



# Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

## *Annual Report 2014-15*



*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 2014-15*

Jenni Gormley (Chairperson)

John Nelson (Treasurer)

Tassia Kolesnikow (Secretary)

Roger Bramble

Jonathan Doig (Climate Change)

Michael McInerney (Hacking River)

Phil Smith (Environmental Education)

Ruth Zeibots

*Development Officer*

Graeme Booth

## **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 Sutherland Shire Environment 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 Sutherland Shire Environment 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.

## **Chairman's Report**

Each year I can't help but be impressed by the activity of our members and associated groups. It is a privilege to be able to support such keen and active guardians of our environment.

Importantly, I would like to extend my thanks to our board: secretary Tassia Kolesnikow, treasurer John Nelson, and directors Phil Smith, Jonathan Doig, Roger Bramble, Ruth Zeibots, and Michael McInerney. As well as being actively involved in their own campaign areas, they have continued to give their time and energy to ensure that the Centre adheres to its goals and constitution and is financially sustainable.

Especially I would like to single out Michael McInerney who has announced that he is not nominating for the board this year. As well as being a long time director of SSEC, Michael has represented the Centre on Council's Port Hacking Management Panel for a very long time and is a strong advocate for protection of our river. But sadly for us, Michael and Judy have decided it is time to do more travelling and enjoy other rivers. We hope they enjoy their retirement and look forward to his eventual return.

Many of our groups have enjoyed successes: Stop CSG Sutherland celebrated AGL's decision not to renew its exploration licence over the Woronora Catchment; Sutherland Climate Action Network was able to thank the Commonwealth Bank when they decided not to invest in Adani; Spring Gully Protection Group convinced Sutherland Shire Council to hand back 8.5ha at Jibbon Hill (the former Night Soil Depot) to National Parks and Wildlife Service.

World Heritage Listing of Royal National Park edges slowly closer. Our involvement in the World Parks Congress last year was an effective strategy, and this year we have started work on a video to help promote the cause.

NSW State Government announced \$2 million of funding for planning for the shared path from Sutherland to Cronulla. One step closer in the slow fight for active transport routes.

Our environmental education programs continue to go from strength to strength. We continue to fund our University of Wollongong Community Scholarship to encourage students to further their study in environmental science. Speaking 4 the Planet, the inspiration of Phil Smith, is now in its third year and has expanded beyond the borders of the Shire. This year it took in 3 council areas and 13 secondary schools. With the involvement of Keep Australia Beautiful, through the Eco-Schools program, S4P is expecting to go Australia-wide in the near future – and there is interest from overseas.

We approach the coming year with cautious anticipation. A new Mayor and General Manager for Sutherland Shire Council (we will be actively seeking them out to ensure we establish good working relationship right at the beginning), the reshuffle in State Government cabinet that gave us the Minister for the Environment in our own backyard and last, but definitely not least, a new Prime Minister (although Greg Hunt has retained the Federal Environment portfolio).

Happily in 2016 Sutherland Shire Environment Centre is well-equipped to assist our community confront these new challenges and courageously stand up to those who are more interested in short term gain than long term sustainability.

*Jenni Gormley*, September 2105

## Achieving our Purpose in 2014-15

The “Statement of Purpose and Functions” (upon which this report is based), is the statement that guides all our actions and the implementation of our strategic initiatives.

### 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.

Community based campaigns and activities supported by Sutherland Shire Environment Centre:-

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### 2. Establish efficient communication processes with the community

The SSEC website has been re-structured this year and is now integrated into with our Facebook page and Mailchimp. This means that the website it constantly kept up-to-date with our current activities.

More activity on Facebook and our twice weekly “Leader ecoNews” (a summary of environmental matters in the local *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*) has seen our “likes” increase by well over 100%.



Attendance at the Progress 2015 conference in May was inspirational with a focus on new ways to communicate. See full report on our website [www.ssec.org.au/progress](http://www.ssec.org.au/progress)

### 3. Develop and conduct education initiatives

- University of Wollongong Scholarship.** The winner of the 2015 UOW Community Scholarship is Alicia Cronly (pictured at right). Alicia is an Environmental Science student. Her project is focussed on monitoring migration and determining the most effective methods to control invasion of the Eastern mosquito fish, *Gambusia holbrooki*.
- Speaking 4 the Planet.** S4P is now in its third year. 2015 saw Keep Australia Beautiful join us in supporting this annual through their Eco-Schools program. S4P was run across 3 council areas in 2015, Sutherland, The Hills and Liverpool. Local Toastmasters groups were also in each area. (see full report on page



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

#### a) Sutherland to Cronulla Shared Path

report by Tassia Kolesnikow

SSEC has been campaigning for a shared path between Sutherland and Cronulla since 2006. We originally suggested that the path be constructed as part of the Cronulla Rail Duplication project. Since that time we have continued to work to achieve this badly need infrastructure for Shire residents.



