

## NATURAL AREAS MEDIA ARCHIVE: 2007-14



Since TEC was established in 1972 our campaigners have worked tirelessly to protect the natural environment. The unique ecosystems which evolved over millennia across the Australian continent, including those that have survived European settlement and the introduction of Northern hemisphere agricultural practices, continue to come under threat from human activities and practices. TEC's goal is to reduce the impact of these activities to preserve the natural environment and all its processes so that it continues to function as a haven for a diverse multitude of flora and fauna, while providing clean air and water for everyone

# Latest News

## New native vegetation codes a threat to biodiversity and economy



*Created on Wednesday, 26 November 2014 16:06*

New 'self-assessable' codes for clearing native vegetation in NSW will increase the risk of vulnerable plant and animal species becoming extinct and undermine efforts to control soil erosion and salinity.

The new codes relax controls on thinning native vegetation, removal paddock trees and permit removal of 'invasive' native scrub using highly destructive techniques such as chain clearing and blade ploughing.

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "The Native Vegetation Act 1993 was introduced to stop broadscale land clearing that was driving native plants and animals to extinction and causing soil erosion and salinisation. Relaxing controls on clearing will undermine a decade of effort to repair environmental damage".

The new codes have been introduced in response to claims by the NSW Farmers Association that clearing controls have constrained agriculture and reduced farm profits. However, a recent report by the Australia Institute has revealed that the Native Vegetation Act has had a negligible impact on agriculture in NSW with weather and commodity prices the major influence on farming profits.

"Land clearing rules have a minor influence on farm productivity and it has remained very productive. Relaxing the rules will, however, have a serious impact on biodiversity and soil conservation in NSW"

"The NSW Government has put the environment last and there will inevitably be long run economic costs which future generations will pay", Mr Angel said

# Latest News

## Shooters Land Clearing Bill defeated – commonsense prevails



*Created on Wednesday, 12 November 2014 07:42*

Common sense has prevailed with the defeat by 35 votes to 3 of the bill to dismantle the NSW Native Vegetation Act proposed by the Shooters and Fishers Party and NSW Farmers, environmentalists said today.

"The proposals in this piece of ill-advised legislation went overboard and did not reflect the more moderate views in the rural community nor of those in the cities and towns of NSW. It was simply a recipe for destructive and extensive land clearing that would have had serious perverse environmental and economic effects on soil health, salinity and biodiversity," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

"It was also a test of the Baird government's commitment to good process as it was about to receive a report on the range of vegetation and threatened species laws from an independent, expert panel. The panel has received hundreds of submissions from the community, including from NSW Farmers Association which received a government grant of \$50,000 to participate."

"This has been a sorry episode especially since members of the National Party and NSW Farmers pushed the Shooters Bill forward after the tragic killing of environment officer, Glen Turner at Croppa Creek."

"Environment groups will continue to engage with the broader community and politicians, on the importance of protecting the state's remaining native vegetation for basic economic and environmental reasons. Those that do not acknowledge and practice bushland conservation and restoration sow the seeds of landscape disruption to the great detriment of sustainable farming, clean water and soil productivity," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## Land clearing rules not a threat to agriculture



*Created on Monday, 20 October 2014 10:48*

Claims by the NSW Farmers Association that the Native Vegetation Act is crippling agriculture have been completely discredited by land clearing figures obtained under Freedom of Information laws by the Total Environment Centre (TEC). A report by The Australia Institute also shows land clearing rules have minimal influence.

The FOI figures show that between 2007 and 2011 a total of 46,600 hectares of woody vegetation was cleared for agriculture. Over 75% of this clearing did not require approval. The clearing includes the removal of unprotected regrowth and clearing for 'routine agricultural management activities'.

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "NSW Farmers Association has deliberately misrepresented the impact of the Native Vegetation Act on agriculture. The FOI data shows plenty of farmers are able to clear and manage regrowth without any controls as was intended by the Act. The amount is far larger than the higher value bush under land clearing controls."

"NSW Farmers Association claims today about lost income by some farmers are based on speculative plans and do not represent actual current impacts", Mr Angel said.

The figures on clearing come at a time when a report released by The Australia institute has revealed that the Native Vegetation Act has had a negligible impact on agriculture in NSW with weather and commodity prices the major influence on farming profits.

"As shown by The Australia Institute report into the NSW farm economy, land clearing rules have a minor influence on farm productivity and it has remained very productive."

"The politically inspired claims of NSW Farmers ignore the fact that under the Native Vegetation Act many farmers are managing the land better with over 950 property vegetation plans and more than 4 million hectares under improved environmental management, as well as many millions of dollars provided for improved stewardship", Mr Angel said

# Latest News

## Baird government on verge of environmental insanity?



*Created on Thursday, 11 September 2014 10:05*

Moves by senior ministers in the Baird government to open up rare native bush to broadscale land clearing and cripple powers to stop illegal clearing were described as 'insane' today.

"We understand that the Shooters and Fishers Bill to amend the Native Vegetation Act that has been instrumental in saving thousands of hectares and tonnes of topsoil from erosion, across the state will be put to the vote today. It would be an insane move by the Baird government to support it," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Nevertheless in my discussions in Parliament yesterday there was evidence the Shooters were confident they could push it through. This is despite the government already reviewing environmental laws via an independent Biodiversity Panel and receiving public submissions with a decision due at the end of the year. Passage of such environmentally damaging legislation not seen in many decades would let loose the bulldozers on a massive scale; be a complete abuse of process and of the public's participation in the Review."

"Senior National Party ministers have been pressing to pass the Shooters Bill since the tragic death of environment compliance officer, Glen Turner at Moree. They are trying to leverage this alleged murder and disquiet in some parts of the rural community about Native Vegetation laws purely for political purposes. Reports in the Sydney Morning Herald today about the views of Mr Turner's family are further testimony to the immoral position being taken by the National Party."

The Shooters Bill seeks to dismantle the Native Vegetation Act which was passed in 2003 to bring an end to the millions of hectares of bush clearing over past decades with many vegetation communities and animal species brought to the edge of extinction; and valuable topsoil being lost. The Bill also drastically reduces penalties and inspection powers for illegal clearing in a clear signal the government would tolerate environmental destruction.

# Latest News

## Nationals must not politicise death of Glendon Turner



*Created on Friday, 01 August 2014 17:40*

The National Party should stop politicising the tragic death of environment and heritage officer Glendon Turner in the state's northwest on Tuesday, Total Environment Centre said today.

"Some opportunistic politicians have asserted the Native Vegetation Act is the cause and want it repealed. Members of the National Party are using the tragic events for political purposes to further their pressure inside the NSW government about the Act," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of TEC.

"Such actions are morally indefensible and extremely irresponsible."

"They are raising the heat and local expectations. Total Environment Centre has begun receiving abusive phone calls this morning."

"Further, the current Biodiversity Laws Review should be removed from such political pressure. The review's late 2014 reporting timetable is devised to give the National Party an election platform for next March."

"The Review has little time for effective public consultation and investigation of three large pieces of law and should be extended to beyond the March election."

"It is essential for the dignity of the bereaved that these events not be misused by those now engaged in the debate around the state's land clearing laws," Mr Angel said.

The conservation movement extends its condolences to Mr Turner's family and all those touched by these terribly sad events.

# Latest News

## Land clearing law and environment protection on the chopping block



*Created on Thursday, 29 May 2014 16:32*

"This proposed law supported by the NSW Farmers puts the bulldozers above protection of hundreds of threatened species and the soil and water health and drought reliance provided by native bush. We call on Premier Baird to reject the Bill and also stop his government's ill-considered review of the Native Vegetation and Threatened Species Conservation Acts," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

"This is a line in the sand for the government's environmental credibility."

The Native Vegetation Amendment Bill 2014, introduced today by Shooters and Fishers Party MLC, Robert Brown, proposes to:

- remove the 'maintain or improve environmental outcomes' test for clearing approvals
- remove protection for any native vegetation that is less than 30 years old
- expand the range of exempt clearing types and allow unlimited 'selective' clearing
- remove protection for multi-stemmed trees, shrubs and native grasses
- reduce penalties for illegal clearing and failure to comply with lawful orders by 90%.

"Taken together, these amendments would open the door for a massive increase in broadscale land clearing across New South Wales," said Pepe Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"This ill-conceived legislation presents a clear and present danger to our forests, woodlands and wildlife. The Shooters and Fishers Party are notoriously out of touch with mainstream community values, and this legislation is no exception."

Wilderness Society NSW Campaigns Coordinator Belinda Fairbrother said: "Land clearing is the biggest threat to our native wildlife and plants, with more than 240 species at risk of extinction because of clearing in NSW alone. It is also a major cause of salinity and land degradation.

"Ten years ago NSW had the unenviable reputation of being one of the world's worst land clearers. The last thing the state needs is a return to those days and the environmental damage that comes with it."

"The NSW Government has already weakened our land clearing laws, by introducing regulations that will allow farmers to thin native vegetation and clear paddock trees without prior approval. It's time for Premier Baird to demonstrate leadership on environmental protection by distancing his government from this divisive and ill-conceived legislation."

# Latest News

## DEAD KOALA ELECTRICITY – BOYCOTT CALL



*Created on Friday, 07 March 2014 15:44*

Environment groups will be urging consumers to boycott electricity generated from native forests burnt in power stations, describing the announcement by the O'Farrell government as a further attack on the state's environmental heritage.

