



Newsletter December 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT

My thanks go to all our Committee members who have been very busy this year in their endeavours to prepare written submissions on an avalanche of documents issued by Council, State and Federal Governments. I would like to single out four people for special thanks: outgoing committee members Alison Baird, for her work as Secretary, and Mike Thompson for his work on native forests, John Allen for managing our excellent website and Kay Vine for help in producing the newsletter.

I am delighted to welcome Judith Bourne and Fiona Whitelaw, who both bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the new Committee

Coastwatchers begins 2012 in appealing, along with South East Conservation Alliance (SERCA), the recent approval by the NSW Government of the Dargues Reef Gold Mine, near Majors Creek. This proposal has potential to impact on the biodiversity of a large area and we contend that the mining application should have been given a much more thorough assessment. We are represented by the Environment Defenders Office and the appeal is set down for hearing before the Land and Environment Court.

In closing I wish all our members and their families a Happy and Peaceful Christmas. May the New Year bring good outcomes for everyone and for our natural environment.

Sheila Monahan

WANTED

We are still looking for someone to learn to be Treasurer (as we have an excellent book-keeper this job is not difficult). The quest also continues for other helpers. We would love to have some younger people, especially someone who would be happy to be our social networker, others who have contact with teens or young adults, people good at communication and those interested in fundraising – you may be able to help on an irregular basis but not want to attend committee meetings. You might like to concentrate on your own area of interest / expertise only – or work with someone else.

LEP DECISION

The Council meeting on **Tuesday 20 December** is scheduled to decide what will happen with the LEP. It could be considered very suspicious that this important document – which may be significantly altered from the version that was exhibited – will be decided only four days before Christmas. There is sure to be a large crowd of those landowners and developers who do not want any land zoned E3 Environmental Management. It is vital that people like you also attend. We need support from those who want to see Endangered Ecological Ecosystems, habitat corridors and threatened species given better protection, and who think development of unstable, and hazardous land should be constrained.

The interests of individuals seem to have been listened to more than the interests of the community as a whole. Protection for the natural environment ranked very highly in a 2010 Shire survey. Also, as in the draft Community Strategic Plan, less concern has been shown for environmental sustainability well into the future compared with shorter-term economic gain.

Jenny Edwards

MEETINGS

As this time of year is so busy and December meetings in previous years have been poorly attended we will have our next general meeting in the new year.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

It is possibly a cliché these days to say that Christmas has been reduced to a celebration of consuming. The human being, particularly in our western mode of consciousness and now increasingly in the east as well, has commodified creation (the earth) to such an extent that for many of us Christmas has become the high season and celebration of our relentless capacity to consume.

Since time immemorial however humanity has celebrated religious festivals - acknowledged times of particular spiritual importance. Being fully human includes the conscious acknowledgment that there is a mystery at the heart of life that is beyond our control. It seems important that we continue to observe this in our lives in both individual and communal way. The environmental and economic crises we face are at base a spiritual crisis of humanity. This is the level at which we need to engage with these challenges.

What can Christmas say to us in this age of climate change, extinction of species, deforestation - indeed the radical disruption by human beings of the biosystems of this earth? Christmas of course is the celebration of the birth of a human being, who more than any other has influenced our modern history in one way or another. The vision of that man was of a reality utterly subversive of the cultural and even religious norms of the time. It was the vision that the 'divine domain' that is 'spread out upon the earth' is the reality that the very heart of life is relationship that the defining quality of creation is interrelatedness and that the source of all relationship is the mystery of love.

Today we understand that in a biological sense we do indeed live within a web of life. However our scientific and technological knowledge has not led us to live in a mutually enhancing way with the rest of that web or whole earth community. Rather our lifestyle is almost completely oriented towards exploitation of this web of life. We have forgotten who we are and where we fit in this most beautiful and unique planet. We must now undertake the task of remembering and engage in the 'Great Work'* , the call to transition from a period of human devastation of the planet to a time when human beings may become present to the earth in a mutually enhancing way.