Bicycles are the ultimate in clean-energy vehicles, with zero emissions and only a small amount of material required for their construction.

Climate change and peak oil are two of the biggest issues we face as a civilisation. Scientists around the world have been ringing alarm bells about these issues for years and Governments are finally starting to take notice. Billions of dollars are being invested in “green cars” and carbon-reduction schemes, yet bicycle promotion and infrastructure remains underfunded in many countries. <http://bicyclensw.org.au/info/benefits/>

In May 2015, the State Government announced plans to advance this project, saying: “The NSW Government is committed to the planning and design of this walking and cycling path between Sutherland and Cronulla as part of Sydney’s Cycling Future.” (MR, 27.5.15) State government funding of \$2 million dollars has been allocated for this planning.

## **b) First National Park**

*report by Bob Crombie*

*First National Park – Campaign for World Heritage Listing of Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park and Garawarra State Conservation Area.*

The NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) contracted GML Heritage to prepare a report on the potential World Heritage values of the Royal Reserves (Royal National Park, Heathcote National Park and Garawarra State Conservation Area) for a Tentative List Proposal. GML’s report found that additional information is required from the State Government. Minister Stokes asked the OEH to contract an independent expert to review this work. Dr Anita Smith from Context Pty Ltd was appointed to undertake the review. Dr Smith has extensive experience in World Heritage, including a number of years as a member of the Australian delegation to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. The release of her findings is imminent.

OEH is also working with the Australian Department of the Environment regarding options for including the Royal Reserves on the Australian Tentative List.

On 18 March 2015 State Minister Stokes and Federal Minister Hunt visited Royal National Park. Both Ministers confirmed the State and Federal Governments’ commitment to continue working together to explore a potential World Heritage nomination for the Royal National Park. Minister Hunt announced that the assessment was making “incredible progress.” “Once finalized, we will work closely with Minister Hunt’s department to ensure any documents comply with the World Heritage Committee’s operational guidelines and the broader world Heritage Convention,” Mr. Stokes said. Minister Hunt said, “Royal National Park is one of Australia’s great public parks and its importance to the nation was recognized with a National Heritage Listing in 2006. I look forward to continuing our work



community can connect, interact, and celebrate the importance of our parks together. PlanetFest will also be an opportunity to help share with the public the discussion topics and inspiring initiatives that are developed during the IUCN World Parks Congress sessions.

Ten Congress delegates arranged for First National Park to showcase Royal with a walk along the coastal cliffs from Jibbon to the Balconnies.

### c) **Save Our Shire**

The Sutherland Shire LEP was finally gazetted in 2015, despite continued loud protests from the Shire community in opposition to inappropriate highrise and unnecessary increases in the permissible size of dwellings across all zones.

The NSW state government's 10/50 vegetation clearing legislation met with statewide opposition across the state from residents who have fought for many years to preserve remnant bushland and tree cover in urban areas. While some there have been some small wins for the environment in regard to this carelessly thought-out legislation, it still remains a substantial threat to the tree-covered ambience we enjoy in Sutherland Shire, with some residents using the legislation unnecessarily, particularly with an aim to improving water views.



The Save Our Shire facebook page remains an active means for residents who are concerned about development matters to communicate with each other.

#### d) **Gandangara West Menai/Heathcote Ridge Development**

*report by Allan Green*

A small part (23.6 Ha) of the West Menai area was recently rezoned for development. While the amount of development proposed is only 10% of that originally planned by the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC), we still believe that the development process was not democratic. Rezoning should take place as part of the LEP process, not at the convenience of developers working directly with the State Government.

There has been no further news regarding the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA). The majority of the land which lies along Heathcote Road was not approved for rezoning because the Dept of Planning and Environment (DoPE) was not satisfied that the terms of the VPA with respect to funding of the required infrastructure could or would be met. The smaller area that was rezoned is close to existing roads and services so no VPA is required and therefore no written undertaking to protect the undeveloped areas has been required. One aspect of the VPA was that a Biodiversity Management Plan would be implemented to ensure the natural vegetation and wildlife would be protected from the impact of development. This Biodiversity Management Plan was to be funded by a laughably small \$100,000 p.a. for 5 years.



