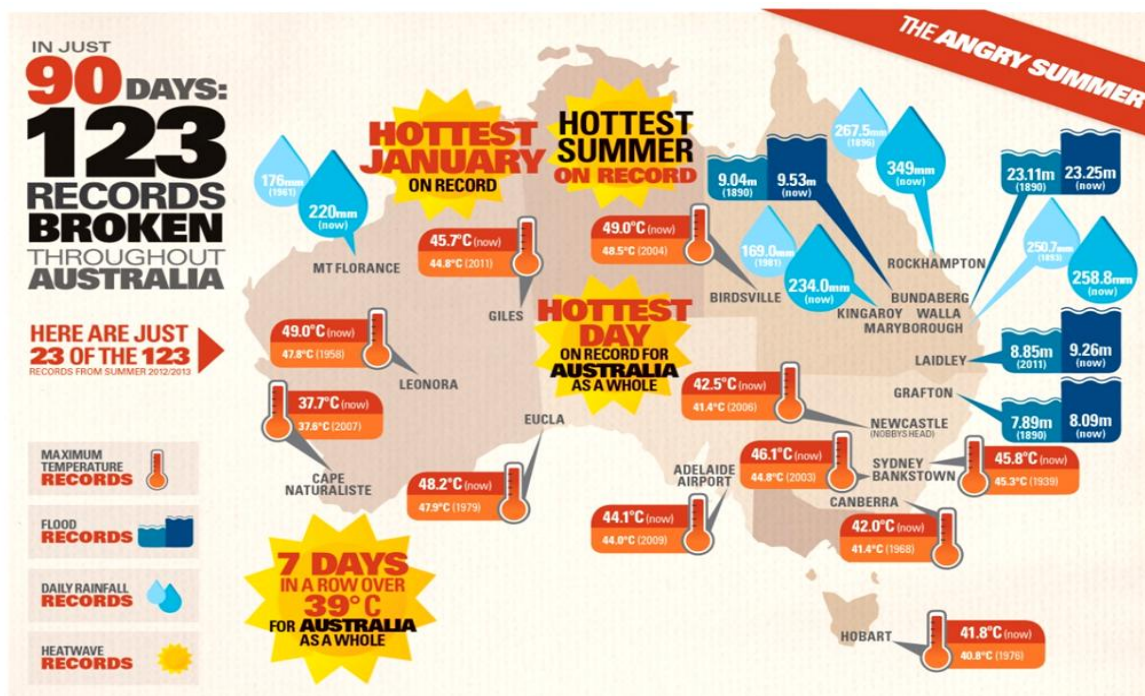
Exhibition on Botany Bay at George Hanna Museum, 2 Hatfield St, Mascot, until March 2014.

Special Talk: 2pm 19th October. Bookings essential: 93663888 or

museum@botanybay.nsw.gov.au (Photo – Reginald, Jeffrey and Stanley Edwards getting ready to row at Botany c. 1930s)

AUSTRALIA LAST SUMMER

from the Climate Commission now the Climate Council
www.climatecouncil.org.au



Lynda Newnam
September 2013