It may be that Christmas itself can mark this conversion by becoming a time when we are reminded that the One whose birth we celebrate was a person who challenged humanly constructed power systems to such an extent that he was killed for this challenge. But this story does not end in death. Death does not hold back the power of life when that life is lived in love and with forgiveness of the other. We can make Christmas a time of giving to those in true need; a time to reflect on the essential values and priorities of life; a time to consider that we might give birth to love for the other, including the non-human other in such a way that may be personally costly but will ultimately be gift for the other; for the whole earth community.

So, may we celebrate this Christmas season mindful of what we truly need and the needs of those who are truly in need. May we remember the needs and indeed rights of the natural world for habitat and freedom from cruelty and exploitation. And may we determine to live hopefully, joyfully and with compassion as we act together for the whole community on this magnificent and unutterably precious planet earth. Peace and goodwill to all.

Linda Chapman

* Thomas Berry, a historian of cultures and Passionist Priest, has written of this task in his book *The Great Work; our way into the future*.

BOTANIC GARDENS

The meeting/workshop that Council planned to have about the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens has been postponed until early next year. John Knight, the Gardens' manager, plans to retire around that time so hopefully, whoever takes his place has time to settle in. It will be difficult enough matching John's standards without having to do battle with Council at the same time. However, the new staff structure may improve things.





SHORE BIRDS

This photo was taken in early November at the Durras Lake entrance. At some stage every day the Pied Oystercatcher parents and chicks return and stay in the fenced off area, "returning to their place of birth." It has now been a little over 13 years that I have been fencing off Pied Oystercatcher nesting sites in this area. I'm now wondering if these shorebirds associate the fenced off bit as some sort of sanctuary area, even when they have chicks. The previous weekend Durras was so busy, there were people everywhere at the Durras Lake entrance area, the Pies and chicks were being shuffled in all directions, as a result of

this people pressure. Then these Pied Oystercatchers returned to the fenced off area, and stayed there for the remainder of the day, away from being disturbed. There are now a lot more Pied Oystercatchers in the Durras Lake area, a week ago I saw a flock of five fly over. It would have been so useful to have banded all the chicks that have hatched in this area over the years, so as to keep a better track of them.

John Perkins

DARGUES REEF APPEAL

After being approached to consider supporting the Upper Deua/Majors Creek community and talking with the Environment Defenders Office, the Committee agreed to being a joint applicant to the Land and Environment Court along with the South East Conservation Alliance (SERCA). A legal agreement ensures that Coastwatchers will not bear any costs and our Executive will be kept fully informed of proceedings.

The appeal is against the determination of the consent authority to grant the project approval. The respondents are the Minister for Planning and Big Island Mining Pty Ltd, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cortona Resources Ltd.

The court will hear the case from scratch and the Class 1 appeal will depend on scientific evidence. It will be based on the impacts of mining and the tailings dam on groundwater dependent ecosystems, threatened species and endangered ecological communities and migratory species. Expert witnesses have been engaged on our behalf.

The Eurobodalla Shire Council is also taking a separate court action against the company based on the potential threat to the quality and quantity of the water supply for Eurobodalla. The hearings for both appeals are set down to run concurrently in the Land and Environment Court over 10 days, commencing on 1 February 2012.

Our court action will go ahead regardless of what arrangements may be made between Council and Cortona in the meantime to avoid going to Court.

Sheila Monahan

NSW PLANNING REVIEW

Several members of your committee attended the session in Batemans Bay where Tim Moore and Ron Dyer (the Review Panel co-chairs) continued their statewide consultation about how the NSW planning system could be improved. We subsequently made a written submission supporting a new approach to planning in NSW aimed at achieving ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and restoring balance, transparency and accountability to the planning system.

A discussion paper outlining identified issues and tensions within the system is on exhibition for public comment. The Panel hopes to submit a green paper to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure before the end of April 2012.

(PTO)

To view the **Issues Paper**, please follow this link –

<http://planningreview.nsw.gov.au/IssuesPaper/tabid/117/Default.aspx>

You are encouraged to make a submission about any of the questions set out the Issues Paper, which are of interest to you.