*Allan Green and Councillor Peter Towell raised the issue of illegally dumped asbestos in bushland at Lucas Heights – but their warnings appear to have fallen on deaf ears. (Leader, 24.03.15).*

No information or action has been forthcoming about how or when or even if the significant areas of environmental and aboriginal cultural significance on GLALC land will be protected following the recent rezoning.

With the GLALC now under administration and some members of the executive and board facing governance and financial irregularity related charges, the board members dispersed and reports that \$10's of millions of GLALC monies are missing there seems no chance that the natural and cultural values of the West Menai lands will be protected. In the meantime has been a huge increase in illegal recreational vehicle use and waste dumping including of hazardous materials and this important land has not even a fence to provide protection.

Something must be done before it is too late for this land. WMAG is searching to find some solution to this lack of protection.

### e) **Sutherland Climate Action Network**

*report by Jonathan Doig*

In the last twelve months Sutherland Climate Action Network:

- Ran seminars on divesting from fossil fuels at Bundeena in November and Sutherland in February. We received very positive feedback with attendees enthusiastic to switch banks and divest their own super funds. More on divestment at [gofossilfree.org.au](http://gofossilfree.org.au)
- *Protested* CommBank in May, asking them to withdraw from Adani's mega coal mine in Queensland's Galilee Basin (top right).
- *Thanked* CommBank in August for withdrawing from Adani's mega coal mine in Queensland's Galilee Basin! (bottom right).
- Wrote twice to Cronulla MP Mark Speakman as new NSW Minister for Environment.



Bank blasted: Protesters voice their objections at Sutherland Commonwealth Bank branch.



Sutherland CAN thanks the bank for ditching Adani

Tassia wrote to request a meeting about CSG and Sue about the national environment ministers' meeting and particulate matter standards. Mr Speakman has not replied...

- Joined 350.org and other groups in Global Divestment Day protests outside Commbank in Sydney.
- Walked for Water in February to raise awareness about the threats from coal and CSG to Sydney's precious water supply.
- Promoted and attended screenings of the film Frackman featuring activist Dayne Pratzky at Cronulla Cinemas in March and in Bundeena in July.
- Presentation on renewable energy and divestment to the Lugarno VIEW club.



**Watershed moment:** Protesters outside a gate to Cataract Dam.

SSEC has joined in a number of PopUpPicnic events around the Sydney catchment area. In June we joined with other groups to stage a large pop-up picnic event outside Cataract Dam to protest CSG drilling and longwall coal mining in our water catchment.

The Sutherland CAN core team of Tassia Kolesnikow, Sue McKinnon, Judy and Greg Walker and Jonathan Doig meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. We also distribute a monthly email of news and activities to our supporters. To subscribe or get involved, email [scan@sutherlandcan.org.au](mailto:scan@sutherlandcan.org.au).

## f) **Stop CSG Sutherland**

*report by Col Ryan*

As usual, Stop CSG Sutherland have been very active in their opposition, not only to Coal Seam Gas exploration and extraction in our catchment areas, but also protesting proposals for more and bigger coal mines across NSW.

- Members made several trips to Gloucester in support of that towns struggle against destruction by AGL CSG operations.



- Members maintained a weekly vigil outside AGL HQ at North Sydney. This vigil has been active now for over 100 weeks.
- Combined pressure on AGL from various action lead to the cancellation of PELL 2 a large area covering Sydney.
- Members attended action outside AGL's AGM in Sydney.
- Attended - Walk for water, Appin to NSW Parliament
- Members celebrated with Newtown the cancellation of PELL 463
- Knitting nanna action supported in many locations
- Supported the promoting and viewing at Cronulla of "Frackman, the movie".
- Protested at NSW Parliament the holding of a mining conference in OUR parliament house
- CSG Protest at Prime Minister Abbott's Manley office with Senator Glen Lazareth
- Attended the Gloucester Summit
- Recently Protested at Intercontinental Hotel Sydney 'The Eastern Australia Energy Markets Outlook 2015 conference'