"On all counts the electricity is not green, nor renewable. Native forests are not plantations and the logging and woodchip industry systematically attacks the diversity of habitat and wildlife values. The government has also embarked on a program of reducing environmental protections in logging areas and wants to weaken the Threatened Species Conservation and Native Vegetation Acts," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The sawlog and woodchip industry may think that finding a new market for their operations will improve their viability but the consumer backlash will do the opposite. It will further tarnish their reputation and new investments in power generation will be financially dubious."

"Called dead koala electricity – it was immensely unpopular when it was first banned 10 years ago and remains so. We will be working over coming months to make sure electricity providers and investors are aware of the reputational risks of buying into dead koala electricity. Already some major suppliers have committed to exclude such power."



# Latest News

## New longwall impact study – Sydney water catchments need extra protection



*Created on Wednesday, 13 November 2013 11:49*

A NSW Government moratorium on coal seam gas (CSG) mining in Sydney's drinking water catchment is welcome but it is the threat posed by longwall coal mining that must be addressed immediately, Total Environment Centre said today.

A new TEC report shows that the proposed Gujarat NRE Underground Expansion currently under consideration will have major environmental impacts inside the Special Areas.

"It's not enough to put a moratorium on proposed CSG. Serious damage is happening right now with longwall mining which is destined to get worse as the mines expand," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of TEC.

The report shows that the Gujarat NRE mine will impact seriously on streams and endangered swamps vital to water supply and the environmental values of the Woronora Plateau. It also raises serious doubts regarding Gujarat NRE's estimation of subsidence impacts and asserts that the company has presented an unrealistic 'best case scenario' in its assessments.

"The proposed expansion of coal mining in the water catchment for millions of people is unacceptable and if approved would break a key promise by the Premier to stop mining in water catchments," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"Three Government MPs last week witnessed the damage wrought by longwall mining on our water catchment and were shocked by what they saw. They called for action."

"NSW Government agencies have been telling government this for years and now the Premier has heard from his own MPs. Destructive mining around precious water resources in NSW must be reigned in and this should start with the rejection of the Gujarat NRE proposal," Mr Angel stated.

# Latest News

## Miners' demands increase corruption risk



*Created on Thursday, 31 October 2013 14:28*

"Late night amendments to the Mining Act by Resources Minister Chris Hartcher yesterday and several other special concessions to exclude or override independent review are constructing a corruption-risk consent system," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the TEC.

"The introduction of the amendments is intended to override an independent court decision and is the second time in recent weeks that the government has used legislation to intervene in legal proceedings. This is a direct result of the mining industry politicising decisions and going directly to ministers."

"We find it extraordinary that this comes within hours of ICAC making 26 recommendations to reduce the risk of corruption over the granting of coal licences and the finding that corruption is "almost inevitable" as things currently stand. The miners are making the system worse."

Two other examples are:

- The proposed state law that would see mines approved on the basis of economic value even if they fail to meet environmental and social conditions – overriding established independent decision making which seeks to balance social, economic and environmental factors . These changes also impact upon an existing court decision and current proceedings with the village of Bulga being consumed by the Warkworth Mine in the Hunter Valley.
- The new planning bill which at the behest of the miners now allows the minister to vary a consent for a state significant development 'in any way' is another gift to mining development.

"If the O'Farrell government wants to create a corruption-proof planning and mining consent system – it should stop listening to the miners," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## MINING THREAT TO SYDNEY WATER SUPPLY



*Created on Thursday, 17 October 2013 13:31*

The Sydney Catchment Authority has warned that longwall mining in Sydney's drinking water supply catchment poses a serious risk to water supply, which should come as no surprise to the O'Farrell government, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

In a submission on proposed changes to mining laws, the Authority warned that under the new regime there would be increased damage to water quality and quantity, along with water supply infrastructure.

"Prior to the last election the Premier stood up wearing a 'Water Not Coal' T-shirt and promised to protect drinking water catchments from mining with a 'No ifs, no buts' guarantee," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"Since then we have heard nothing. The Premier and his key ministers have dodged the issue and instead have engaged in the introduction of new laws that make it easier for companies to get a green light to mine in these critical water supply areas.

"We have seen the recent damage at Mt Sugarloaf. We have seen terrible destruction occasioned to the Waratah Rivulet providing 30% of the water to Woronora Reservoir. Cracking to the bed of the Upper Cataract River from the Appin Mine saw methane bubbling to the surface in volumes that allowed the river to be set alight. The Dendrobium Mine is currently dehydrating endangered swamps vital to the functioning of the water supply catchment.

"Further to this there is currently a proposal by Gujarat NRE to undermine critical parts of the water catchment with experimental mining techniques despite an appalling track record both on environmental and financial compliance terms. This proposal has really been the last straw.

"In almost every case government agencies, such as the SCA, have objected to all or part of the mining proposals prior to the damage occurring. But successive governments have proceeded with mining against the agencies' recommendations. This is a crisis of their own making and it's time to deliver on the promise of full catchment protection," Mr Angel concluded.

\* In 2007 the Sydney Catchment Authority told the Southern Coalfields Inquiry that up to 91% of Sydney's southern water supply catchment (the Metropolitan Special Areas) would be undermined.

# Latest News

## New subsidence damage shows inquiry needed more than ever



*Created on Friday, 13 September 2013 13:04*

If the NSW Government was "serious" about the environmental damage caused to sensitive areas by longwall mining it would not block calls for a Parliamentary Inquiry or wind back environmental laws, Total Environment Centre said today.

Despite another incident of subsidence damage in the Mt Sugarloaf State Conservation Area and further impacts to Sydney's water catchment area being revealed last week, the Premier yesterday rejected calls by Greens and independent MPs for a NSW Upper House Inquiry.

"The Premier has a huge problem on his hands when it comes to the damage longwall mining is causing across the state but seems unable to admit it," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"The public wants a say on what is occurring across the coalfields of NSW and an upper house inquiry provides the best opportunity for that to take place. This can still occur with ALP and cross bench agreement."

"Sugarloaf is just the tip of the iceberg. There are equally disturbing instances of cliff collapses, drained rivers, failing swamps and methane leaks across Sydney's drinking water catchment. Massive cliff falls and destruction of endangered swamps is taking place in the Blue Mountains as well. Whole water catchments are being totally compromised and the common theme is longwall mining," Mr Angel said.

The Premier's refusal to hold an inquiry comes as his Government attempts to change the law to allow mining to proceed even if it fails to meet environmental standards.

"The Premier wants to leave investigation of the Sugarloaf incidents in the hands of the government departments but in many cases it has been the failures of the agencies that have allowed the destruction to take place."

"This is no time to wind back environmental protection. An inquiry is urgently required. The Premier must fulfill his promise to protect drinking water catchments and sensitive areas from the unacceptable impacts of longwall mining," Mr Angel concluded.

# Latest News

## Miners v 660 community groups



*Created on Monday, 02 September 2013 10:45*

The NSW mining industry campaign for special treatment from the O'Farrell government has pitched it against 660 community groups, Total Environment Centre announced today.

"This is the biggest response I've ever seen to an attempt to rot the planning system and it's well deserved. The mining industry and Mines Minister Chris Hartcher are trying to ram through a new law that will let any mine – no matter how bad its environmental and social impacts – to get the go-ahead," said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

"The community is responding on a massive scale across all electorates. Those opposed to the mining policy include the Better Planning Network (420 groups); Lock the Gate (120) and Nature Conservation Council (120), as have NSW Farmers."

"The announcement that Premier O'Farrell has established a Cabinet sub-committee to resolve internal government tensions on the issue is a sign the miners and their minister are pushing beyond common sense."

"As expected the miners are threatening a capital strike but we've seen it before and it's an empty threat. The reality is that not all mines should get approval. For example the Warkworth open cut that will wreck the village of Bulga and destroy previously agreed bushland offsets; and the Coalpac proposal to mine the proposed Gardens of Stone national park, near Lithgow."

"This dispute is coming at a time when the NSW government wants to usher in a new era of balanced and community driven planning as promised at the last State Election. The proposed mining law is so far from this commitment that it will destroy the government's intention to return confidence to the planning and development decision process. The miners may be calling for certainty but all it will do is lead to severe political eruptions for the government and the industry," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## TEC CALLS ON PARLIAMENT TO ACT ON LONGWALL MINING



*Created on Friday, 30 August 2013 15:05*

In light of the 'environmental catastrophe' in the Sugarloaf Conservation Area, TEC today called for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Sugarloaf situation and more generally into the damaging impacts of longwall mining and government decision making on approvals.

"The damage inflicted by Xstrata upon Sugarloaf State Conservation Area and the spectacular failure of their attempts to remediate is just the tip of a big concrete iceberg," said TEC Executive Director Jeff Angel.

"A NSW Parliamentary Inquiry is urgently required to investigate the impacts of longwall mining; mining company ability to predict the damage and so-called remediation. It must also investigate the roles of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and Mines when approving mine plans."

"We will be providing suggested terms of reference to MPs."

"The environmental damage that has befallen Mt Sugarloaf's waterways (cracking, draining and subsidence) is routinely taking place in longwall mining leases across the NSW coalfields with remediation - a joke. The industry makes much of its 'social licence to operate' but that's exactly what is now under serious question," Mr Angel said.

"Massive damage is occurring to rivers and endangered swamps away from the public's gaze in Sydney's drinking water catchment. Drained swamps and massive cliff collapses litter the Newnes Plateau in the Blue Mountains, while farms in the Hunter Valley have been rendered unviable as waterways cease to flow."

