



**STEP Inc.**

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 16th SEPTEMBER 1992**

STEP has had a busy year which has been characterised by steady progress rather than by any cataclysmic or unexpected events. Our urban natural and built environment continues to be threatened from a number of directions.

I shall attempt to summarise the work that we have done over the year, some current issues and to look forward to next year.

### **NEWSLETTERS**

Five newsletters have been issued over the last year. These go to our members and also to a substantial free list of Aldermen, local politicians and other groups.

We have increased the number of articles relating to the flora and fauna of our bushland which we hope you see as a welcome relief from the never ending adversarial material on dealing with the environmental disasters & threats which surround us.

### **ACTIVITIES**

In November John Martyn gave us the benefit of his many years experience in W.A. and presented a fascinating talk on the wildflowers of that State.

In April we held a bushwalk in the Lorna Pass - Conscript Pass area of the Lane Cove Valley led by Yvonne and Fred Langshaw. Both this and John's talk were very well attended.

At this AGM tonight Dr Chris Dickman and Dr Ashok Rathore are to speak on the problems of feral animals.

### **COMMITTEE**

Your Committee continued to meet monthly.

### **FINANCES**

STEP continues to be in a sound financial position. Accounts for 91-92 are available at the AGM. Bruno Krockenberger has done a marvellous job as treasurer.

### **REPRESENTATION**

STEP is represented on these permanent bodies;

- \* Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushland Management Working Party.
- \* The St Ives Wildflower Garden Committee
- \* The Lane Cove Valley Total Catchment Management Committee
- \* The Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservation Societies

In addition we have been involved in;

- \* A committee of the UTS, local residents and other parties concerned with the proposed access road from Lady Game Drive
- \* A committee set up by Council to look at strategies for dealing with urban consolidation
- \* A committee which is attempting to save from development and regenerate a ridgetop in Fox Valley
- \* The Coalition Against Lane Cove Valley Freeways
- \* Various other meetings and ad-hoc committees dealing with a range of environmental matters.

### **ISSUES**

The newsletters cover the issues in more detail but some of the key ones are;

#### **Urban Consolidation**

This is a sensitive issue. The proponents have often been environmentalists or people who have extolled the environmental benefits of urban consolidation. We have, however, identified many environmental problems associated with it and have drafted a policy which opposes consolidation in the form now being implemented by the State Government.

## **Feral and Pet Animals**

This is another sensitive issue which we first canvassed in a newsletter almost two years ago. The times have moved with us however and the effect of introduced animals on our native fauna is now being publicly debated.

We hope to eventually see koalas, wallabies and other locally extinct animals back in our urban bushland.

## **Freeways**

STEP made substantial submissions to the new F2 Freeway EIS and to the RTA Future Directions initiative. There is no doubt that the conventional wisdom on the effects of urban freeways has shifted considerably for the better over the last few years. STEP member Caron Morrison has been one of the most active and effective people in the State in this area.

One good result during the year was the release of the freeway corridor from St Ives to Dee Why through the Garrigal National Park.

## **Private Bushland**

Another initiative during the year has been to look at areas of bushland held in private hands. There is always the possibility of arranging for permanent preservation of some areas once the owners realise their value or by arranging commercial tradeoffs.

## **Mona Vale Rd**

The fight for the Mona Vale corridor continues with the threat of a bus depot opposite the Showground still being very real.

## **WALKING TRACKS**

Committee member John Martyn has made a good start on a book of walks in local bushland. The book will contain an excellent commentary on the walks and botanical and other details. John is expert with computer graphics and we shall be publishing a high quality product for general sale.

## **KU-RING-GAI COUNCIL**

We have been mildly critical of the dissension within Council between the Aldermen because it lowers their effectiveness. It is not STEP's role to become involved in the politics, however, except the politics of conservation. We have maintained good relationships with all aldermen.

Those who we supported at the election, Peter Derwent, Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame, Elaine Malicki and Robert Pallin, have given us no reason to doubt their basic, active commitment to conservation and environmental issues.

We have had discussions on various matters over time with Malcolm Patterson, Tony Hall, Richard Geddes and David Barnett and find them approachable and in agreement with us more often than not. We don't yet know Geoff Swinson and Ted Roach too well but see neither of them as a threat to the environment of Kuring-gai.

## **THE NEXT YEAR**

The next year will be more of the same. The new Planning Scheme being drafted by Council will require input from us. One of our problems is finding the time to attend to everything in sufficient detail. There is enough work on just the issues listed in this report to see us through the whole year.

I wish to thank the STEP Committee who have worked so hard all year and our hundreds of members who continue to support us. Without you our efforts would lack credibility. We look forward to a productive year and to meeting many of you at our functions.

John Burke  
Sept 1992