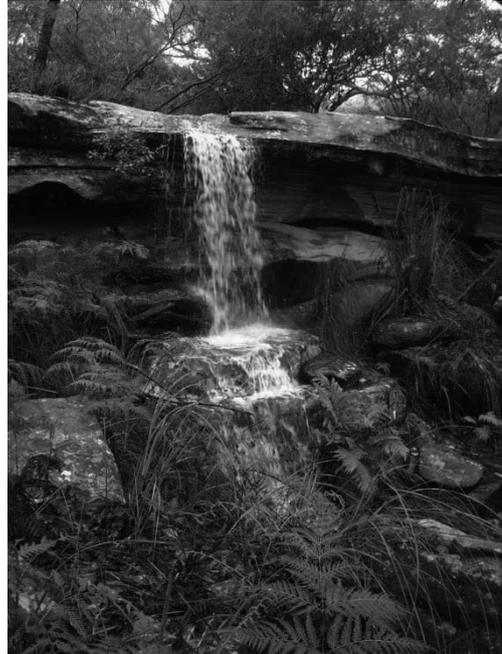


## g) **Spring Gully Protection Group**

*report by Mark da Silva*

### **Former Scout land**

Persistent community pressure supporting sound justification saw substantial concessions gained in improving the final zoning of these 5.6 hectares of bio-diverse and pristine bushland and wetland, through the gruelling process of the exhibition of three draft local environment plans (LEPs) plus an independent review that stretched from 2013 to the final making of the plan in July 2015.



Originally exhibited with a zoning of Private Recreation and a permissible use of Recreation Camp, the final zoning is Environmental Conservation with Eco-Tourist Facilities permitted. During exhibition of the third and final draft plan, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage raised a “significant issue” over the permissibility of eco-tourist facilities and the Rural Fire Service (RFS) requirements for large asset protection zone clearings being incompatible with conserving the high bio-diversity values of the site. The RFS made a submission warning council it cannot be assumed that the land can accommodate the asset protection zone clearings required for development due to the steep slope of the site and the endangered ecological communities present.

In submitting the LEP to the NSW government, Council adopted a recommendation requesting that the government place the former Scout land on the land reservation acquisition map for future purchase and addition to the Royal National Park. The Mayor also wrote to local members of parliament with this request. The government has not adopted this recommendation to date.

The owner of the former Scout land submitted two development applications under the old zoning of Special Uses – Recreation Camp in November 2014. The applications are for Construction of a Recreation Camp Comprising 6 Guest Accommodation Tents, Communal Tent, Reception Tent, Refuge Building with Garage, a Workshop, a [four bedroom] Caretakers Dwelling and clearing and landscaping of the adjoining unmade road reserve bushland for the purpose of an asset protection zone.

Council refused the development applications in May 2015 stating they posed unacceptable ecological and environmental impacts. The applicant has appealed to the Land and Environment Court and an on-site hearing is listed for 20 November 2015.

The former Minister for the Environment, Rob Stokes, wrote to Council in March 2015 accepted the unmade road reserves as an addition to the Royal National Park and Council has agreed to hand over this land to the NPWS pending resolution of the legal status of the land.

The development proposal requires constructing a two lane road built to public road standard from the start of the Coast track, stretching 500m through the Royal National Park, ending in a 12m radius turning circle connecting loop road servicing the proposed development. This requires the approval of the Minister for the Environment, Mark Speakman, Member for Cronulla.

In August 2015, NSW Greens MP, David Shoebridge, attended a community rally at Spring Gully and called on the NSW government to reject the road proposal and purchase the former Scout land for addition to the park.

### **Jibbon Hill Lands (former Night Soil Depot)**

Sutherland Shire Council resolved to hand over the 8.5 hectare former “night soil depot” at the south of Spring Gully, Bundeena, to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in February 2015. The land was declared as an addition to the Royal National Park by the Governor of NSW on 5 August 2015.



The two coastal upland swamps located here are the lowest and closest to the coast of all the upland swamps which characterise the Woronora Plateau. They remind us that the incline of the Woronora Plateau, which forms the southern side of the Sydney basin on which the Royal National Park is located, starts here at Jibbon. The heathland is recognised as the most

southern occurrence of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub in the Sydney Basin. Both the scrub and swamp communities are listed as endangered under both state and federal legislation. The heathland scrub an important winter source of nectar for birds and a colony of eastern pygmy possum.

The swamps contribute to the health of the Bundeena wetland providing sustained year round water flow through Spring Gully.

The northern extent of the Gibbon Hill relic cliff dune is also located on this land. The dune is the largest cliff-dune in SE Australia and its conservation is listed as a priority in the Royal National Park plan of management.