"The issue also calls into question the government's pro-mining consent policy championed by Mines Minister, Chris Hartcher. It will make it all the harder to impose environmental controls," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## NSW DITCHES MINING CONTROL



*Created on Monday, 29 July 2013 17:03*

Published on Monday, 29 July 2013 17:03

In an extraordinary action the O'Farrell government has ditched air, water and biodiversity controls for the mining industry, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

"The new draft environmental regulation for mining is a fraud. It contains so-called non-discretionary standards for air, aquifers and noise but in fact they can be ignored under 79C (3) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. To make matters worse there is no standard for protection of native habitat – it's just a disposable 'consideration'," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"The NSW government has caved into the mining industry in a spectacular fashion."

The NSW community should respond ferociously – and quickly, Mr Angel said.

"The government has only given the public two weeks to respond – a sign it is trying to avoid scrutiny for this attack on the living standards, water catchments and natural heritage of millions of rural and urban people."

"This proposal is another example of why the Federal government should never cede or weaken its environment protection controls to NSW. You can't get a balanced decision process from the state."

# Latest News

## NSW Land Clearing Laws – something stinks



*Created on Wednesday, 20 March 2013 17:38*

The sudden cancellation by the O'Farrell government of a high-level meeting of farmers and environmentalists to review the state's land clearing laws, on the day the Queensland government weakened its bushland clearing laws – has raised deep concerns amongst peak environment groups.

"We had been told there would be a process of consultation and negotiation – but the Friday meeting has been suddenly cancelled – certainly not at our request. It's clear that someone has interfered with the process and they are not likely to be sympathetic to controlling the clearing of native vegetation in this state. What's the point of trying to be constructive and going to meetings?" asked Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

"It appears the Queensland disease of attacking land clearing laws has infected New South Wales. We know that extreme elements of the NSW Farmers Association and the Shooters and Fishers Party want to emasculate or get rid of our laws. It would be a disaster for the New South Wales environment if they were successful," said Pepe Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"The laws in NSW are already weak enough and we have identified practical ways to protect threatened species, soil and water. Seems like the government does not want to have a fair dinkum consultation. Trashing the laws will add to the severe political problems the O'Farrell government has with hunting in national parks," said Belinda Fairbrother, NSW Campaign Manager of The Wilderness Society.



# Latest News

## BHP Billiton mine plan gets go ahead to damage Sydney's water supply catchment



*Created on Tuesday, 12 February 2013 10:41*

An approval for BHP Billiton to mine a highly sensitive environment in Sydney's water supply catchment is a slap in the face to the integrity of the NSW planning system and shows the excessive influence of the mining industry on NSW government decisions, Total Environment Centre said today.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure yesterday gave BHP Billiton's Dendrobium Area 3B a green light. This was despite a scathing report by the state's peak planning review body, the NSW Planning Assessment Commission, into a similar mine plan in 2010 that found that such mining in publicly owned water catchments and under swamps was no longer acceptable to the community.

"The Planning Department has approved 300m wide mining voids right under a significant cluster of endangered swamps with guaranteed subsidence and inevitable damage to Sydney's water supply," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"The area in question is known to be the most ecologically sensitive in the entire Dendrobium lease but the Government has caved into BHP Billiton's manipulation of the planning process. BHPB was given a 10 year environmental warning about this important area; but it did nothing, waiting till the last moment to force the government's hand."

"In previous inquiries the company has admitted that it doesn't know how to remediate swamps and the Department admits there will be damage - yet somehow BHPB has gained approval for one of the most aggressive mine plans possible."

"Water security is vital to a growing city. The damage predicted by BHP Billiton's own consultants will make it very difficult for the Sydney Catchment Authority to uphold its legislated responsibility to protect the catchments."

"There are other imminent mine proposals in Sydney's water catchment and another on the Central Coast. The Premier must explain how he intends to protect water supply catchments as a matter of urgency," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## NSW'S ENVIRONMENT CRED ON NOTICE



*Created on Thursday, 24 January 2013 13:52*

A wake up call for Barry O'Farrell has sounded with the release of the NSW State of the Environment (SOE) report, said Total Environment Centre (TEC) today.

Mr Angel noted that ozone (smog) and particulates, both dangerous to the health of millions of people, are still a serious problem, although emission controls on cars have lowered the levels of traditional air pollutants.

"Unfortunately, the urban sprawl being considered by the O'Farrell government will reverse this more positive trend in air pollution," Mr Angel said.

The SOE warns of significant land degradation and threats to wildlife have been worsened by land clearing and weed invasion.

"The O'Farrell government is intent on weakening the land clearing rules enacted by the previous government. It will also allow open cut coal mining to destroy forests," Mr Angel warned.

"Consumers have made a big effort and there have been improvements in recycling overall as well as water and energy use, and associated resource savings, due to the combination of smart green regulation of the market and building approvals.

"We welcome the NSW government's continued support for energy efficiency, but its anti-green tape and attitude to climate change, threaten to deprioritise the energy challenge."

Mr Angel said litter issues such as beverage containers and hazardous domestic waste should be urgently addressed.

"Over 2 billion containers are landfilled or littered annually; hazardous chemicals in discarded batteries are still contaminating landfills and recycling bins," Mr Angel said.

"There is certainly no room for complacency in the current environment."

# Land Issues

## Land Clearing



## LIVING LANDSCAPES



TEC stands up for our precious native plants and animals so that present and future generations can enjoy the amazing diversity and fertility of the world around us. When we see a beautiful butterfly, or listen to a song bird or marvel at a rainforest fringed stream – we know we need to protect what's left and restore essential areas. Our biodiversity also supports the long term sustainability of our agricultural sector – the water and soil needed for healthy harvests.

TEC's campaigns in 2014-15 are focussed on turning back the attacks on the laws that protect nature to give threatened species a voice in development decisions; and continuing the ban on broadscale land clearing. We are also targeting the new push to nurture habitat for biodiversity in urban areas.

Our new report about why we must protect the laws that protect nature:

Laws for the Bush, benefiting biodiversity and people (2014, 1.76mb)

Land for species [3.09min]

### What we do

In past years TEC produced the first national list of endangered species; achieved laws to protect threatened species (Threatened Species Conservation Act), ban damaging land clearing (Native Vegetation Act); and special protection for coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest. We also worked with rural stakeholders to increase the appreciation and conservation of native grasslands.

### Actions you can take

- Tell the NSW government to keep the laws that protect nature [Send a letter]
- Arrange for your local community group to hear a presentation from Leigh Martin , our campaigner

Facebook

Less than a decade ago NSW had one of the worst records for land clearing in the world. In 2004 the state sat behind only Indonesia, Bolivia, the Congo and Brazil in the rate at which native vegetation was being bulldozed.



*Pre-European vegetation*



*Native vegetation today*

In response NSW developed has some of the best laws that protect threatened species and control land clearing of remnant native habitat. But now the government is reviewing them 'root and branch' to satisfy farmers, miners and developers who want to bulldoze the bush. The federal government is also divesting its environmental approvals to state governments. Both levels of government say they want to retain environmental standards - but this won't be possible if the laws are weakened!

A majority of farmers value their environment and are able to use NSW's Native Vegetation laws to their advantage. Current laws encourage landowners to formulate a plan for their land, access funding to protect native vegetation on their properties, and at the same time gain a better understanding of what environmental assets their area contains. Property values are also known to be higher on land where native vegetation has been retained, while pockets of native vegetation are also known to lessen water losses and provide habitat for the natural predators of farm pests.

Twenty two mammal, 56 bird, 12 reptile, 4 amphibian and over 140 plant species listed as threatened in NSW have been named by the NSW Scientific Committee as being adversely affected by land clearing. Federal Environment Department figures show that for every 100 hectares of woodland cleared the habitat of 1,000 to 2,000 birds is permanently destroyed, while in some ecosystems up to 200 reptiles will be killed per hectare cleared.

Weakening the laws will once again put millions of hectares of bushland at risk.

#### **Our media releases:**

Farmers misinformation campaign reaches new heights (12/10/12)

NSW Farmers want 'license to bulldoze' (31/8/12)

Illegal land clearing - a challenge for O'Farrell Government (30/8/12)

Environment groups gear up for land clearing law fight (20/7/12)

Campaign launched (17/7/12)

Native Veg Law Review - excuse to boost land clearing (1/6/12)

MP's call encourages breaches of land clearing laws (11/5/12)



# Latest News

## HOW TO DESTROY A FOREST FOREVER



*Created on Thursday, 25 October 2012 17:30*

Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

**The approved destruction of the last remnant woodland remaining on the Liverpool Plain, in order to facilitate one of the world's largest open cut coal mines, is indisputable proof that the NSW Government's commitment to balanced land use has failed, Total Environment Centre said today.**

"Maules' Creek mine will destroy Leard State Forest," said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner, David Burgess.

"We were in the room when Leard State Forest was mapped as Tier One Biodiversity in the draft plan. When the final plans were released in September, however, all biodiversity mapping was removed. This is the intended result."

The NSW Government went to the 2011 NSW election promising to protect "sensitive environments" from mining.

"You can't get much more environmentally sensitive than Leard State Forest, and the departmental staff who did the Strategic Regional Land Use mapping agreed. They ranked Leard at the highest level."

"This decision is a direct signal from Macquarie Street that nowhere in NSW is off limits. It's the complete opposite of the promises made to regional communities prior to the election.

"The Maules Creek mine has no social licence. Neither on an industry nor governmental level," Mr Burgess concluded.

# Latest News

## DISMAL MINING IMPACTS OUTRAGE



Created on Wednesday, 24 October 2012 14:22

Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

TEC and a coalition of environment and community groups have warned Barry O'Farrell's NSW Government that it must recognise the unacceptable impact that mining continues to have on Sydney and Illawarra's water supply catchments.

