

Sutherland Shire
Environment Centre Inc.

Annual Report 2006-07

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre works with others in the community – including business, council, government and residents – to achieve a sustainable environment in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions.



Patron

R.D. (Bob) Walshe, OAM

Board Members 2006-07

Phil Smith (chair)

John Nelson (treasurer)

Elaine Lucas (secretary)

Roger Bramble

Genevieve Kelly

John Lincoln

Michael McInerney

Ruth Zeibots

Development Officer

Graeme Booth

Chairman's Report

Once again I'd like to thank everyone for your year of interest and activity – in the Centre and its initiatives, and in environmental issues specific and general. That you continue to choose to be member of SSEC bespeaks an attentiveness to sustainability matters and personal actions to achieve it. The Centre has continued to work with others at local, regional and national levels (where it can) for sustainability.

Times and technology bring us to a cusp. Conversations have been had on where the Centre is going – not today or even tomorrow, but sometime not too distant. The Centre has evolved...is evolving.

As you know, the Centre grew out of a 'writing for the environment' program and a parallel community campaign against a mega-tip. The Centre was established as a centre – of information, organization and action. Nothing else existed for those in the community who wanted to *do something* to stop the damage and do something to enhance the quality and health of the environment.

When I look closely at the Centre – where it's been, what it's achieved, what it's doing – I cannot help but also look at what's happening outside its doors. The context has changed in the past 15 years locally, nationally and globally and thoughts must necessarily expand to embrace the evolution of the *idea* of a Centre.

Our Centre was born when almost no-one was looking, and for most of its life, there's been little widespread concern about the environment. In schools in the 90s for example, the NSW Education Department's mandatory environmental education curriculum statement was withering out of ignorance and neglect. In government...nothing: the community still accepted that environment and economy were different and separate, and it accepted the government lines of 'not enough evidence' and 'they're just greenie ratbags'. Green was a trillion miles from mainstream. (Though, as this current decade is showing, it has been traveling at light speed!). For all intents and purposes, environment meant waste; so, not surprisingly, the Sutherland community got behind this environmental campaign against the mega-tip because waste was something people could understand – particularly if it was to be used to make a mountain in your backyard. Business simply ignored concerns – just as it ignored the damage it was doing.

The idea of a place, a room, a shop... a Centre was critical. A storehouse of information, a campaign office, a conduit for sharing concerns and building commitment for action... Community centres

have been around forever wherever people need to meet and organize and discuss and learn and share. SSEC – like other environment centres in NSW – was no different. It filled a need.

But look at what has happened in the Centre's teenage years:

- The internet and computer usage in Australia was in its infancy when we began; these have also traveled at light speed and we are one of the world's fastest adopters of technology.
- The expansion (explosion) of online information coupled with this uptake of the internet across all demographics means that information is at hand at home at any time.
- National and state and local governments have woken and smelled the flowers (bouquets of toxic evidence?) – economic rationalism was doing damage. Governments have accepted that government policy has a role to play. All Parties have adopted an environmental stance.
- Communities everywhere fell off their horses: Aha! So economy and environment and well-being are connected!
- Mainstream media has taken an interest and we're seeing such manifestations as *Sydney Morning Herald* liftouts and weekly eco-editions, EarthHour, themes in movies, sitcoms and cartoons (e.g. hybrid car in *South Park*).
- Environment programs and independent providers have slowly burst onto the scene everywhere.
- Businesses are fighting for the high ground in environmental protection (perhaps it's the high ground for when climate change really takes hold!)
- Across this country every state and territory government is providing significant support for the Sustainable Schools Initiative. TAFEs and universities everywhere are working rapidly to integrate environmental perspectives into programs and operations.

And all of this is true for many countries.

Yes, the world has changed: information and actions are increasingly becoming decentralized. There are implications for the Centre: membership, campaigns, communication, structure, roles...The community once came to us – now we must get better at going to it. At moving from a focus that's inside to one of outreach. From management to facilitation. From small numbers doing stuff to lots of people everywhere doing and wanting to do stuff. From supporting a few lobbyists to enabling whole communities to lobby. From being out in front to having to get out of the way!