Submissions may be lodged via this link

<http://planningreview.nsw.gov.au/Submissions/tabid/104/Default.aspx>

Hard copy submissions may also be posted to:

NSW Planning System Review, GPO Box 39, Sydney 2001

All submissions must include the author's street address (PO Box numbers will not be accepted) and a daytime contact telephone number. In the interests of transparency and openness, all submissions will be published (as submitted) on the website.

Submissions close on **17 February 2012** and late submissions will not be accepted.



NEXT YEAR'S KOALA VOLUNTEERS TO BE SUBSIDISED

The Coastwatchers Environment Fund has agreed to subsidize helpers traveling to scat searches and field-based vegetation type inventories, as well as the GIS mapping component of the Eurobodalla Koalas project. Those needing to travel some distance will be paid \$30 per excursion for their transport costs plus \$30 for accommodation, up to a maximum equivalent of five people for ten trips.

During 2012, using a four-wheel-drive vehicle also hired under the funding arrangement, Keith Joliffe will lead the field trips to iconic forest locations

around the Eurobodalla, as part of a peer reviewed scientific effort to test the capacity of the Shire's remaining forests to sustain a revived low density koala population. In addition, working mainly from Canberra but occasionally at the coast, Judy Bourne will lead the development of a multi-layered GIS habitat map.

Anyone wanting to volunteer for the fieldwork or the GIS mapping aspect should contact Keith on mobile 0427 546 156. No prior knowledge is necessary, but willingness to get your hands dirty in the survey technique and a good level of physical fitness are required for the bush outings. The mapping work requires willingness to learn the GIS computer application or to liaise productively with agencies holding databases.

The 2012 stage of the Eurobodalla Koalas project has an academic element as well, so anyone who'd prefer to make a research and/or writing contribution from home or the library should also contact

***Project coordinator Keith Joliffe,
Mobile 0427 546 156***



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thank you to all those members who have already renewed. Only a few still to come.

Cheques or money orders should be made out to --
The Coastwatchers Assoc. Inc and posted to
The Treasurer, PO Box 521, Batemans Bay 2536

Or you can pay by EFT or direct deposit to

Bank : IMB Ltd
BSB: 641 800
A/C Name: **The Coastwatchers Association Inc.**
A/C No: 200 271 714

Please tell the bank to say who it is from on their statement and it helps if you email our book-keeper to let her know too
b-kidd@bigpond.com

DRAFT EUROBODALLA WASTE STRATEGY 2011-1018

This report, prepared by Mike Ritchie and Associates for the Eurobodalla Shire Council (ESC) identifies options for the future management and minimisation of waste in the shire. It is linked to the draft Eurobodalla 2030 Community Strategic Plan, which has vague targets for waste management. Community feedback on the waste strategy was sought by the council until 2 December and on the Community Strategic Plan on 12 December. Strangely, the waste strategy report is not listed in appendix 3 of the 2030 Community Strategic Plan ("Local plans and strategies that support the community strategic plan")

The waste strategy report includes much useful information on current waste services, including infrastructure, waste management fees and charges. Legislation and policy relevant to waste management at the national, state and local level is explained. However the implications of the "waste management framework" for future waste management are not explored in detail.

Opportunities to reduce waste, increase recycling and conserve landfill space are identified and considered as options, evaluated and then prioritised. The final chapter states 'Strategies and specific actions have been developed to assist Council in meeting the objectives of the Waste Management Plan'. Unfortunately the outcomes of the reasonably thorough evaluation process in earlier chapters are not faithfully transferred into this section. For example, rather than being implemented by 2012, the components of the preferred option for municipal waste are to be 'investigated'. These are an 80 litre residual bin (residual waste only) collected weekly, 240 litre recycling bin (recyclable waste only) collected fortnightly, 240 litre green bin (green and food waste) collected weekly and no bundled green waste service



Rather than consider tackling the difficult problem of large-scale waste generation and disposal by NSW and local policy makers, the report shifts responsibility for municipal waste minimisation onto the community, with education programs, etc. to further increase recycling, recovery and reuse. An example is the intention to encourage householders to make their own compost. Composting is not a fail-safe activity compatible with all lifestyles and can just shift the source of noxious and greenhouse gas emissions from the tip site to the households.