The coalition was spurred to action by the NSW Mineral Council's Environment and Community Conference, which opened in Wollongong this week, at \$1000 per head.

"It was expected that mining in drinking catchments would be addressed by in the NSW Government's *Strategic Regional Land Use Policy*," said Pepe Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the nature Conservation council of NSW.

"However the policy failed to protect any areas from mining and left drinking catchments in limbo by excluding the Special areas from its areas of assessment."

David Burgess, Natural Areas campaigner at Total Environment Centre, noted that "Mining in the Southern Coalfields is linked to cracked and polluted rivers, the draining of endangered swamps critical to the catchments' integrity, the use of loopholes to gain mine approvals, endless breaches of approval conditions, and an aggressive approach to community engagement. Each and every mine in the water catchments is having serious impacts and more mines are proposed."

"BHP's Dendrobium mine has undermined, cracked and drained three small upland swamps," said Julie Sheppard from the National Parks Association's Macarthur branch. "But its new plan targets four massive swamps which are the headwaters of feeder streams for the Avon Dam. If the government approves this in the face of damage so far, then we know that the noble concept of Special Areas for Sydney's high quality drinking water means nothing anymore – not to industry or government."

Sharyn Cullis, Secretary of the Georges River Environment Alliance, said: "The ever growing Westcliff Mine Dump near Appin, euphemistically known as "the emplacement area" is a weeping sore. It is responsible for a toxic plume traceable for kilometres in the Georges River. Instead of complying, BHP is trying to have their licence conditions watered down so they're no longer in breach. This is not best practice."

"Peabody are mining the second longwall of the Metropolitan Colliery expansion and say they're pleased with their performance," said Peter Turner, spokesperson for the Save Our Water Catchment Areas campaign.

"But the new longwalls have shattered a beautiful waterfall, caused further riverbed cracking, reactivated the old subsidence damage, and turned the Waratah Rivulet pea-green with iron and other metal contaminants that ultimately end up in the Woronora Dam. If this is best practice coal mining, it has no place in our Special Areas," Turner said.

In the short time Gujarat NRE have been mining in the Illawarra, Kaye Osborn from Illawarra Residents for Responsible Mining, noted that "they have been fined for mowing down a threatened swamp to do a survey, and have failed to declare political donations as required and recorded subsidence six times the predicted levels in their current longwall. They have taken an exceptionally poor approach to community consultation. They are currently planning a 120,000 tonne mountain of coal only 200m from residences and are either not willing or able to stop their truck drivers speeding through the suburbs or covering their loads."

Caroline Graham is a founding member of the Rivers SOS Alliance and won a landmark case against BHP in the 1990s, when its longwall mining destroyed a section of the Cataract River at Douglas Park.

"We formed Rivers SOS as witnesses to the wrecking of the Cataract and Georges Rivers by BHP Billiton," said Graham. "They promised to remediate the hundreds of cracks in the bed of the Cataract, and re-supply the river

with fish after most had died, but vanished after cementing a couple of cracks as a media stunt. They moved on to the Georges River where rock falls spoiled Marhnyes Hole and the pollution continues to this day.

"It's time the Premier acts on his promise," Graham said.



# Latest News

## DIRTY COAL UNDERMINES NSW WATER SUPPLY



*Created on Wednesday, 17 October 2012 15:30*

**Gujarat NRE mining company is prepared to put its own interests ahead of the integrity of the NSW planning system and water supply catchments, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.**

Statements by Gujarat NRE in the company's *Response to Submissions* on a recent application to modify its mine plans, prove that the company is determined to ignoring warnings made last year by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC), and repeated in submissions by the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Sydney Catchment Authority.

Gujarat NRE has described its less than transparent approach to seeking incremental planning approvals as "an unavoidable requirement from the company's commercial perspective."

In its 2011 approval of Gujarat's Preliminary Works application, the PAC warned that "separation of project applications where the primary purpose of the first is to facilitate the second, could lead to lack of public confidence in the NSW assessment and regulatory systems, and must be considered undesirable."

"Gujarat NRE blames its incremental approval seeking on delays in the planning process, and says that it had 'reasonable expectations' of having a 20 year approval by now," said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"There's a bit more to the story than that. What Gujarat NRE doesn't say is that it used the stock exchange to announce that it would commence longwall mining at NRE No.1 on a particular date, and without a planning approval. This led to the Planning Department saying 'no' to mining many times before finally relenting and saying 'yes', and that issue is currently before the courts.

"We also have no doubt that the purchase and public blessing of a longwall machine prior to mining approval in 2011, and the 2008 push to lease or purchase six bulk carriers, also prior to approval, serves the company well in terms of putting big pressure on agencies to approve what are essentially new coal mines.

"There is no excuse for Gujarat NRE to say they had reasonable expectations that they would be mining full scale by now, given their shoddy records of reporting, monitoring and non-compliance. There have been 12 breaches of various conditions in the past year, as well as failure to disclose all the political donations that have been made," Mr Burgess said.

# Latest News

## Dirty coal tactics undermine sydney water supply



Created on Wednesday, 17 October 2012 15:19

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# Latest News

## NSW Farmers misinformation on Native Veg Act reaches new heights



Created on Friday, 12 October 2012 13:32

A claim by NSW Farmers that it is basically illegal to clear land in New South Wales falls nothing short of absurd and is blatant misinformation, said Total Environment Centre today.

The comments reported from NSW Farmers spokesman Cam Rowntree in *The Moree Champion* (11 Oct, 2012), were made in response to nearly twelve months of illegal land clearing at Croppa Creek in the Gwyder region of northwest NSW. It is believed that thousands of hectares of koala habitat and endangered ecological communities have been bulldozed in that time.

“These remarks are completely misleading. All the public need to do is have a look at the latest NSW Annual Report on Native Vegetation to see that in the last reporting period there was the greatest amount of native vegetation permitted to be cleared since the Native Vegetation Act came into being,” TEC Executive Director Jeff Angel said.

“Not only do the existing laws allow remnant vegetation to be cleared with appropriate environment protections, but no permission is required for the millions of hectares of regrowth, as defined by the Act.”

“The NSW Farmers Association is running a misinformation campaign and is clearly not interested in a rational debate. They also want to suspend compliance action – surely an invitation for more illegal clearing. We don’t believe they represent the majority of the community,” Mr Angel said.

“We urge the NSW government to keep the Act in its entirety and only make changes to the Regulation that are guaranteed to retain or improve environmental standards.”

# Latest News

## Gujarat failures send danger signals for NSW Government and water catchments



*Created on Friday, 14 September 2012 15:30*

A damning report by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) into Gujarat NRE's bungled attempts to expand mining deep into the Sydney water supply catchment shows that the company's projects should be reined in and its competence scrutinised at the highest levels, Total Environment Centre said today

"In a very short space of time Gujarat NRE has developed a spectacular record of ineptitude, non-compliance and deception. The continued passage of its proposals through the NSW planning system must be questioned and challenges the government's commitment to have a credible process," said Dave Burgess, TEC Natural Areas Campaigner.

"Mysterious share transactions, failure to disclose money donated to politicians, failure to establish proper community consultation, the use of loopholes in the NSW planning system to gain approvals and speeding trucks through Wollongong's suburbs have sent public trust in this company over the cliff."

The OEH report to NSW Planning and Infrastructure shows that Gujarat NRE has failed to conduct proper monitoring and adequate assessment in an area of Sydney's drinking water catchment containing endangered ecological communities, such as the nationally significant Temperate Highland Peat Swamps, numerous threatened species and groundwater aquifers.

"The report also indicates the Department believes that Gujarat NRE's method of gaining mining approvals is likely to lead to a lack of public confidence in the NSW planning system. The Planning Assessment Commission and Department of Planning among others have been signaling for Gujarat to lift their game for nearly three years now, but the company continues to ignore the warnings.

Prior to the last election Premier O'Farrell promised that the next Liberal and National Government would "... ensure mining cannot occur in any water catchment area and that any mining leases and exploration permits will reflect that common sense. No ifs, no buts, a guarantee."

"The question now is what is the NSW Government going to do with rogue mining companies who treat the environmental laws of this state with contempt? Sydney's water supply catchment is a treasure and Gujarat NRE has shown it is not up to the job," Mr Burgess concluded.

## Latest News

# GREEN LIGHT FOR MINING SPELLS BLACK DAY FOR NATIVE HABITATS



*Created on Tuesday, 11 September 2012 16:03*

**In a shock announcement today, The Strategic Regional Land Use Policy released by the NSW Government has given the coal mining and coal seam gas industries carte blanche to mine across the state, regardless of endangered communities of biodiversity, said Total Environment Centre.**

“The SRLUP and accompanying Strategic Regional Land Use Plans for the Upper Hunter and New England North West have failed to deliver on the promises of the current NSW Government,” said Dave Burgess, Natural Areas campaigner for TEC.

“Environmental protection has been reduced to lip service and the crucial biodiversity mapping in the original drafts has been removed.”

Mr Burgess said that communities currently under siege by coal and coal seam gas were told when this process began that ‘the pendulum had swung too far’.

“It’s now clear that the pendulum has stuck and it’s business as usual for mining in NSW.

“The much vaunted “triple bottom line” and cost benefit analysis which were supposed to protect these communities, has been reduced from a core principal of decision making, to a voluntary basis, whereby the developer is not required to do anything it doesn’t want to do.

“Barry O’Farrell promised regional communities certainty, but instead he has handed that certainty to the mining industry, regardless of the environmental and social impacts,” said Mr Burgess.