## h) **Speaking 4 the Planet**

*report by Phil Smith*

With SSEC support, three S4P events were held this year: Sutherland Shire, The Hills Shire, and Liverpool City. All were very successful. S4P is a public speaking and drama competition for high schools students. This year, the UN's World Environment Day theme was *Seven billion dreams. One planet. Consume with Care.*



The quality of the prepared and impromptu speakers continues to astound. The insightful drama pieces continue to throw useful and sometimes entertaining perspectives on global issues and crises.

2015 brought a couple of wonderful things. First was the partnership with Keep Australia Beautiful. S4P supports their national Eco-Schools program, so KAB supported S4P. And because the Eco-Schools program is an international one, KAB will help us take this initiative around Australia and the world!



The second wonderful thing was the new relationships with Toastmasters groups in Miranda, Liverpool and The Hills. These groups invited the winning speakers to address their meetings. Wow! The kids did well and the feedback was incredibly useful. Each of these groups will support the local S4P events next year. SSEC is also working with two of the groups (Miranda, Liverpool) to support Speechcraft courses for youth. And SSEC is looking to subsidise participation by its members in the February/March Speechcraft course in Sutherland. Look out for more information on this through the SSEC Newsletter.

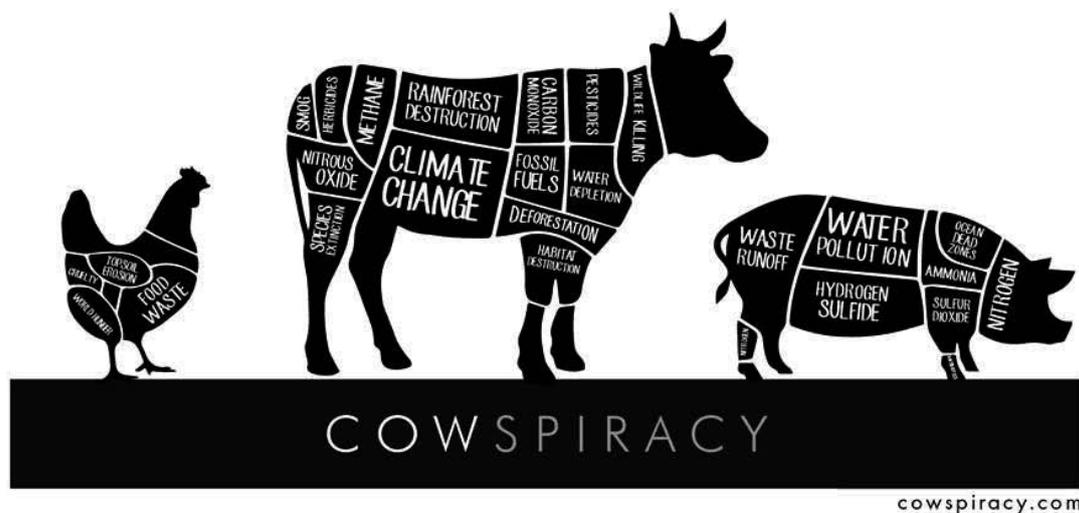


A full report is being prepared on the Speaking 4 the Planet. Members can request an electronic copy through Phil – after October. ([phil@ssec.org.au](mailto:phil@ssec.org.au))

## i) **Veg-In**

*report by Jenni Gormley*

Together with members of Sydney Vegans (Sutherland Shire), the Veg-In group organised a very well attended screening of *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*, a ground-breaking feature-length environmental documentary following intrepid filmmaker Kip Andersen as he uncovers the most destructive industry facing the planet today – and investigates why the world’s leading environmental organizations are too afraid to talk about it.



Animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation, water consumption and pollution, is responsible for more greenhouse gases than the transportation industry, and is a primary driver of rainforest destruction, species extinction, habitat loss, topsoil erosion, ocean “dead zones,” and many other environmental ills. Yet it goes on, almost entirely unchallenged.

(SSEC has a copy of the Cowspiracy DVD which can be borrowed by members interested in this issue. Contact <mailto://jenni@ssec.org.au>)

## j) **Free Trade**

*report by Phil Smith*

The free trade agreements include Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions which give control of decisions about environmental impact, community well-being and labour conditions to multi-national corporations. These provisions give corporations the right to sue governments and communities that attempt to bring in any regulations (e.g. environmental legislation) that might interfere with profits.