We've addressed some of these. The website is being improved all the time and presentations have been given to community groups. But there are further implications and these will be a part of the

conversation of the Centre over the next year. (Did I hear someone suggest a name change to Sutherland Shire Environment Decentre?)

But we won't sit on our hands wondering. The SSEC will continue to fight and advocate and support. The Centre, regardless of its shape or size or location, embodies an idea – an ideal – a wish that *we can* protect the environment and *we can* live our lives in more sustainable ways.

The Centre needs to be continually refreshed with good thinking and new hands and new heads. The *idea* of the Centre also needs to be continually refreshed. Please read this as an invitation to participate where best you can in the conversations about where our Centre goes and what it does.

You will see that this Annual Report is organized around the elements of the SSEC's Statement of Purpose and Function. This past 12 months, the Board has been focused on these elements; the Report's structure thus reflects this focus.

Finally, thank you to the many who have kept our doors open and blood running. Thanks to Graeme Booth, Ruth Zeibots, Shirley Renshall, Ruth Turner and Elaine Lucas for your presence in the Centre and for the energy and ideas you have brought. Thanks to our other volunteers: Gordon & Elsa Hocking and John Zeibots. Thanks to Jenni Gormley for the wonderful work happening on the website and with the local presentations and Fact Sheets.

Thanks also to our Auditor... Melina at Munro Spaul Accountants.

Thanks to the Board. I repeat what I said last year: each member has demonstrated patience and creativity and both have been needed this year. Thanks to Roger Bramble, John Nelson, Genevieve Kelly, Ruth Zeibots, Elaine Lucas, Michael McInerney and John Lincoln.



Phil Smith
Chair

Statement of Purpose

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre will work with others in the community – including business, council, government and residents – to achieve a sustainable environment in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions.

Statement of Functions

The Board agrees that the following list comprises the priority functions of the SSEC:

1. Establish the SSEC as the Peak Environment Group in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions, one that supports low-impact lifestyles, practices and behaviours in the community.
2. Establish efficient communication processes with the community.
3. Develop and conduct education initiatives.
4. Campaign publicly for protecting and improving the quality of the environment in Sutherland and its bio-regions.
5. Support members and local community organisations in their efforts to protect their local areas.
6. Establish efficient information, operation and management systems for the Centre.
7. Strengthen relationships with Sutherland Shire Council, other councils and other community and environmental organisations.
8. Raise funds to carry out the functions of the Centre.

For all of the above, the principles of working in partnership with others and in concert with other initiatives apply. Consultation and collaboration are vital elements of effective partnerships.

The overall aim is to create an environment centre! One that is welcoming and useful for the community. And one that models and demonstrates environmental and sustainability values in its decisions, practices and actions.

1. Establish the SSEC as the Peak Environment Group in the Sutherland Shire and its bio-regions, one that supports low-impact lifestyles, practices and behaviours in the community.

- Throughout the year SSEC has developed strategic initiatives to strengthen the foundation of the Centre to more thoroughly align its purpose to the environmental needs of today. These initiatives have begun with the updating and strengthening of the Constitution, the creation of a “Statement of Purpose and Functions” (upon which this report is based), and the beginning of the implementation of the strategic initiatives.
- SSEC is developing plans to further reach out to the community to facilitate action to introduce and maintain sustainable lifestyle practices that have low environmental impacts. These include initiatives such as the Centre’s push for a cycleway to be constructed from Sutherland to Cronulla.
- In keeping with the themes of maintaining sustainable lifestyles and low environmental impact, SSEC has redefined its shopfront presentation to the community. The Centre therefore no longer sells electrical items or non-native plants. Second hand books are still available and we still accept donations of books. The Centre would like to sell native plants if a suitable supplier could be found. Consideration is also being given to a range of other items that could be sold that are compatible with the Centre’s objectives.
- SSEC has had on-going discussions with council concerning the future of the “sustainable house” near the Sutherland Leisure centre, the possibility of a “sustainable streets” program in the Shire and also the concept of a “sustainability centre” which would inform homeowners of the options available when building and renovating.