Click here to watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFWR-whqtEg>

<http://www.facebook.com/teclivinglandscapes>

## Latest News

### NATIVE HABITAT BATTLE IS ALL ABOUT BIODIVERSITY



*Created on Monday, 10 September 2012 11:52*

**A famous musician, various birds and frogs, and nature conservation groups across NSW have applauded the new Total Environment Centre (TEC) film which raises awareness of threats to the laws protecting native vegetation and threatened species in NSW.**

TEC launched the short film today to promote its *Living Landscapes* campaign, and raise awareness of the beauty of biodiversity and the necessity for habitat conservation. It features an original score by one of Australia's most acclaimed composers, singer songwriter Steve Kilbey (The Church), and asks viewers to "lend your voice to the dawn chorus."

"As a musician I love listening to the birds sing," said Kilbey, "and I imagine in horror the day when our trees and skies are silent...and the lovely native birds have ceased their song. That is why I am part of this campaign!"

The film commences with stark newsreel images of the NSW drought of 1944, when the Australian Government first recognised the disastrous environmental impacts of land clearing. A shift in tone as the images move from black and white into vibrant colour introduces Kilbey's ambient sound track and the arias of various endangered birds, including the Turquoise Parrot, Swift parrots, and Bush Stone-Curlews. Other endangered native flora and fauna are also mentioned.

"This film is a tool to raise awareness of the extraordinary diversity of native species whose future is at stake in NSW if land clearing laws are weakened or abolished," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"The current review of the Native Vegetation Act contains several changes to regulations that will make it easier to get on a bulldozer and start felling trees. Some in the farming and developer lobby are pushing for the Native Vegetation and Threatened Species Acts to be abolished altogether.

"Only last week we discovered large scale illegal land clearing near Moree and that state authorities had failed to act to prevent it. The images seen in *Living Landscapes* serves as a timely reminder of why laws that regulate land clearing were introduced in the first place," Mr Angel said.

[Click here to watch Living Landscapes music video](#)   [Living landscapes facebook](#)

"Australia's biodiversity is not only a national treasure to be cherished and protected, but it is essential to the very health of our landscape and therefore to us individually." Julian Lee **General Manager - Marketing & Sales, Food Connect Sydney**

"Lovely film. Really drives home the need for strong protection of our native vegetation laws. Like Rachel Carson's message in *Silent Spring*, this little film is a timely wake up call to protect our wonderfully rich yet increasingly endangered ecology." **Nell Schofield, environment activist, film critic**

"We are very much in support of TEC actions to safeguard and enhance the living landscape of our state. It is of crucial importance." **Graeme Phipps, President, The Avicultural Society of New South Wales.**

# Latest News

## NSW Farmers 'licence to bulldoze'



*Created on Friday, 31 August 2012 13:25*

Proposals by NSW Farmers to amend the Native Vegetation and Threatened Species Conservation Acts and clearing rules, are a 'recipe for environmental disaster', Total Environment Centre aid today.

"The demands in their submission to the NSW government review of the Native Vegetation Regulation are outrageous. Basically it is let the bulldozers rip by removing many protections for endangered species, grasslands, soil and revegetation," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of TEC.

"It may be convenient for them to forget that the vast majority of native vegetation (regrowth) does not require clearing consent and the Act only protects remnant bush. If the rules are changed the way NSW Farmers want then the ugly sight of massive land clearing will be a regular feature on our TV screens. And that won't help the reputation of the farming community."

"One of the greatest insults to environment protection is the demand that prosecutions be suspended. This at a time when we have found serious illegal clearing in the north west. Such a non-compliance policy is an invitation to wreck the countryside and shows a disdain for environmental laws," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## ILLEGAL HABITAT DESTRUCTION - a challenge for O'Farrell government



*Created on Thursday, 30 August 2012 12:06*

**Illegal clearing of endangered native vegetation in the past few days should convince the O'Farrell government that NSW needs strong protection laws, the Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.**

Investigations by TEC have uncovered extensive areas of over 1000 ha have recently been cleared in the Croppa Creek area, in the Gwydir region. Federal and state regulators are now examining the clearing.

"This clearing will send the region's biodiversity backwards, damaging the habitat of already endangered species, including koalas," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre. "It is a slap in the face to landcare groups and concerned farmers, who are doing their best to protect native flora and fauna.

"This has shocked many farmers who we know are appealing to the regulators to do something about what they see as a blatant abuse of the law. It's likely both state and federal laws have been breached," he said.

"The NSW Native Vegetation Act protects such remnant native vegetation, but in recent weeks extremists in the farmer community and the Shooters Party have been agitating to repeal the Act."

Mr Angel said the NSW Farmers Association is also proposing a significant downgrading of protection in response to the NSW government's plan to water down protection rules.

"We understand state regulators are stymied by a lack of resources and compliance powers. Rather than changing the rules to allow more clearing, the NSW government should be making it stronger and more effective."

"The public purse has already paid out \$436 million for protection and restoration of agricultural landscapes such as the Gwydir catchment. Just this week a new project for the planting of 600ha, fencing natural regeneration of 2,300 ha, and controlling feral species over 2,300ha, was launched. It will cost \$5 million over 6 years."

"Our unique flora and fauna represent natural assets which belong to all Australians," Mr Angel said. "It will be too late for the O'Farrell government to stand up for them when they are gone."



# Latest News

## Environment Groups gear up for land clearing law fight



*Created on Friday, 20 July 2012 15:12*

Environment groups are warning the NSW Government not to listen to extremist farmers threatening to hijack a review of the state's native vegetation laws, vowing today to fight weakening of the laws "all the way".

The NSW Native Vegetation Act (2003) was introduced to urgently address NSW's appalling record of land clearing and operates effectively to prevent broad scale clearing on private land with high conservation value vegetation. Native vegetation provides essential environmental, social and economic benefits, including protecting water quality, maintaining soil health and providing wildlife habitat.

Executive Director of Total Environment Centre, Jeff Angel said: "If the Government's commitment to a balanced review of the Native Vegetation Regulation (2005) is genuine then it must assure the community that the process will be fair and that it is committed to maintaining the Act that protects native vegetation in NSW."

"A vocal minority of NSW farmers are spreading misinformation about native vegetation laws. These individuals are exaggerating the size and scale of prosecutions of people who are caught conducting illegal land clearing and staging walkouts at public information sessions."

Chief Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of NSW, Kevin Evans said: "After the disappointment of a broken promise and amateur shooters being allowed into our National Parks the Government must stand firm and commit to the ongoing protection of native vegetation in NSW."

"There are numerous issues emerging over the next twelve months that will indicate that the NSW Government is either serious about maintaining a credible environmental agenda or whether it is held captive by extremists. The Government and its Environment Minister's credibility are on the line here."

Acting Chair, of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Rob Pallin said: "Ten years ago NSW had the unwanted reputation of being one of the world's worst land clearers. The last thing the state needs is a return to those days and the environmental damage that comes with it."

# Latest News

## Campaign to protect native veg laws launched



*Created on Tuesday, 17 July 2012 12:12*

Total Environment Centre today announced the launch of its 'Living Landscapes' campaign to protect and improve NSW's native vegetation laws that control damaging land clearing.

"We had hoped that the review of the state's essential native vegetation protection laws would be a balanced debate but it's clear that the voices of extremists are drowning out the voices of moderation. There is no way we are going to sit back and let the bulldozers rip through remnant bush, once again," said TEC Executive Director, Jeff Angel.

"The Native Vegetation Act and Regulation were already an environmental compromise when enacted and now we see some farmers calling for the Act to be ripped up and for other drastic changes."

"The O'Farrell government needs to decide if it wants the state to become an environmental pariah or retain some sense of balance and good environmental governance. First hunters in national parks – wreck land clearing laws next?"

"All the evidence points to the economic and environmental benefits that result from an appropriate balance that considers the future. Some farmers may be upset about the perceived infringement of private property rights. However what has been shown in the past is that unfettered or weak clearing rules, only lead to serious environmental mistakes that harm everyone, including future farm sustainability."

# Latest News

## Native Veg Law review - excuse to boost land clearing



*Created on Friday, 01 June 2012 13:19*

A NSW Government plan to weaken Native Vegetation laws will lead to land clearing levels not seen since NSW was one of the worst offenders in the world, Total Environment Centre said today.

The release of the Native Vegetation Regulation Review, by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, reveals that millions of hectares of native vegetation, currently requiring careful management, will be subject to no effective scrutiny at the stroke of the Minister's pen.

"In the name of 'flexibility' and 'administrative savings' the NSW Government has revealed its intention to escalate an unprecedented attack on environmental regulation, which it also revealed this week by the decision to allow hunting in National Parks," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"Even under existing laws, last year was reported as the worst year on record for land clearing and forest logging consents in NSW. Land clearing is recognised as the single biggest threat to wildlife in Australia and is a major contributor to global warming.

Mr Angel said the majority of property owners are doing the right thing, and respect the environment, "but this attack on existing regulation is being driven by an extreme faction. Minister Parker and Premier O'Farrell have shown this week that they're only too willing to accommodate such views."

The two key changes proposed by the review involve the clearing of so-called "invasive" species, which are really the return of native vegetation in over cleared landscapes and reduced environmental assessment and offset rules. The clearing will become an activity that does not require consent, and the weakened assessment methodology will mean more vegetation decline. Both will create major compliance nightmares.

"We hope these issues can be worked through with the government and stakeholders, but TEC will also be fighting to protect and improve Native Vegetation laws, through its new Living Landscapes campaign," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## O'Farrell Government's Green Reputation Shattered



*Created on Wednesday, 30 May 2012 17:01*

It's only taken a little over a year for the government to begin dismantling our conservation heritage with a dirty deal with the Shooters Party so that they can pass their electricity privatisation law.