Judy Bourne

REVIEW OF NATIVE VEGETATION LAWS

A statutory review of the Native Vegetation Management Regulations in NSW is currently underway. Since the regulations were introduced 16 years ago the approach changed from "heavy-handed" regulations, to a regional planning model, to ultimately a system that currently provides for landholders to sign up to individual agreements. This has seen approvals for native vegetation removal reduced from around 80,000 hectares per year down to an average of 2,750 hectares per year over the past 5 years.

The Minister for Environment, Robyn Parker, says, "We want to make sure that the regulations are sensible, balanced and effective to help ensure we get the best possible environmental and economic outcomes. We support the objects of the Native Vegetation Act to protect native vegetation of high conservation value, to prevent broad-scale land-clearing unless it improves or maintains environmental outcomes, and encourages the revegetation of lands." There are some worrying weasel words in that statement.

The Review will be carried out with the guidance of the Office of Environment and Heritage, the Department of Primary Industries and the Catchment Management Authorities. It will involve a full stakeholder engagement and consultation process

The Minister claims the review will drive improved performance and help the Government make informed choices about the need for changes to the Native Vegetation Act 2003. Further information is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation and you can register to participate by emailing to native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au

Jenny Edwards

COASTAL MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CMAC) UPDATE

Pam Dean-Jones of Umwelt Australia Pty Ltd, the company engaged to prepare the Batemans Bay Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP), outlined their CZMP project to the final meeting of the Coastal Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) for 2011. Prior to the meeting, a Technical Brief for the preparation of a CZMP was distributed to the Committee and provided the background and policy framework for the preparation of CZMPs.

The Office of Environment and Heritage had already identified Batemans Bay as a coastal erosion hot spot due to the low elevation of several locations already at risk from coastal hazards, and at increasing vulnerability to sea level rise and potential exacerbation of coastal hazards, such as tidal and coastal inundation.

The purpose of a CZMP is to describe proposed actions to be implemented by Council and other public authorities and possibly the private sector to address priority management issues in the coastal zone over a defined implementation period. These issues include managing risks to public safety and built assets; pressures on coastal ecosystems; and community uses of the coastal zone.

CZMPs are based on the goals and objectives of *the NSW Coastal Policy* (NSW Government 1979) and the *NSW Sea Level Rise Policy Statement* (NSW Government 2009) and assist in implementing integrated coastal zone management. The *Coastal Protection Act 1979* and *Guidelines for preparing Coastal Zone Management Plans* (DECCW 2010) detail the minimum requirements for preparing coastal zone management plans.



Erosion at Wharf Rd, Batemans Bay 2005

Among other things management principles in the *Guideline* advocate a risk management approach to public safety and assets - avoid risks where feasible, mitigate where risks cannot reasonably be avoided; and adopt interim actions to manage high risks while long-term options are implemented. They also advocate adopting an adaptive risk management approach if risks are expected to increase over time, or to accommodate uncertainty in risk predictions.

Most importantly they focus on the maintenance of the rehabilitating priority degraded coastal ecosystems.

The NSW Sea Level Rise Policy Statement supersedes the 1998 NSW Coastal Hazard Policy and outlines the Government objectives and commitments in regard to SLR adaptation. It also outlines the support the Government will provide to coastal communities and local councils to prepare and adapt to rising sea levels, as well as advocating planning benchmarks for SLR of 40cm to 2050 and 90cm to 2100, relative to 1990 levels.

Regular public meetings as well as workshops and surveys will be organised by Council to present the management options to the community and stakeholders for feedback on adequate relevance and priorities. The CZMP will be on exhibition for public comment in December 2012 and finalised early in 2013 for certification by the NSW government.

Reina Hill

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (CSP) – FINAL DRAFT

This document was exhibited for comment until 12 December. Much good, detailed and quality work seems to have been done so far by the Council. There seems to be insufficient understanding that the Plan is for the next twenty years, during which time, many changes will occur - the Shire and its residents should prepare for these and guide them where practical.