SSEC was represented at a number of rallies in the past 12 months – in Belmore Park, Parliament House and Martin Place. As well, Phil attended

the annual dinner of AFTINET – the NGO leading the battle for fair trade not free trade – and SSEC made an additional donation to the cause.

The Trans Pacific Partnership threatens health, environment, and labour rights and conditions. Healthcare, food labelling, patents on medicines... The potential to sue governments for demanding environmental impact assessments... Keeping a cap on minimum wages and reducing employee conditions....All designed for the profit of global corporate pirates. All exacerbating the well-being of the environment and ensuring the health gap follows in step with the widening poverty gap.

But the TPP negotiations are collapsing. Disparate expectations, enormously high levels of greed, lack of transparency and government deception are hallmarks of the push for free trade agreements around the world. The federal government is keen to sign onto a corporate agenda and sign away our sovereignty. The Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions remove our right to make our domestic laws. Our governments must retain the right to regulate, or there goes the end of what's left of a democracy shattered already by government deceptions, corruption and secrecy.



In recent months, this issue has hit the mainstream media. The media is critical. The recent Senate Enquiry was critical, and it demanded transparency. If the deal is so so so good for Australia as Robb says, why not bring it out into the open and show us how?

Pat Ranald, the Chair of AFTINET, will be the keynote speaker at the Eureka Dinner on Friday 13 November at the Bowlers Club on York Street.

SSEC will continue to support AFTINET in 2016.

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

As well as helping groups through financial sponsorship, provision of equipment, setting up/hosting of websites, networking, wording of petitions, artwork for brochures, etc. SSEC regularly fields phone calls from a range of Shire residents concerned about a wide variety of environmental problems. These callers are encouraged and supported in their concerns about how to protect our beautiful shire from those who would destroy it. Other valuable assets that are provided to the community are our Public Gift Fund (charitable) status, incorporation and banking and PayPal facilities.

New groups we have worked with this year have included Spring Gully Protection Group and Sydney Vegans (Sutherland Shire).

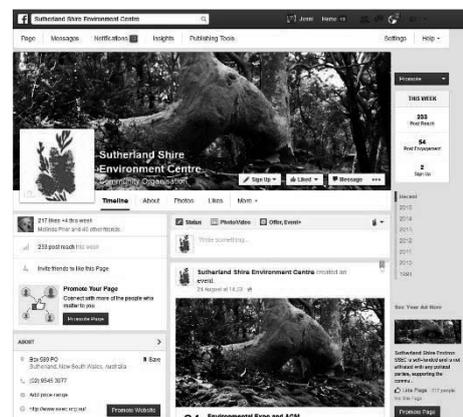
## 6. Establish efficient information, operation and management systems for Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Improvements to our communications systems include:

- Updated SSEC website
- Website integrated with SSEC Facebook and Mailchimp
- 2x weekly “ecoNews” (a summary of environmental issues in *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*)
- Monthly emailed newsletter

SSEC also maintains and administers a number of other Facebook pages and websites for our associated groups;, including Save Our Shire, Speaking 4 the Planet, Veg-In, Ecoeles, West Menai Action Group.

The committee reassessed the need for, and costs and benefits of continuing with, the office and decided that it was appropriate to relinquish it at this time.



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

- Concerned about damage to Temptation Creek by illicit mountain bike track creation, SSEC members escorted representatives from NPA Southern Sydney down the creek bed. NPA have now taken up this issue with NPWS.



- In May we were proud to attend Progress 2015 in Melbourne, a conference that gathered together the who's who of Australia's leading campaigners and change-makers. At Progress 2015 we discussed new and bold ideas for our country's future – and, more importantly, explored how we will strengthen our organisations and movements to make them happen. Check out “When We Dream Together - Progress 2015” by AustralianProgress on Vimeo.



- We sent our congratulations to Sutherland Shire Council General Manager John Rayner on his retirement and look forward to working with Council's new General Manager, Scott Phillips.

## **8. Raise funds to carry out the functions of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre**

We continue to closely monitor our expenditure with a view to becoming debt free and so ensuring our long term viability. We are grateful to our members and donors for their support and also to Perpetual Trustees. This year funds from Perpetual have been used for:

- Environmental education initiatives in schools, including a range of teacher resources
- Continued support of the First National Park campaign.

Our new website simplifies the membership and donation processes using Paypal and/or credit card facilities.

## **Treasurer's Report**

The 2014/2015 Financial Year saw the Centre return a loss of \$23,122. This was brought about as a result of a large decrease in Income offset by a smaller decrease in Expenses.