The Premier has repeatedly assured the public that he would not allow hunting in national parks.

Today, he broke that promise.

Yesterday, his government announced a proposal to weaken our state's land clearing laws.

What will tomorrow hold?

- fast track approvals for mines and coal seam gas fields?
- removing community participation rights in development decisions?
- weakening laws to conserve threatened species?
- winding back protection for wilderness areas?
- failure to grow recycling?

We call on the community to contact their local MPs to express their alarm at the Premier's actions, and call on government to take urgent action to restore its environmental credibility.

The groups are: Total Environment Centre, Nature Conservation Council, National Parks Association, Humane Society International, The Wilderness Society, Colong Foundation for Wilderness

# Latest News

## MP's call encourages breaches of land clearing laws



*Created on Friday, 11 May 2012 15:22*

Calls by the Member for Northern Tablelands to place a moratorium on prosecutions under state native vegetation regulations are tantamount to encouraging people to break the law, Total Environment Centre said today.

Richard Torbay used Parliament Question Time on Wednesday to call upon the NSW Environment Minister to introduce a moratorium on prosecutions under the Native Vegetation Act 2003 while a review of native vegetation regulations takes place.

“Mr Torbay’s claim that the Act is draconian and unjust simply reflects the extreme views that have existed ever since the failure of past policies made this regulation inevitable and essential to protect the landscape. The current review will determine which aspects of the Native Vegetation Regulation need adjusting and that will ideally be for the betterment of both land managers and the environment. However they should not be an invitation for any measure of weakening of environmental standards and outcomes and validating extreme views”, said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

“In the last three years for which data is available, reports show that there have been less than 20 convictions under serious land clearing offences and only 55 penalty notices. These numbers show that claims of widespread persecution of farmers and developers across the state don’t stack up and that compliance is targeted and necessary.”

“A moratorium now would give a green light to would-be land clearers who wish to see a return to the days when NSW had one of the worst land clearing records in the world”, Mr Angel said.

## Latest News

### Longwall mine backflip raises serious questions about NSW government's planning promises



*Created on Wednesday, 21 March 2012 09:24*

Revelations that the NSW government has allowed Gujarat NRE to commence controversial longwall mining without the required environmental assessment and development approval, in a backflip on its rejection only a few weeks ago – raises serious questions about the O'Farrell government's commitment to integrity and transparency, Total Environment Centre said today.

In the last few weeks the Department of Planning and Infrastructure repeatedly said it had refused the development because the Environmental Assessment for this highly sensitive area was deemed inadequate and a more comprehensive EA is required; then exhibited and assessed by the department, and determined by the PAC.

"Now the company which clearly is having problems justifying the environmental impacts of its mine expansion has lobbied the government and got its foot in the door. Gujarat NRE should not be rewarded for being unable to produce a competent environmental assessment. It's getting itself into trouble by thinking its development announcements can drive the planning system. This is just the type of decision that caused so much community disenchantment with the previous government's handling of planning decisions," said David Burgess, TEC Natural Areas Campaigner.

"Apparently a token Subsidence Management Plan is being produced – a process that has been discredited. Where is the public consultation on the SMP and environmental impact assessment? It's sneaky and secretive."

"It gives a signal that mining companies can 'play' the planning process and be rewarded for avoiding proper planning and environmental assessment. These are not the type of developers the state should tolerate."

# Latest News

## NSW Mining and Gas Policy – a disappointment



*Created on Tuesday, 06 March 2012 14:11*

The NSW government's new land use policy for mining and coal seam gas released today, will disappoint farmers and environmentalists who will have to wage an even bigger campaign in coming months, Total Environment Centre said today.

"The draft rules give no certainty of protection of environmental and agricultural values essential to future sustainability. They are better than the system under the Labor government but not by much and not enough," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of TEC.

"The protection of strategic agricultural lands and high conservation values is left to a process which can sideline water protection and be sidelined itself if the government deems the project to be 'exceptional'. There's no certainty for sustainable agriculture nor threatened habitats. As a consequence the O'Farrell government will become embroiled in the attrition of project-by-project decisions – as communities object and campaign; and mining companies seek special exemptions and weak conditions."

"The government is hoping the fact they have mapped important lands and set up an independent gateway process for strategic agricultural lands (but not biodiversity areas) will signal to the mining industry that they should back off. But why would a company expecting to make billions of dollars back off because of a 'sign' in a plan? They'll bring all their lobbying and public relations resources to bear to get what they want," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## 'WE CAN COEXIST' - MINING MYTH BLASTED



*Created on Wednesday, 26 October 2011 01:00*

A report by Total Environment Centre (TEC) into mining policy in NSW has found that claims by mining companies and government that mining and the environment can 'coexist', are a myth.

"The state is facing a major stoush between mining, environment and agricultural stakeholders. In an effort to calm the political conflict, government and the coal and gas companies now claim these land uses can coexist. But TEC's study of the last time NSW faced such a degree of controversy, in the 1990s, when government instituted a coexistence policy, shows massive damage occurred," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"In 1994 a report by the Coal Resources Development Committee predicted land use conflicts and proposed policies such as multiple land use and coexistence. However serious damage is occurring in those very same areas now:

- damaging underground mining has occurred around the foreshores on Lake Macquarie;
- creek diversions, the removal of entire villages, and giant open cut pits, are driving Hunter Valley and Mudgee farmers off the land;
- serious coal mine dust problems plague Singleton and Muswellbrook;
- cracking and draining of swamps and creeks has been caused by longwall mining under Sydney's water catchments."

"The same greenwash is being propagated today," said Mr Angel.

"It's vital that the O'Farrell government sticks to its election promise of prohibiting mining in key environmental and agricultural areas. This time the community is awake to it."

TEC has also launched its 'Carbon Mine Threats Map' on its website, which shows many controversial sites across the state. It will be updated as new information becomes available.



# Latest News

## Coal miner must be prosecuted for failure to reveal political donations



*Created on Sunday, 28 August 2011 13:19*

Illawarra coal giant Gujarat NRE's failure to disclose 18 political donations to both major parties when submitting a \$114m project application in Sydney's water supply catchment breaches the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and raises questions about the company's commitment to transparency, Total Environment Centre said today.

Under NSW planning law a developer is required to declare all political donations at the time a project application is lodged. When Gujarat's mining application was lodged in March 2010 no donations were disclosed. However a declaration appeared this week on the NSW Planning website detailing 18 donations to both major parties and on the same day the Director-General's Assessment report supporting the development was released.

"The key action in a developer's statutory requirement to declare donations to political parties is to do so when the project application is lodged, not 17 months later," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"Political donations and their timely lodgement with an application are a highly sensitive matter. They must be declared at the correct time to inform the government and community of the situation and political relationships. It's essential to the integrity of the planning system."

"After the profile this issue had under the last government, and especially in Wollongong, it beggars belief that this major company didn't know full disclosure was required. It is staggering that Gujarat's donations were only declared this week and on the same day as the NSW Planning report. There are only two excuses - they forgot or wanted to avoid the transparency rules - neither is satisfactory and prosecution and penalty should be in train."

"TEC is also very concerned about the impact of the project on Sydney's drinking water supply, not least because it is the first and necessary stage to a massive longwall mining expansion. The entire project should have been assessed - not in segments because once the first stage is in, the company will no doubt argue it must proceed with the next, more damaging development," he said.

# Latest News

## Water catchment gas drilling should be called off



*Created on Friday, 01 July 2011 13:00*

The authority announced this week for Apex Energy to undertake exploratory drilling for gas in Sydney's water catchment close to Burragorang Dam, should be withdrawn, Total Environment Centre said today.

"To even begin exploratory drilling in such a sensitive area so important to millions of people in Sydney is unacceptable. We should not be considering the introduction of gas extraction here in view of the pollution and damage to the landscape and water systems that can occur with the production and disposal of polluted water out of drill sites, a matrix of pipelines, vegetation clearing and truck traffic," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"Companies don't explore with the intention of doing nothing. Further this particular company is small and we don't believe has the resources to back up its risk management intentions."

"While this permit was not covered by the NSW government's moratorium there should have been exceptions to cover more advanced applications for high risk situations. The authority should be withdrawn," Mr Angel said.

Apex Energy NL was subject to controversy last year with the release of confidential company documents revealing its gas industry ambitions in Sydney's water catchments and intention to use the polluting 'fracking' technique.

## Latest News

### COWBOY MINING INDUSTRY GETS THE ELECTION IT DESERVES



*Created on Tuesday, 15 March 2011 13:05*

New mining and gas policies from the Coalition and ALP that seek to limit the environmental and social impacts of mining; and today's hysterical reaction from the mining industry go to prove that ALP governments and the mining industry have indulged in unbalanced decision making for years, Total Environment Centre said today.

"They are reaping the costs of thinking that coal was king and that gas was the next big thing – and that they had unhindered pre-eminence amongst land uses in natural areas, rural towns and villages. They miscalculated," said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

"It's absolutely essential that the next NSW government quickly completes the Coal and Gas Strategy so balance is injected into the decision making system."

TEC Director Jeff Angel said, "the introduction of exclusion zones, the banning of exploration in waterways and protection of water sources, serious attention to cumulative impacts, withdrawal or no renewal of exploration licences, improved auditing and compliance, and the banning of dangerous fracking practices for gas drilling and early environmental assessment of proposals – underlain by a strategy rather than the current cowboy approach – are all needed".