We should try to look forward positively to the future, especially towards protecting the natural environment for the well being of humankind and the rest of biodiversity for current and future generations. A healthy, sustainable environment has positive implications for all other important parts of 'our Vision' and 'Our Community Principles'.

Outcomes will depend on effective implementation of the CSP. Council also needs to factor in the need to transition to a time when resources become more scarce and expensive. Other things that need to be considered are food security; the effects of continuing climate change; possible biodiversity degradation and population increase.

The CSP talks about reducing greenhouse emissions. This is necessary, but is the Council thinking about reductions in relation to the whole Shire or per person?

The CSP, the LEP and the 'Funding Scenarios' (see Council website) need to be consistent with each other and, also, recognize that 'business as usual' is not an option, as circumstances continually change.

Brian Versey

READ THIS ON COASTWATCHERS WEBSITE

The Clyde River and the Eastern Link and the Batemans Marine Park

An overview and introduction to the Clyde River and its catchment.

Prepared by Bob Snedden on behalf of the Reserves and Park Management Committees of the NSW National Parks Association

The NSW National Parks Association is seeking better protection and management of the Clyde River and its catchment and Coastwatchers will be working with them to try to achieve these aims. Unfortunately we did not have space in our printed newsletter to include all of this very interesting article, but you can read it on our website at www.coastwatchers.org.au/objects/clyde_river_catchment.pdf

“When the “Batemans Marine Park” was declared in 2006 it raised interest in the qualities of the entire Clyde River catchment and the need to recognise and manage it for its importance to the welfare of the Bateman’s Marine Park, as well as to maintain and improve its intrinsic conservation and connection values. As an initial step the headwaters of the Clyde River, within the Clyde Gorge should be declared a wild River and managed as such.”



The article gives some fascinating facts about the river and its catchment. Only 9% is freehold land of which only about 50% is cleared, and the area contains 18% of the threatened fauna species of NSW. Its cultural significance to indigenous and Europeans is mentioned as are its historical, current and potential economic values.

The discussion recognises that:

- the quality of the Clyde River and catchment is integral to the future well being of the Batemans Marine Park.
- the Clyde is one of the last major rivers in Eastern Australia that remains without damming.
- key elements of the biological landscape and cultural values need to be protected.
- other rivers including the Bimberamala and Yadboro are interwoven in ensuring the well being of the Clyde River itself.

Potential threats to the integrity of the catchment

- Regional promotion of tourism affecting the quality of water
- Possible future increase in water extraction.
- Unregulated eco tourism
- Changes to local government policies in turn allowing subdivision of freehold lands

- Land clearing and other disturbances along the riparian zone and riverbanks.
- Over harvesting forest areas.
- Damage at road crossings increasing sediment into the waterway.

Opportunities for protection of the catchment and waterway.

- An initial step in the Clyde River protection will be to have the upper reaches inside Budawang Wilderness declared as a “Wild and Scenic River”. This would recognise the unspoilt nature of its condition, and strengthen the position when reviewing proposals for the development of adjacent lands that could impact on the waterway and the water itself.
- A new Act, similar to “Protection of wild rivers ACT”. Wild rivers are currently only protected if they are in an already protected landscape. Rivers are the responsibility of the Lands Department and legislation governs the use of water and maintaining water quality. However there is no legislation that specifically protects the welfare of a river that flows outside of a protected landscape. Such legislation would provide a stronger operation framework for our allies, the CMA’s, thus helping ensure maintenance of high water quality.



Sediment run-off into the Clyde River

UNSEALED ROADS AND RIVER HEALTH

Unsealed roads the dominant pathway for the run off of sediment into waterways. Water quality is one of the fundamental aspects of good river health: ecological processes, which sustain native fish populations, wetlands and bird life, depend on it.

Unsealed roads are a major source of sediment in forests managed by Forest NSW. This occurs through the detachment, abrasion and crushing of the road surface, which increases the availability of fine easily, transported material.

