

President's Report October 2001

It is with pleasure that I present the President's report for the year to October 2001. It has been a very busy year for the committee with many achievements.

The year began with the launch of STEP's new map *Walking Tracks of the Lane Cove Valley* which was put together by committee member John Martyn and his band of volunteers. We had an extremely successful map launch on the 9 November at Jenkins Hall in Lane Cove National Park, with Peter Duncan, Director of the Centennial and Moore Park Trust as guest speaker. Much of the committee's time this past year has been spent on sales and marketing of the map – I am pleased to say that we have sold well over 1000 of the 5000 printed and thus recouped our costs. The map has also reignited interest in our *Field Guide to the Bushland of the Upper Lane Cove Valley* and we will be doing a new print run next year to meet demand. The map is something that STEP should be very proud of – it is beautifully produced, provides a valuable resource for bush enthusiasts, raises STEP's profile and generates both new members and income that can be spent on bushland conservation. In addition, the enthusiasm generated has resulted in the desire to produce another walking tracks map – this time of the Middle Harbour bushland from Sydney Harbour as far north as Garigal National Park. This project should keep the mapping volunteers busy for another 18 months or so!

We have also spent considerable time on our EPA Stormwater Trust grant for Morona Avenue, Fox Valley. This has involved working on the design of the stormwater detention basins, keeping a watchful eye on the contractors during the construction phase, many meetings with Peter Draper of Lane Cove National Park, letter drops to neighbours, designing brochures and signs, organising information days, collecting water samples for chemical analysis and setting up a bushcare group for the site. This has been a very worthwhile project, with much community participation, as well as importantly reducing the impact of stormwater release on Lane Cove National Park. Monitoring and bush care will continue for some time. I would particularly like to thank Neroli Lock for her time and effort on this project – it wouldn't have happened without her.

Another important achievement has been the launch of the new STEP web site. We now have a very impressive and informative web site (www.step.org.au) that I hope all members with internet access log on to regularly to keep up-to-date with news and activities. STEP also continues to move into the electronic age with regular e-mail contact with members as well as newsletters now available via e-mail. Special thanks are due to Helen Wortham for taking on the additional roles of maintaining our web site and e-mail contacts.

STEP has continued to support environmental education through the Pam Morse Bequest Fund. This year we awarded grants to Warrawee and Turrumurra Public Schools to support their environmental initiatives – planting a native garden and hosting Ku-ring-gai Council's Puppet Play *Privet the Weed*. For the first time we are also supporting the Intel Young Scientist Awards, organised by the Science Teachers' Association of New South Wales, through the provision of prize money for the best environmental project.

Activities

This year's activities program has been particularly successful. We held three talks which were all very well attended:

- Jocelyn Howell from Royal Botanic Gardens on *Ways of Wildflowers*
- Angus Finney on the first longitudinal traverse of the sub-Antarctic Island of South Georgia
- Valerie Close from Ku-ring-gai Council led an environmental education *Journey to the Heart of Nature* experience.

We also ran three bushwalks (Tambourine Bay, Great North Walk from Killara to Fiddens Wharf, and Blue Gum Walking Track Berowra Valley Regional Park) which were also very popular.

As usual, STEP organised a Clean-Up Australia Day site (this year in Fox Valley) and ran a stall at the Ku-ring-gai Festival of Wildflowers.

Newsletters

We published six newsletters (numbers 105 to 110) as well as a monthly contribution in the *Ku-ring-gai Observer*, thanks to Bruno Krockenberger who has been our newsletter editor and *Ku-ring-gai Observer* writer for several years now.

Committee

The committee met monthly to deal with the business at hand. The current committee comprises eight members, which is fewer than the constitution allows for. This has meant that the committee has had to work hard this year to achieve its goals and we certainly look forward to welcoming some new members.

Bill Jones will not be standing for the committee again due to other commitments, and we thank Bill for his contribution over the last few years. We are very pleased that Jennifer Schwartz is rejoining the committee and we also welcome Neryle Sheldon as a new member. I would like to thank all committee members of 2000–01 for their hard work and enthusiasm, particularly Helen Wortham as minutes secretary, publicity officer and web maintainer, and Hugh Roberts as treasurer, secretary and membership secretary. Simon and Joy Jackson have also assisted by taking care of the STEP display.

Representation

STEP has been represented on Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushland Conservation Advisory Committee, B2/B3 Committee and Environmentally Sensitive Working Party. We have also remained as a member of the Union of Lane Cove Valley Conservationists, although we have not been able to attend every meeting.

Finances

STEP's financial position is healthy, with details in the Treasurer's Report. Sales of the map and field guide contribute substantially to STEP's finances.

The Coming Year

There are several looming issues for the coming year.

The major issue is likely to be the rezoning of the B2/B3 corridor, now made more complicated by the Federal Government's announcement of a study into a possible link between the F3 and the M2 as part of the Western Sydney Orbital Project. STEP plans to employ a Project Officer through the Nature Conservation Council on a part-time basis to assist in the development of strategy and to campaign on transport and environmental issues related to the possibility of the F3 to M2 link.

There will also be continuing issues with Council's Residential Strategy and SEPP5 developments, as well as with the construction of the Parramatta Rail Link. We will continue to be involved with Council's management of urban bushland through the advisory committee. STEP will also continue to support environmental education and community awareness of bushland issues through its environmental education grants.

We look forward to continuing our role as an effective advocate on environmental issues in Ku-ring-gai in 2001–02.