"The next Government must use the momentum generated by these policy announcements to deliver better outcomes for the regions, water catchments and bushland."

TEC is calling for an approach to mining that delivers certainty to the environment and mining affected communities.

"The mistakes of recent years that have seen places like the Hunter Valley transformed into a huge mining zone, longwall mines damaging rivers and swamps across Sydney's water supply catchment, the destroying of forests for open cut coal mines, the threats posed to food security and the confetti of exploration licences - must not be repeated."

## Latest News

### Wyong Coal Mine Rejection Good for Water Security



*Created on Friday, 04 March 2011 13:22*

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has applauded today's decision by the NSW Government to reject the Wallarah 2 Coal Project in Wyong.

"For the first time an evidence based decision has been made to reject a longwall coal mine in a gazetted water

supply catchment area," said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"The NSW Government must be congratulated for paying attention to the potential for 53% of the Central Coast's water supply area to be severely compromised, the potential damage to the ecological systems of Jiliby State Conservation Area, and the strong wishes of the local community and business community."

Although an inquiry by the NSW Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) did not specifically reject the proposal, its comprehensive recommendations have given the Planning Minister ample grounds to make the decision to do so. The PAC found that subsidence would have uncertain impacts on the water catchment area and that a 'purely responsive' approach to damage by the proponent was 'inadequate'.

"TEC welcomes the fact that both major parties have taken a precautionary approach to this unsustainable mine" Mr Burgess said.

"It is vital that the next NSW government turns its attention to the ongoing impacts of longwall mining south of Sydney's where numerous mines operate side by side with mining planned across a quarter of Sydney's water supply area."

A TEC inspection of Waratah Rivulet earlier this week revealed a critical watercourse where surface flow has still not returned to a riverbed cracked by longwalling nearly six years ago. The Waratah Rivulet feeds the Woronora Dam and provides the Sutherland Shire and Northern Illawarra with about 30% of their water supply.

"The Waratah Rivulet was a pristine river until it was undermined. It still looks appalling years afterwards. It is important that today's decision leads policy away from the lasting damage longwall mining is doing to our water," Mr Burgess concluded.

# Latest News

## NO DAM GIVES THE HUNTER WATER MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY



*Created on Monday, 29 November 2010 16:22*

Last Updated on Sunday, 17 February 2013 06:40

Newcastle and the Hunter have been an historic opportunity to become leaders in sustainable water management, after the decision to reject the proposed Tillegra Dam, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

"Tillegra Dam was an expensive white elephant that could not be justified on the basis of need, cost or environmental impact," TEC Water Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said. "Having made the only sensible decision to reject the dam, the State Government should now focus on making Hunter Water a leader in sustainable water management."

Hunter Water was criticised throughout the Tillegra saga because it neglected cheaper, environmentally sustainable options such as water conservation, recycling and stormwater harvesting, while pursuing a massive engineering project that was simply not required.

"Hunter Water has failed to introduce basic water savings rules that have saved millions of litres of water in cities around the country. It has undermined the development of water recycling by giving its largest industrial water users massive discounts to discourage them from switching to recycled water," Mr Martin said.

Tillegra Dam was first proposed in the 1980's in response to a severe and prolonged drought. A decision to reject the dam then in favour of water conservation saw Hunter Water become a national leader in sustainable water management with the introduction of user pays pricing, innovative water conservation programs and a major recycling project at Eraring Power Station.

"Newcastle and the Hunter once led the country in water conservation. Sadly this proud status has been lost as Hunter Water pursued an outdated and discredited dam building agenda over the last four years.

"This second rejection of Tillegra Dam offers a chance to become a world leader in sustainable water management," Mr Martin said.

"This second rejection of Tillegra Dam offers a chance to become a world leader in sustainable water management," Mr Martin said.

# Rivers & Water

## Don't Frack The Gas Out Of Us!



*Created on Friday, 19 November 2010 12:42*

TotalEnvironment Centre (TEC) has launched its Don't Frack The Gas Out Of Us campaign. TEC says Australians must stop the rush to implant a massive gas mining industry in this country, until the community grants a 'licence to operate'. Take action! [see below in read more]

Mining for coal seam gas involves a web of drill sites with cleared pads, polluted water ponds, pipelines and gas storage tanks – spreading over the landscape – and use of 'fracking' which injects water and toxic chemicals into aquifers to crack rock and release the gas.

Long experience has shown TEC that if you let a mining industry wind up it is very hard to wind back. This is what has happened in Queensland which has recently seen multi-billion dollar approvals from state and federal governments for gas exploration. In New South Wales, where we are still at the beginning of any real assessment process, very large exploration permits have already been granted.

The impacts of gas "fracking" are particularly invasive and polluting, as has been proved by the experience of communities across the United States and yet there has been no public debate on the impacts on Sydney, the Hunter, our precious southern water catchments and other areas where the gas industry is preparing to dig in.

The gas industry is saying 'fracking' doesn't always take place and that a more 'gentle' depressurising is being used on the Sydney basin area. However, this is part of a long term strategy to pull the wool over our eyes while maneuvering the infrastructure into place. The current "explorations" are intended to build up a convincing argument for the industry to get the go-ahead by providing proof of the resources, wooing investors and shareholders with dividends, and exciting governments with the prospect of hefty royalties.

We can't risk a powerful industry riding roughshod over the environment. TEC and other environment groups will be joining with all Australians, including those in targeted communities, to demand transparency and a rigorous and impartial process of environment impact assessment of a commercial industry before any further exploration takes place.

The community needs to be brought into the decision making process now so we can plan where gas mining can and cannot occur.

If you would like to support our campaign – sign the Frack Off! Letter - and make a donation. TEC is committed to effective and long term campaigning.

Coal Seam Gas: by the numbers [ABC]

### On-Line Letter

To: The Premier

Below are some suggested points you might like to make:

*I demand a moratorium on gas mining and a full independent public inquiry into the establishment of the coal seam gas industry. I am concerned about:*

- \* the potential for pollution below and above ground*
- \* clearing of vegetation for multiple drill sites, access roads and pipelines*
- \* air pollution from storage tanks and flaring*
- \* truck traffic transporting water and chemicals*

*\* AND the lack of a transparent plan for where gas mining can and cannot occur*

# Latest News

## MINING GIANT CAVES TO ENVIRONMENT



*Created on Wednesday, 27 October 2010 12:16*

The reputation of longwall mining, which cracks rivers and drains wetlands, has suffered a serious blow with BHP Billiton's decision to drop extensive plans to mine coal under the Dharawal State Conservation Area in the northern Illawarra, said Total Environment Centre (TEC) today.

"BHP Billiton and its consultants were clearly indulging in greenwash when they originally said there would not be serious impacts, but at last they have listened to the valid concerns from environmentalists and the community," said Mr Jeff Angel, TEC's executive director. "We hope this signals an ongoing sensitivity to the long term environment impact of the mining industry in Australia."

The new proposal excludes one-third of the original area and removes all mining near the Dharawal State Conservation Area, including five large mining areas near the Woronora River, Cataract River, O'Hares Creek at the top of the Georges River catchment, and key swamps that feed the rivers.

"This river system and the valuable swamps which feed it are irreplaceable and should be fully protected as a nature reserve," said Mr Angel. "BHP has made it clear however, that it is not giving up on the five areas, but putting them on hold indefinitely. We will have to be vigilant."

"TEC and the community will now have to address the massive Gujarat scheme for mining under the catchments – the next mine expansion in this pristine area which Australians will still need long after the mining industry has moved on."



# Latest News

## Govt Must Act on Polluting Gas and Damaging Coal in Sydney's Water Catchment



*Created on Friday, 24 September 2010 09:55*

The NSW Premier must take immediate action to halt gas drilling (CSM) in our pristine water catchments following explosive revelations which have exposed an industry seeking to avoid proper public scrutiny of its polluting practices, said Total Environment Centre (TEC) today.

CSM extraction involves large swaths of land being leased to energy companies using a controversial, poorly understood technique called hydraulic fracturing or 'Fracing'. Along with massive surface disturbance, the process could involve the fracturing with hundreds of chemicals of aquifers linked to Sydney's water supply, and could also lead to polluted water being pumped to the surface.

"It is now clear that we can no longer assume that longwall mining and coal seam methane are separate industries," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"These documents reveal that a clear relationship between the longwall industry and CSM industry has been deliberately concealed from public scrutiny, and seemingly encouraged by various ministers through changes to exploration licences and approval variations. They indicate a systematic plan to establish CSM extraction within Sydney's Water supply catchments."

The documents reveal Apex Energy intention to use "whatever means" to extract gas in its joint venture with Peabody Energy above Metropolitan Colliery in the Woronora Special Area.

TEC calls on the Premier to:

- Impose an immediate moratorium on new CSM extraction in NSW while a NSW CSM Environmental Strategy is developed with full community and independent scientific input. This follows recent pollution incidents in Queensland and the Lower Hunter Valley in NSW and mounting international evidence about the damage CSM extraction is having upon the environment. This would include a ban on CSM in Sydney's Metropolitan Special Areas covering the drinking water catchment and State Conservation Areas in the Southern Coalfield.
- Force all companies with currently operating or proposed longwall mines to reveal any relationship with CSM extraction and review all existing Part 3A approvals that have not included these plans and instruct the Department of Planning to fully engage with the public in the review.
- Establish areas in NSW that are off limits to longwall mining and CSM extraction based on environmental, water supply, agricultural and infrastructure values.