The decrease in income to \$61,093 resulted from a significant decrease in Donations and smaller decreases in Fund Raising & Sundry Income, Subscription Income and in the Gross Rental from the Merton St Property. Overall expenditure reduced by \$6,780 to \$84,215 compared to prior year. Increases in Consultant Fees and Environmental Projects were offset by reductions in Donations, expenditure associated with Fund Raising Events, Rates & Strata Fees and Interest Expense.

This result is a marked turnaround on previous year's surpluses and largely results from the unfortunate loss of a generous donation from an individual coupled with a period where the Office premises owned by the Environment Centre was vacant.

As was disclosed at last year's AGM, the tenant of the office had advised that they would not be renewing their lease at the end of their agreement in late 2014. Despite our efforts to find a new tenant we subsequently found the property vacant for a period during this financial year. A new tenant was found earlier this year and ongoing rent received from this tenant over the coming year will bolster the income for the Centre.

For many, many years the Centre has been supported financially through the generous donations from many people but largely from one individual whose aim in providing this financial support was to enable the Centre to become a vibrant and financially independent organisation. The donations over these many years funded a large part of the Centres operations and enabled it to participate in and complete numerous environmental projects. This financial support also allowed the Centre to accumulate funds to purchase the office premises in Merton Street, these premises now providing this ongoing source of regular income for the Centre.

The Management Committee continue to strive to generate more income through subscriptions, donations and other income producing activities but the rental income from the office and the support of this particular donor over many years has enabled the Centre to move towards achieving this financial independence.

The Centre will be forever grateful for the generosity of this individual and for all our other supporters over many years.

With ongoing prudent management of the Centres finances, the Committee aim to see the Centre return to a small surplus in the coming Financial Year.

Again, as in prior years, of note in this year's Financial Statements are the movements in the Balance Sheet as a result of a small increase, via a drawdown, in the mortgage that the Environment Centre holds and a reduction in funds held in bank accounts. The draw down from the mortgage and reduction in funds held were necessary to fund the Centre through the period where the office was vacant and to pay for repairs, maintenance and improvements associated with the office premises including new carpets, painting and air conditioning (which in turn will lead to ongoing reduction in our yearly strata fees).

Attached you will find further commentary and analysis of Year End Financial Statements.

### **SUMMARY**

The Centre continues with its aim to become financially self-sufficient with the goal to generate "sustainable, long term" income from its' operational activities (subscriptions, fund raising and donations) and the income generated from the rented premises.

However, there is still a way to go to ensure full self-sufficiency and the Management Committee continue to closely watch and manage the finances of the Centre.

### **SPECIAL MENTION**

I would like to make special mention and extend my thanks to Jenni Gormley for her commitment and effort in completing and tracking financial details on a weekly basis.

Also, thanks are again extended Bruce Spaul and Melina Lidis from the accounting firm Munro Spaul for their and their staff's time in auditing the accounts of the Centre.

### **OPERATING SURPLUS**

At 30 June 2015 the accounts of the Centre showed an operating deficit (loss) of \$23,122 compared to an operating surplus in the previous year of \$57,418.

### **INCOME**

Total Income for the year was \$61,093, which was a decrease when compared to the previous years' amount of \$148,413.

Items of note within Income of the Centre included decreases in:

- Subscription Income and Donations;
- Fund raising events & Sundry Income
- Gross Profit from Rental Income

This year saw us lose a key donor and also the vacancy in our rental premises for a number of months. These two items have largely led to the sharp fall in income for the year. With the office now again tenanted, this will improve in this coming financial year.

### **EXPENDITURE**

Total Expenditure for the year of \$84,215 represents a decrease in expenditure compared to the previous financial year of \$90,996.

Major areas of variation in expenditure over last year are seen in:

- Environmental Projects expenditure – an increase over prior year
- Fund Raising Events - which show an decrease in expenditure over prior year reflecting smaller expenditure associated with major activities
- Interest – reduction due to lower interest rate and average loan amount outstanding over the year.
- Rates & Strata Fees – showing an decrease in expenditure over previous year

### **BALANCE SHEET**

Turning to the Balance Sheet, the property purchased in 2002 and its associated mortgage continue to dominate the Balance Sheet of the Centre.

The Centre has had to draw down on the loan thereby increasing the loan amount outstanding to \$41,825.

Our Bank balances (in excess of \$58,000) remain healthy providing sound footings for any Campaign support or other activities.