Some of the effects of sediment on our waterways include, reduced light penetration, soil and other sediments can remain suspended in our waterways, making it difficult for sunlight to pass through the water. This interference can inhibit the growth of aquatic plants and algae, disrupting the ecological balance of a waterway. Sediment can also inhibit the feeding processes of aquatic plants and animals by either damaging or clogging their feeding surfaces. Reduced visibility caused by suspended sediment can also inhibit the ability of some animals to capture prey.

The combined effects of sediment can have a huge impact on the recreational quality of our waterways. Sediment laden waterways are murky and often heavily polluted with other pollutants carried into the waterway attached to sediment particles. They are usually unsuited for swimming, difficult to navigate, exhausted of fish and other aquatic life, and generally unpleasant.

John Perkins

NEWS IN BRIEF

Broulee certification for clearing – 54 hectares on the western side of Broulee village is currently undeveloped and Council is hiring consultants to investigate the remaining vegetated land. The forest is part of the Endangered Ecological Ecosystem – Bangalay Sand Forest and has been identified as important Yellow-bellied Glider habitat. However, if it is found to be degraded, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage may allow it to be cleared for development on condition that Council provide and manage for conservation



Bangalay Sand Forest with cleared understorey – intact forest behind

a suitable area of similar forest elsewhere. There is no doubt Council would like this to happen. In the 2009 Draft LEP the land was zoned E3 Environmental Management but in the current Draft the zone has been changed to R2 Low Density Residential.

Employment Lands – Some of the suggestions Coastwatchers made in our submission on this Strategy have been adopted, including the removal of land at Noads Drive, south of Moruya. We were concerned about the drainage into Old Man Bed Swamp but were aided by local residents who made numerous submissions opposing the idea of this area being used for industrial purposes. However, our attempt to remove the commercial zoning from the land adjacent to the Broulee Public School was not successful.

MARINE MATTERS

Commonwealth Marine Parks

The Commonwealth government is trying to meet its international obligations to establish marine reserves while not putting any fishers offside. The result so far has been less than impressive as far as conserving marine biodiversity is concerned. Coastwatchers is particularly interested in the proposals for the Temperate East Marine Region – Commonwealth waters from Fraser Island to Bermagui and around Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands.

Marine scientists say that between 10 and 30% of the marine environment should be fully protected. However, in the current proposal only 4.3% of the bioregion will be in sanctuary zones and none of these will be off the NSW coast, apart from two tiny existing reserves both of which are on the north coast.

Of the few reserves adjacent to state water the nearest is near Jervis Bay. As with most of the others near the coast, it does not include most of the continental shelf (that's where most of the commercial fishing takes place). The Jervis Bay reserve will continue to be used for naval exercises.

Two thirds of all the proposed reserves, including all those near the NSW coast, are proposed to be zoned Multiple Use. This will allow all types of fishing except four commercial systems - trawling and set lines on the bottom, Danish seine and gill netting.

Mining, including petroleum exploration and development will be allowed in Multiple Use zones if given the consent of the Minister for Environment. The proposal for reserves in the Coral Sea does not allow these activities in the Multiple Use Zone.

Submissions on the draft Marine Bioregional Plan and Commonwealth marine reserves network proposal for the Temperate East Marine Region are due by **21 February 2012**.

Copies of the relevant documents and other supporting materials are available from the website of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities at: www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/temperate-east



Dalmeny coast – Batemans Marine Park

NSW Marine Parks

Is no news good news? We have not heard anything about the deliberations of the NSW Marine Parks Scientific Audit Committee. Unfortunately, no matter what the audit finds it could be a grubby political deal with the Shooters and Fishers Party that will be the final result.

Jenny Edwards

THE PROS AND CONS OF DREDGING BATEMANS BAY

Cost-Benefit Analysis needed first

There has been a proposal made to dredge the bar at Batemans Bay to create a safer crossing for craft. The proposal has been championed by the NSW Government via the Land and Property Management portfolio, previously The Crown Lands Department. It has the support of local boating groups who claim that it will be very positive for the economy of Batemans Bay.