2. Establish efficient communication processes with the community

- The SSEC website generates a slow but steady stream of enquiries. The site menus have had some small changes recently to improve and simplify access to information and the site is updated on a continual basis.
- The Centre reference library has been reduced to Sutherland Shire based topics plus related reference material, and the catalogue for the reference library will be put on the website after all online references to reports and information have been determined. This process may take a few months to complete but will provide valuable reference

material to local students and others researching local environmental issues.

- Public meetings are an important means of communicating with the community and the Centre has become proficient in organising and conducting these meetings. Two significant meetings (WaterFirst and Desalination) were held in the Hazelhurst theatre and another larger Desalination meeting at the UTS university hall.

- Email networks are already in place so the Centre can communicate quickly and effectively with like minded community and environmental organizations. A more comprehensive email list of Centre members needs to be established so we can keep members up to date on local environmental issues.

- Letterboxing and mailouts are planned over the next 12 months to enable the Centre to communicate directly with Shire residents.

3. Develop and conduct education initiatives

- In 2007 SSEC once again ran its regular Recycled Art competition among the local schools of the Shire. Ruth Zeibots, who has ably coordinated the competition since its inception many years ago said: "A good response, with Lucas Heights Community School, Sylvania Public School, Cronulla High School, St. John Bosco School Engadine and Jannali Pre-school showing interest in participating. Lucas Heights has been a regular participant dating back to 1998. Joan Sutton has always coordinated the school's entries ranging from Kindergarten to Year 7/8. Some of this year's entries can be seen at our AGM. Book prizes will be awarded at school assemblies in October. We always stress the importance of using recycled materials in their entries which seems to have had an impact. The imagination and resourcefulness shown, never ceases to amaze me!"

The Recycled Art Competition is a way of educating today's children, and tomorrow's leaders, with positive environmental messages.

- A range of education brochures (fact sheets) on major environmental issues. These will be provided on the website in PDF format and will continue to be valuable as education pieces to the wider community. Fact Sheets will be delivered to target campaign areas of the centre in 2008.

- This year SSEC has provided guest speakers for local community groups on 3 occasions. Ruth Zeibots addressed the Older Women's Network and Jenni Gormley has presented a climate change address to South Cronulla Probus Club and a German Speaking group in Bexley. Jenni's speech is on the website for those interested. The

Centre hopes to make the availability of speakers better known to our local community groups. (The Centre has recently won a small Federal Government grant for equipment for purchase of a data projector.)

4. Campaign publicly for protecting and improving the quality of the environment in Sutherland and its bioregions

- Our campaigning toolbox includes our website, letter writing campaigns, and media releases.
- The proposed construction of a huge \$1.76 billion desalination plant at Kurnell has continued to be a central focus. SSEC organized a public debate on this issue at Hazelhurst and later a much larger meeting at UTS. A great many letters to local and state politicians, and media (*Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph, St George and Sutherland Shire Leader and Shire Life*) have been written. Again, a coalition of community groups has provided a more centralized force. Representation on Sutherland Shire Council's anti-Desalination Working Party has been crucial.
- The WaterFirst group (campaigning against extensions to longwall coal mining in nearby water catchment areas) held an information evening at Hazelhurst with invited guests including local politicians and decision makers as well as a range of other prominent shire citizens. Petitions, its own website, media releases and articles in *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader and Shire Life* as well as metropolitan press. A strong coalition of environmental groups from around NSW was formed. Approaches made to Sutherland Shire Council resulted in council agreeing to make an independent submission to the inquiry into the Southern Coalfields. SSEC also prepared a submission which is available on the website.
- The Sutherland-Cronulla Rail Trail campaign utilised traditional petitions in cycle shops, door-knocking, on street stalls, and in the Centre office, an on-line petition, articles in cycling magazines, letters to the editor, articles in local media (*Shire Life, St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*), newspaper coupons (*Shire Life*). Deputations were made to local members of Parliament, State Transport Minister John Watkins (who received petitions from 3000 residents), Minister for Health and Minister for Roads, Opposition members, and the RTA. Days before the State election, a promise was made by the Government to provide \$50,000 for design of two small disjointed sections of rail trail (Miranda Station to Sutherland Hospital, and Caringbah Station to Gannons Road). Campaigning will continue for better cycling facilities in the Shire.

