

S.T.E.P. INC.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT.

NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

S.T.E.P.'s year 1986-7 has been one of sustained growth, achievements and involvement in many aspects of the conservation scene.

Of major importance was the successful completion of S.T.E.P.'s second Community Employment Program at Browns Field, Wahroonga, which finished in November, 1986. With a more stable team, much new work was done as well as follow-up on areas previously weeded. Many trees and shrubs, propagated from material collected from the site, were planted. Our thanks to Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council and the Society for Growing Australian Plants (North Shore Group) for their help in this work. The S.G.A.P. members took on the often difficult job of propagating the rainforest species as one of their projects and will continue to supply plants as they become ready for planting out. We are pleased to note that the newly appointed Council Bush Regeneration team will continue to care for this important area.

S.T.E.P.'s project to publish a walking track map of the local bushland areas is approaching its final stage. It is hoped to have this much sought after document available soon.

Of particular interest to S.T.E.P. was the release of the Department of Main Road's "Roads 2000" plan early this year, outlining the road proposals for Sydney up to the year 2000. The F3 Freeway as it affects the upper Lane Cove Valley is of great concern to S.T.E.P. The value of the bushland threatened by the Freeway corridor was examined by the Hon. Bob Carr, Minister for Environment and Planning, when representatives of S.T.E.P. and other groups accompanied this energetic Minister on a walk from Kissing Point to Pennant Hills. It is S.T.E.P.'s basic policy to preserve urban bushland. With this aim in mind, a position paper has been prepared as a basis for a campaign against construction of the section of freeway from Pearce's Corner to Epping Road and thanks are due to John Burke for preparation and printing of this masterful document. Copies are now available at cost to interested people. S.T.E.P. has representatives on the recently formed Coalition for Urban Transport Sanity which is working for a more rational approach to Sydney's transport problems.

During the year the N.S.W. Government enacted the State Environmental Planning Policy (S.E.P.P. 19). S.T.E.P. made submissions and recommendations on the draft policy and we are pleased that this important piece of legislation has been put in place. It will go a long way to protecting urban bushland.

Once again S.T.E.P. has had representatives on the Council's Bushland Management Working Party who have kept us up-to-date with matters of interest affecting bushland. We congratulate Council on the quality of its new bush regeneration team appointed to its permanent staff.

Hazard Reduction work, using the S.T.E.P. method of hand clearing has been carried out during the year on the bushland interface. However, S.T.E.P. was concerned by Council's efforts at hazard reduction in the Geoffrey Street/Ashburton Avenue bushland. A plant survey was done by S.T.E.P. members prior to burning and we will continue to monitor the damage done by

unsympathetic clearing of fire breaks and assessing regeneration.

Bush regeneration work was carried out during the year by our team of volunteers together with groups of interested residents and with help from Venturer Scouts from 1st Turramurra Venturer Unit at three sites--Vernon Street, Monteith Street and Cooper Crescent.

The declaring of Rhus and Pampas as noxious by the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture is a step forward in ridding the environment of these pest plants which are a health hazard and a threat to bushland.

At the Ryde School of T.A.F.E., S.T.E.P. representatives took part in discussions on the introduction and content of new courses in bush regeneration. The commencement of courses in the second semester this year has added a much needed boost to the standing and worth of bush regeneration as a career with consequent benefit to urban bushland.

The continuing problems associated with the Canon Road Netball Complex have again caused serious concern. The latest recommendation of Council's Director of Engineering and Parks that more parking areas be constructed in bushland will need strong opposition to prevent further loss of this irreplaceable resource. The expansion of this already too large complex in an area with only one point of access and no proper traffic management scheme is to be deplored. S.T.E.P. will continue to negotiate through every available avenue and press for a solution which does not involve loss of more bushland.

The following are some highlights of S.T.E.P.'s 1986-7 programme:

- * Spring Bushwalk in the Howson Oval/Mitchell Crescent area in September, 1986 enjoyed by approximately 30 participants.
- * Participation in the S.G.A.P. Festival of Wildflowers at the Wildflower Garden, St. Ives.
- * Breakfast in the Bush enjoyed by a dozen S.T.E.P. members on a beautiful autumn morning in March.
- * Heritage week walk to Bungaroo, St. Ives, in April attended by 40 people again in perfect weather.
- * S.T.E.P. track walk in May with 13 walkers.
- * Combined Ku-B.E.S., West Pymble Bushland Society and S.T.E.P. talk by Professor Carrick Chambers of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, attended by over 70 people.
- * Day Walk in the S.T.E.P. area in June, joined by members of S.G.A.P. (25 people attended.)
- * July visit to Askania Rainforest Park at Curimbah: 10 people enjoyed the beautiful rainforest walks.
- * Heath Bushwalk in the Fox Valley area in August attended by 16 people.
- * Kissing Point Progress Association and S.T.E.P. sponsored "Meet the Candidates", September. (30 people attended.)

Membership: An advertisement placed in the Advocate in March this year to attract new members brought a small response. However, membership has increased to 145 currently. In June, the West Pymble Bushland Society resolved to disband. Their members were invited to join S.T.E.P. and we warmly welcome them.

Five Newsletters were produced and distributed to keep members and other organisations informed of our activities.

The Committee has met monthly throughout the year and S.T.E.P. is fortunate to have such a dedicated and willing band of people. Each and every committee member has willingly helped the smooth and efficient running of your organisation by planning the year's programme, leading walks, taking minutes, writing letters, telephoning, managing finances, mapping, gathering information and writing reports, representing S.T.E.P. on various committees, attending meetings, conferences and seminars, carrying on hazard reduction, bush regeneration, letterboxing and catering and much more. My personal thanks to all the committee for their help, advice and support which is very much appreciated.

Yvonne Langshaw.
President.
September, 1987.