Others strongly disagree with this proposal on the grounds that there has been no cost/benefit analysis regarding the wisdom of spending significant public monies, all historic records show that within 4 to 12 months the depth of the bar returns to pre dredging levels and if there was an increase in boating activity from other ports to Batemans Bay there is no infrastructure capacity to cope with this increase.

For the past 15 years at various meetings such as the Clyde River Estuary Management Committee the issue of dredging has been raised. It has been identified as an issue in the Maritime NSW *Clyde River Boating Plan*. All of the subsequent studies indicate that in the first instance there should be an economic study of the costs and benefits of expensive dredging. This has never been undertaken.

In the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for this current proposal the consultants BMT WBM P/L have strongly advised the proponents that dredging has very short-term positive outcomes for navigability of the Clyde River bar. They note that if the bar is dredged to 2.5 meters depth it will return to 1.5 meters depth within 4 months and thereafter become shallower over time at a slower rate. This means that the bar would need dredging twice yearly at a cost of approximately \$400,000 each time it is dredged. To maintain this level of outlay of NSW Government funds to this project, there would need to be considerable increases in boating activity to recoup the costs. There is no capacity at Batemans Bay to cope with increases in boat activity, little associated infrastructure or consideration of the impacts of visiting craft.

Coincidentally the Eurobodalla Shire appears to be partners in this project and if it proceeds will facilitate the placement of the dredge material on the sand dunes at Hanging Rock (previously subject to Dune Care works) for dewatering and then presumably take the 10,000 cubic metres of sand by truck to the fore dunes in front of the Council owned Caravan Park at Corrigans Beach. No estimation of truck movements has been made but it would be around 1000 return trips at 10 cubic metres per load. This raises the question of who is paying for this activity.

Some comments from a supporter of dredging

The post war dredging, which was much deeper than is now being proposed, did fill up to about 2 metres but after that it filled slowly.

The proposed dredging will be fairly wide and only to a depth of between 1.7 and 1.9 metres as this is the style of dredging that records suggest will last best.

Coastal engineers say that it is very hard to predict the life of the dredging - it may be short or it may be many years. In the 1980s the Navy brought in a landing craft, which dug a channel through the bar and even that narrow shallow channel lasted some years.

Once the bar is dredged there may be cheaper options to maintain a depth of about 1.8 metres. It is thought that a depth approaching this was maintained previously by fishing trawlers crossing the bar but now no boats of this type operate out of the river. On average the bar has become shallower since their operations ceased.

While there has been no cost benefit analysis, Batemans Bay is arguably the best boating area between Sydney and the Victorian border with the only drawback being the shallow bar. There is still a contractual commitment to upgrade the marina which combined with a safer bar will clearly bring in substantial marine related business to the Bay.

The big increase will be permanent boats in Batemans Bay. People who live on the South Coast and Canberra who now keep boats in Sydney will move them to the Bay, which is a great area for recreational boating if the bar is improved. Without improvements to the bar many of the boats that currently spend \$10,000 to \$20,000 in the Bay on annual maintenance will leave.

Rather than, more expensive engineering studies and modeling, a trial dredging may be the cheaper and a more definitive method of determining the life of the dredging. It will certainly help to inform any future cost benefit analysis.

Continued next page

Are the ratepayers of the shire footing the bill for some of the works or is it being funded wholly by the NSW Government?

There is a complete lack of any exploration of the impacts of dredging on the marine ecosystem in the REF. The Healthy Rivers Commission identified dredging of NSW estuaries as having adverse environmental impacts. There are also issues with increased boating activity such as the possible introduction of foreign marine species. The Northern Pacific Sea Star, which was introduced to Tasmania and has spread to Port Phillip and Western Port in Victoria, is moving east along the southern parts of Australia. The vector for this organism is cited as sailing yachts where they travel on the hull, particularly around the steering infrastructure.

More yachts from the south into Batemans Bay increase the risk of introduction of the Sea Star, which has a history of impacting the oyster industry. Similarly if the grand plan is to have more cruise ships the risks are numerous; think Pasha Bulka at Newcastle. Research on the anti fouling coating on large ships indicates that the chemicals are so powerful that no marine life will grow on the hulls for 5 years. Like the banned anti fouling TBT this could impact on marine life.