5. Support members and local community organisations in their efforts to protect their local areas

- SSEC has worked with local cycling group SharkBike and Miranda Precinct Association to promote the construction of a cycleway/shared path between Sutherland and Cronulla in conjunction with the railway line duplication.
- Worked with council and local community groups to stop construction of the Desalination Plant at Kurnell.
- Supported inclusion of indigenous leaders/members views at WaterFirst community meeting
- Supported the formation of local climate action network SCAN and provided both support and the use of the Centre for SCAN meetings.
- Provided meeting facilities and support for CRoSS (Combined Residents of Sutherland Shire) where representatives of local precinct committees meet.

6. Establish efficient information, operation and management systems for the Centre

- SSEC is continually looking at better ways to process information. Email is now handled remotely and the information forwarded on a need to know basis. The Centre's phones are diverted when the Centre is not manned and are therefore able to be responded to on a 24/7 basis.
- The Board has approved the move back to the Commonwealth Bank and is investigating the most efficient means of carrying out the centre's banking activities.
- Centre newsletters will soon become a monthly e-newsletter – a speedier and far more cost-efficient method of reaching the members. Those without email will be able to request a hard copy of the newsletter.

7. Strengthen relationships with Sutherland Shire Council, other councils and other community and environmental organizations

- SSEC has continued to work well and often closely with the Sutherland Shire Council. Key examples includes work on the impacts of longwall underground coal mining on local water supply

catchments and the Council's formation of a Working Party to consider the effects of the construction of a desalination plant at Kurnell.

- SSEC has worked with other environmental organisations to form effective coalitions to secure positive environmental outcomes.
- The WaterFirst campaign to stop the damage to local drinking water catchments was made up of SSEC, Total Environment Centre, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Colong Foundation for Wilderness and Rivers SOS.
- The desalination campaign led by SSEC is being conducted in conjunction with the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Total Environment Centre, BBACA (Botany Bay and Catchment Alliance), Kurnell Progress Association and many small local environment action groups.
- The Sutherland Rail Trail group includes representation from SSEC, SharkBike (Sutherland Shire Bicycle User Group) and CRoSS (Combined Residents of Sutherland Shire).
- With the development of its strategic plan, SSEC is putting together new initiatives that will hopefully see the Centre and Council working together for the betterment of the local environment and community sectors.

8. Raise funds to carry out the functions of the Centre

- SSEC's future coordination and participation in community environmental projects will have the potential to attract funding from local business through corporate/community/ government partnerships.
- Regular rental income will secure the Centre's future ability to pursue its stated goals.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th June 2007**

2006		NOTE
	<u>INCOME</u>	
1,525	Subscriptions	1,667
60,532	Donations	71,988
4,167	Sales	1,967
52,367	Grants	10,390
298	Interest Received	119
	Fund Raising Events &	
541	Sundry Income	1,905
9,805	Rents Received	14,431
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129,235	TOTAL INCOME	102,467
	 <u>EXPENSES</u>	
200	Advertising	668
624	Bank Charges	865
	Computer Software &	
453	Maintenance	117
25,773	Consultants Fees	25,001
5,062	Depreciation	3,371
871	Electricity	621
35,860	Environmental Projects	9,317
109	Fund Raising Activities	41
-	Honorarium	5,000
2,595	Insurance	2,247
18,000	Interest	19,444
661	Leasing Equipment	-
2,436	Lease Preparation Costs	-
81	Meeting Expenses	329
221	Postage	280
196	Printing & Stationery	410
15,981	Rates & Strata Fees	14,269
3,250	Rent	13,145
779	Repairs & Maintenance	246
95	Staff Amenities	91
416	Staff Training	-
404	Subscriptions & Licences	591
1,981	Telephone & Internet	2,714
1,936	Wages	-
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117,984	TOTAL EXPENSES	98,767
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11,251	OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	3,700
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**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th June 2007**