*John Nelson*

Treasurer  
September 2015

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED  
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

2014 \$	Note	2015 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
854	Subscriptions	718
75,283	Donations	18,718
-	Grants	909
19	Interest Received	25
5,091	Fund Raising Events & Sundry Income	1,303
67,166	Gross profit from rental operations	39,420
<u>148,413</u>		<u>61,093</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
341	Bank Charges	242
30,000	Consultants Fees	32,526
311	Depreciation	521
1,583	Donations	500
542	Electricity	559
14,903	Environmental Projects	17,444
3,636	Fund Raising Activities	463
40	General Expenses	-
3,750	Honorarium	2,563
250	Insurance	268
1,658	Interest	844
977	Meeting Expenses	884
456	Postage	232
271	Printing & Stationery	209
25,756	Rates & Strata Fees	20,054
5,320	Rent	5,470
325	Subscriptions & Licences	360
876	Telephone & Internet	1,076
<u>90,995</u>		<u>84,215</u>
<u>57,418</u>	(Loss) Profit before income tax	<u>(23,122)</u>
57,418	<b>(Loss) Profit for the year</b>	<b>(23,122)</b>
524,303	Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	581,721
<u>581,721</u>	<b>Retained earnings at the end of the financial year</b>	<u>558,599</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED  
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**BALANCE SHEET  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2015**

2014 \$	Note	2015 \$
	<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	
581,721	Retained earnings	558,599
<u>581,721</u>	<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	<u>558,599</u>
	Represented by:	
	<b>ASSETS</b>	
	<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
274	Cash on Hand	273
26,041	Public Gift Fund	12,998
55,668	Main Account	45,750
1,778	Security Deposit	1,778
176	Other Debtors	1,190
2,735	Prepayments	5,985
1,740	GST on acquisitions	4,625
<u>88,412</u>	<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>72,599</u>
	<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
	<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
506,353	Buildings - at Cost	506,353
23,696	Furniture & Fittings - at Cost	44,059
(21,908)	Less Prov'n for Depreciation	(22,429)
<u>1,788</u>		<u>21,630</u>
<u>508,141</u>	<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<u>527,983</u>
<u>508,141</u>	<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>527,983</u>
<u>596,553</u>	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>600,582</u>
	<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
-	Accrued Expenses	150
1,870	GST on supplies	8
<u>1,870</u>	<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>158</u>
	<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
12,962	Loan - Commonwealth Bank	41,825
<u>12,962</u>	<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>41,825</u>
<u>14,832</u>	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>41,983</u>
<u>581,721</u>	<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>558,599</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED  
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

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**1 Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

**Basis of Preparation**

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

**Income Tax**

Exemption from income tax has been obtained by virtue of Section 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

**Property**

Freehold land and buildings are shown at cost.

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia holds a mortgage over the property at Suite 4, 2-4 Merton Street, Sutherland.

**Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

**SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED  
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015**

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**Revenue and Other Income**

Investment property revenue is recognised on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease term so as to reflect a constant periodic rate of return on the net investment.

Interest revenue is recognised when received.

Revenue from the provision of membership subscriptions is recognised on a straight line basis over the financial year.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

**Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of GST. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as part of receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED  
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

**Report on the Financial Report**

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated (the association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2015, income and expenditure statement, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

**Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report**

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act New South Wales 2009 and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

**Auditor's Responsibility**

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

1st Floor, 33 MacMahon Street, Hurstville NSW 2220  
Tel (02) 9570 8999 Fax (02) 9570 8011  
PO Box 617 Hurstville NSW 1481  
email spaully@munrospaul.com.au  
www.munrospaul.com.au  
ABN 70 959 486 153

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE  
INCORPORATED  
A.B.N. 96 127 431 611**

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act New South Wales 2009 disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

**Independence**

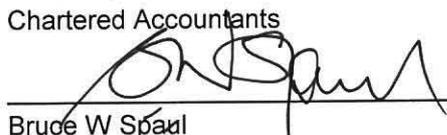
In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

**Auditor's Opinion**

In my opinion, the financial report of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Incorporated as of 30 June 2015 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Associations Incorporation Act New South Wales 2009.

**Name of Firm:** Munro Spaul  
Chartered Accountants

**Name of Principal:**

  
Bruce W Spaul

**Address:** Level 1, 33 MacMahon Street, Hurstville

**Dated this 18 day of September 2015**