In conclusion this proposal fails all tests of Environmental Sustainable Development in that it has poor economic outcomes, poor social outcomes and a raft of environmental impacts that the government is choosing to ignore.

Mark Fleming

Recreational boats do not carry water as part of a ballast system and generally try and keep their boat dry.

A deeper bar is unlikely to have a large impact on the number of boats traversing the coast but it may encourage a few to stop at Batemans Bay rather than, behind Broulee Island or in the Moruya River.

Is there any evidence of transmission of marine pests into Jervis Bay where visitors' moorings are provided and many boats stop?

Batemans Bay may never be attractive to cruise boats but they will certainly be anchored well out towards the Tollgates if they do arrive. The little boats they would use to ferry passengers into the Bay would be unlikely to carry any bilge water and it should be a requirement that no bilge water is discharged from the mother ship.

Is there good evidence that dredging of the minor nature proposed will have a detrimental impact on the marine ecosystem? It may cause a very small increase in the tidal flow into and out of the river but given the very small volume of sand to be removed in comparison with the size of the existing opening any change is likely to be too small to be measured.

Some marine ecologists suggest that handling of the spoil is the sensitive issue but if it is all to end up on land and used to assist in the management of sea level rise, this is unlikely to cause an environmental problem itself and may be of substantial value to the community.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

Thanks to all those members who have made a donation to our Environment Fund. The money is very much appreciated as it will help rebuild our finances after an expensive year. Since grants are so hard to get we rely on your generosity to help pay our printing costs and to fund special activities such as the Koala Project.

Tax deductible donations of \$2 or more can be made by --

Cheques or money orders made out to

The Coastwatchers Assoc. Inc Environment Fund and posted to --The Treasurer, PO Box 521, Batemans Bay 2536

Or you can pay by EFT or direct deposit to

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BSB: 641 800

A/C Name: The Coastwatchers Association Inc. Environment Fund

A/C No: 200 271 717

Please tell the bank to say the **name of the donor** on their statement.

It helps if you email our book-keeper, Barbara, to let her know too b-kidd@bigpond.com

COASTWATCHERS COMMITTEE 2010-11

President	Sheila Monahan	02 4473 6204
Vice Pres.	Reina Hill	02 4472 8566
Treasurer	Keith Joliffe	02 4473 8519
Secretary	Fiona Whitelaw	02 4474 5615
Committee		
Judy Bourne	0420 827 592	Brian Versey 02 4472 7384
Sub-committees	John Perkins	02 4478 6428
	Anthony Mayne and Linda Chapman	02 4471 7208
Public Officer/cmtee	Jenny Edwards	02 4471 5032
Internet Operations	John Allen	02 4471 2512
Newsletter	Kay Vine	02 4471 1613

PO Box 521, Batemans Bay NSW 2536
Email coastwatchers@netspeed.com.au
Website www.coastwatchers.org.au

COASTWATCHERS COOPERATE WITH THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

Broulee Community Association
Congo Area Association
Eurobodalla Landcare / Dunecare
Friends of Durras
Friends of the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens
Long Beach Landcare
Maloneys Residents Association
Nature Coast Marine Group
South East Region Conservation Alliance
Tomakin Community Association
Tuross Lakes Preservation Group

Coastwatchers is a member of -
The NSW Nature Conservation Council
Conservation Council ACT Region and
Climate Action Network Australia



If undelivered return to;

The Coastwatchers Association Inc,
PO Box 521
BATEMANS BAY NSW 2536



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's environment and climate action group

ABN 66 003 550 939

EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Members can receive the newsletter by email and save our association paper, time and postage. The email contains a link to a choice of full or text-only PDF files that you can download when convenient

For more information, or to subscribe, send a message to
coastwatchers@netspeed.com.au

COMING EVENTS

Tues 20 Dec – Council meeting to decide LEP

Sat 14 Jan – Marine Park workshop
Details to be advised by email