2006		NOTE	
11,251	Operating Surplus (Deficit)		3,700
<u> -</u>			<u> -</u>
11,251	OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT) AND EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS		3,700
268,251	Retained Surplus (Deficit) Brought Forward		279,502
<u>279,502</u>			<u>283,202</u>
<u>279,502</u>	ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		<u>283,202</u>

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED**

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30th June 2007**

2006

NOTE

SHARE CAPITAL AND RESERVES

	<u>Reserves</u>	
279,502	Accumulated Surplus	283,202

REPRESENTED BY

PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	Buildings - at Cost	
506,353		506,353
46,030	Furniture & Fittings - at Cost	46,690
28,709	Less Prov'n for Depreciation	32,080
<u>17,321</u>		<u>14,610</u>
523,674		520,963

CURRENT ASSETS

	Cash at Bank	
6,470		2,814
11,685	Public Gift Fund	20,125
1,320	PHPS Cash Management Account	1,291
14,890	ANZ SSEC Projects Account	5,628
3,303	Security Deposit	3,304
48	Trade Debtors	-
41	Prepayments	250
2,114	GST on acquisitions	3,665
<u>39,871</u>		<u>37,077</u>

	TOTAL ASSETS	
563,545		558,040

CURRENT LIABILITIES

	Loan - Literary Productions Pty Limited	
19,000		19,000
79	GST on supplies	1,264
14,964	Grants Received in Advance	4,574
<u>34,043</u>		<u>24,838</u>

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

	Loan - Colonial First State Investments Limited	
250,000		250,000
<u>279,502</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>283,202</u>

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE
INCORPORATED**

**NOTES TO AND FORMING THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th June 2007**

NOTE 1 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

These financial statements are a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the accounts preparation requirements of the Corporations Law. The Committee have determined that the club is not a reporting entity as defined in Statement of Accounting Concepts 1: Definition of the Reporting Entity, and therefore application of approved accounting standards is not mandatory in the preparation and presentation of these statements.

The statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Corporations Law, applicable Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (AIFRS), Urgent Issue Group Interpretations and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board with the exception of the following:

AASB 107: Cash Flow Statements
AASB 119: Employee Benefits
AASB 123: Borrowing Costs
AASB 124: Related Party Disclosures
AASB 136: Impairment of Assets
AASB 137: Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets
AASB 140: Investment Property

The statements are prepared on an accruals basis from the records of the club. They are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following specific policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of these statements:

(a) PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT

Property, plant and equipment are included at cost or at independent or Members valuation. The depreciable amount of all fixed assets including capitalised leased assets, but excluding freehold land and buildings, are depreciated over their useful lives or at depreciation rates set by the Commissioner of Taxation commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Properties held for investment purposes are not subject to a depreciation charge.

(b) INVESTMENTS

Investments are valued either at cost less amounts written off for permanent diminution in the value of the investments, or at Members' valuation. Dividends and interest are brought to account when received.

(c) INCOME TAX

Exemption from Income Tax has been obtained by virtue of Section 50-45 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE Inc.

**STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 26(6) OF THE
ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT 1984**

In accordance with a Resolution of the Board:

- (a) The attached Income and Expenditure Statement of SSEC is not misleading and gives a true and fair view of the association during its last financial year.
- (b) The attached Balance Sheet of SSEC is not misleading and gives a true and fair view of the association as at 30 June 2007.
- (c) The association has a mortgage from \$250,000 over the association's property at Unit 4, 2-4 Merton Street, Sutherland. As at 30 June 2007, the mortgage balance was \$250,000 which is secured by first mortgage over the property.
- (d) The association received a grant in 2001 from Local Environments of Australia Fund (LEAF) for an amount of \$250,000. This amount is repayable under the following condition:
Rule 26d: The \$250,000 grant from LEAF (Local Environments of Australia Fund) to purchase the property described in 26(b) was made with the understanding that the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated would continue as a local environmental action group, but if this ceases to be the case then the property described in 26(b) or the assets acquired in 26(b)(ii) are to be liquidated and the funds realised subject to 26(b)(i) are to be given to LEAF.

Signed by



Phil Smith
Chairman
For and on behalf of the Board.