

## MYALL KOALA AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT GROUP

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2013-2014

Dear Members.

Once again I am pleased to present my annual report for your consideration.

#### **OUR ENDAGERED KOALA POPULATION**

While Gail and Ian will report in detail elsewhere, it is fair to say that our locally endangered population is growing in numbers and that this growth will continue.

The Department of Environment and Heritage, Great Lakes Council and the local community, not the least through the efforts our group, have all contributed to this success.

That the local community values this outcome has been demonstrated through the results of a recent survey conducted as part of the reporting process for the Environmental Trust Grant.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANT**

The first full year of operation has resulted in tremendously valuable regeneration in the area covered by the grant (see my report of last year).

Professional bush regenerators have been employed and their work has been supplemented by outlays from our own resources; the community has been active, particularly Jill Madden's Bitou Busters, composed of members of our group and other members of the community; Great Lakes Council has contributed enormously through expertise, on ground works and administration.

On your behalf I would like to particularly thank Isabelle Strachan and Steve Howard of Council for their continual support.

Likewise the year 9 boys of Barker College, Hornsby, together with their teachers, deserve recognition for their annual battle with bitou, lantana and other noxious weeds. Their work is made possible by the input of local Chris (Stormy) Patteson.

## **A NEW PLANNING SYSTEM FOR NSW**

In my report last year I mentioned our concerns about the NSW Government's intention to legislate a new ("better") planning system for NSW.

The Government's proposals were developer driven at the expense of meaningful community participation and environmental/heritage protection.

I would like to thank many of our members for their participation in the lobbying against these proposals.

The government made some minor changes as the bills progressed through the Legislative Assembly. However it refused to accept the amendments passed in the Legislative Council and indicated it was considering proceeding by regulation.

Now, following the fall-out from the current inquiry by the ICAC into illegal political donations from developers and others, the future of our planning system is very much an unknown. However, I am sure that the fight will continue, ably led by organisations such as The Better Planning Network and The Nature Conservation of NSW.

## **RIVERSIDE AT TEA GARDENS.**

As you doubtless remember, Riverside at Tea Gardens, along with other Crighton Properties was placed under administration.

Since then, the Administrator, Price Waterhouse Coopers, has progressed the application for development by agreeing to the Department of Planning requirements that Crighton resisted.

The property has been sold, and the development that will begin at some time, probably in the near future, will be far more appropriate than that which would have occurred if the 2009 proposal had been allowed.

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENT MATTERS**

- Great Lakes Council's 1996 Local Environment Plan has been replaced by a new LEP based on the state template. The new document is an improvement in many areas, particularly in environmental enhancement and protection. New Development Control Plans support the LEP. We

appreciate the opportunity that Council has allowed our group, along with others, for input into the new arrangements.

- Myall River Downs, formerly a Crighton Property holding, has been sold by the Administrator. Significant ecological studies will have to be commenced or completed before development occurs.
- North Hawks Nest development remains in limbo. I suspect that this will remain the case until a "white knight" akin to Crown Lands Developments appears on the scene.
- North Shearwater development is likely to begin in the near future, and we remain confident that the approvals represent a fair balance between the future need for housing and ecological enhancement and protection.
- The proposed abalone farm at Pindimar is once again "in play" and along with our friends at Pindimar/Bundebah we have opposed it.
- Dredging of the Short Cut, which we supported only as a means of providing sand renourishment for Jimmys Beach, is scheduled to begin later this year.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Our participation in the Wild side Festival in Hawks Nest and the Riverside Festival in Tea Gardens were well received by the community. At the latter we were able to give away more trees than ever before.

My thanks to all those who contributed to these events, which are great vehicles for community education.

Our Easter Stall and raffle was again well supported by the community, with a record amount of \$1865.20 being raised. It was gratifying to see so many of our members assisting on the day.

## **CONCLUSION**

All in all it has been another successful year, I would particularly like to thank Gail and Ian and my wife Anne for all their work and support.

Doubtless some of you are aware that I am not standing for the position of President this year. I wish my successor all the best in the job to be done.

Kevin Haskew