# Latest News

## Mining Companies Hide Threat to Sydney's Water Supply



*Created on Thursday, 23 September 2010 10:05*

A confidential document released today by Total Environment Centre revealing two mining companies had conspired to hide controversial gas drilling from an environmental assessment of longwall mining under Sydney's water catchment, is a scandal.

"Serious questions also have to be asked of the Department of Planning who accommodated the miners without any consideration of whether the public deserved to know about the full ambit of the coal and gas mining scheme under the catchment," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

The discussion paper on Apex Energy's joint venture with Peabody Energy states that both companies want Peabody's name to be hidden from the operation given the damage already done to the catchment by coal mining "lest it attract unnecessary attention and further aggravation".

In 2006 it was discovered that Metropolitan Mine had tilted the Waratah Rivulet's feeder swamp and drained the Rivulet for 2km of its length. The flow from the Rivulet into Woronora Dam provides the northern Illawarra and Sutherland Shire with 30% of their water supply. The company was seeking a 30 year extension for the mine.

"It's nearly five years since longwall mining destroyed the riverbed of Waratah Rivulet and there is still an army of workers down there in a vain attempt to patch it up."

"Now we learn the damage to the catchment could be magnified by gas drilling using what the miners call "whatever means", which will cause serious pollution," Mr Angel said.

"Peabody should be more concerned with avoiding more damage to an extremely important watercourse, upland swamps and the Woronora Dam. Not with gaining a share of the profits from a gas operation that they're not willing to put their name to. And the Department of Planning should protect the public and the environment by insisting on full and comprehensive environmental assessment, not just listen to the miners. "

# Latest News

## THREATENED SPECIES DUMPED FOR DEVELOPER RULES



*Created on Monday, 02 August 2010 17:22*

Key environment groups today attacked proposals by the Keneally government to pave the way for developers to destroy populations of threatened species under the controversial biocertification scheme.

The scheme which is required by legislation to 'maintain or improve' the environment was supposed to follow the 'like for like' principle through offsets so that if a development would harm a threatened species population it could be offset by improved protection of the same species elsewhere. This has now been comprehensively abandoned so that an endangered frog or bird or reptile can be offset by a tree somewhere else in the state.

"This is scandalous and Frank Sartor must withdraw the proposal if he wants to retain any semblance of environmental integrity. Clearly anti-environmental government ministers and developers have got at this scheme which will trash the government's recent steps to green its image. To suggest a threatened frog or bird or reptile species could be offset by some trees elsewhere in the state makes a nonsense of the 'maintain or improve' principle that was supposed to be enshrined in the legislation," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

Pepe Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council said: "Offsetting the environmental impacts from a development was already a controversial idea. This new proposal will increase the anger felt by all those environmental and community groups who have watched the government progressively weaken planning laws in favour of developers."

Kevin Evans, Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of NSW said: "A key principle in any offsetting is 'like for like'. This new scheme is nowhere near this. Environment groups will be appealing to the next federal environment minister to reject this scheme as part of any alignment of commonwealth and state threatened species laws. The feds will have to intervene every time if any national threatened species are involved."

Advice from lawyers at the Environmental Defenders Office who have reviewed the scheme and recently confirmed the changes with the environment department has also revealed other serious weaknesses in the biocertification scheme.

# Latest News

## OIL SPILL RISK IN AUSTRALIA



*Created on Monday, 21 June 2010 17:47*

Rising community and environmental concern about a lack of action to provide safeguards against the risk of large scale oil spills in Australia will be a high profile issue leading up to the federal election, Australia's leading conservation groups said today in a joint statement.

An unprecedented alliance of 32 environment groups including the Australian Conservation Foundation, WWF Australia and Pew Environment Group are calling on all political parties to commit to a network of large marine sanctuaries this coming election to provide safeguards for Australia's unique marine life.

In the face of one of the world's worst environmental disasters, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, the United States has clamped down on the oil and gas industry with a range of measures including a moratorium on new oil approvals in sensitive areas.

Late last year, Australia suffered the major 10 week Montara oil spill off the Kimberley coast.

In stark contrast to the United States, Australia's Resources Minister subsequently gave new approvals to the proponent of the Montara oil spill and released 31 new oil and gas leases over environmentally sensitive areas of Australia's oceans, which had been identified for protection.

"Everyone knows prevention is better than cure," said Australian Conservation Foundation CEO Don Henry. "That means protecting Australia's important and iconic marine areas including Australia's South West marine region, the Coral Sea and the Kimberley with marine sanctuaries."

"Since the Montara oil spill less than a year ago, 31 new oil and gas approvals have been made in Australian waters but no action has been taken to safeguard our marine life and coastal communities from the high risks associated with industrial development", said Greg Bourne of WWF-Australia.

"A network of large marine sanctuaries is backed by science as being the best way to protect our unique marine life, allow fish stocks to recover and provide safeguards against the impacts of threats such as oil spills", said Michelle Grady of the Pew Environment Group-Australia.

In light of Australia's failure to act on the very clear risk posed by deepwater drilling, the alliance of environment organizations is calling on the Rudd Government to release the Montara Inquiry findings without delay, and for all political parties to commit in the lead up to this federal election to:-

1. Place a moratorium on new oil and gas approvals in Australian waters until the safety issues associated with deepwater drilling have been addressed.
2. Declare a national network of marine sanctuaries in Australian waters including Australia's South West marine region, the Coral Sea and the Kimberley, to safeguard Australia's unique and threatened marine life.

Australia lays claim to the third largest marine jurisdiction of any nation on Earth, and a marine area almost twice the size of our continent. Australia's marine life is considered to be the most biologically diverse on the planet. Yet, less than 5% of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone is protected from oil and gas, and most of this area sits in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and around the subantarctic Macquarie, Heard and McDonald Islands.

# Latest News

## ICONIC SNOWY RIVER E-COLLAPSE



*Created on Thursday, 20 May 2010 11:58*

The Snowy River is at risk of complete ecological collapse due to the NSW Government's failure to deliver promised environmental flows, the Total Environment Centre warned today.

The NSW Fisheries Scientific Community has proposed that the aquatic ecological community of the Snowy Catchment should be officially declared "endangered".

"Eight years after the decision to return environmental flows to the Snowy River the health of the river continues to decline," said TEC Director Jeff Angel. "Unless promised flows are delivered this national icon will become a dead river."

The NSW Fisheries Scientific Committee has identified the impact of Snowy Hydro Scheme and inadequate flows in the Snowy River as responsible for the decline of the Snowy aquatic ecological community. At risk are at least 60 native fish and other aquatic species including threatened and vulnerable species such as the River Blackfish (*Gadopsis marmoratus*), Southern Pigmy Perch (*Nannoperca australis*) and Australian Grayling (*Prototroctes mareana*).

"The evidence is clear and the jury has delivered its verdict. It's time for Premier Kristina Keneally to cut the red tape and save the Snowy River," Mr Angel said.

TEC has warned the Premier that further inaction will create political backlash in the crucial marginal seat of Monaro.

"Snowy River communities are rightly angered by the failure to deliver promised environmental flows. The government risks facing a severe voter backlash at the March 2011 election unless this situation is remedied," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## STONER'S DOPEY STANCE ON FRAGILE FLORA



*Created on Wednesday, 03 March 2010 11:50*

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has warned NSW State Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell that he must distance himself from his deputy, the National's Leader Andrew Stoner, after his performance at a farmers' rally in Sydney yesterday.

"Andrew Stoner stood outside Parliament and called for the NSW Native Vegetation Act to be torn up," said TEC director, Jeff Angel. "He then led the crowd in an ugly rant against environmentalists.

"Stoner proposes to plunge NSW back into the dark ages, threatening dozens of endangered fauna and flora; creating massive carbon emissions; and reducing the health of rural landscapes."

Mr Angel said the coalition must choose.

"The coalition either comes up with a sound environment policy, or risks association with the rural extremism articulated by this small group of protesters and some members of the shadow cabinet."

"Mr O'Farrell must now step forward to inform the public whether he intends to take this policy of vandalism to an election," said Mr Angel.

"The alternative is a proven system that has reduced clearing of remnant bush, conserved ecosystems, prevented salinity and protected water catchments; while at the same providing funds to farmers to restore degraded agricultural landscapes."

# Latest News

## BHPB Ducks Public Accountability



*Created on Wednesday, 17 February 2010 16:13*

BHP Billiton's decision not to present at public hearings into its proposed massive coal mine expansion south of Sydney has provoked censure from environment groups today.

Two days of Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) public hearings into the proposed Bulli Seam Operations commenced this morning in Appin, south of Campbelltown. But there are now significant questions of procedural fairness hanging over the review.

"As Kristina Keneally said back in 2008, the PAC was formed to 'deliver the NSW public more transparency, accountability and certainty about planning decisions,'" said David Burgess, from the Total Environment Centre. "It is astonishing that a mining company has been allowed to duck this public review process. Apparently BHP Billiton made a secret presentation to the NSW PAC last year. "

Forty-seven rivers and streams, two hundred and six upland swamps, six hundred and sixty-one cliff lines, and six hundred and twenty-three Aboriginal heritage sites sit within the mining area, which includes Sydney's drinking water supply catchment, the iconic Dharawal State Conservation Area, and private land. The expansion will also see CO2 emissions increasing by 40% from current levels.

"While BHP Billiton and some government agencies were able to present in private some time ago," said Burgess, "community, environment and indigenous group have been left to present in public with no redress. The NSW Government risks the accusation that it is weighted well in favour of the developers."

Julie Sheppard of the Rivers SOS Alliance, said: "we were hopeful of hearing some answers to very real concerns we have about the mine. Apparently there is nothing in the regulations that obliges the company to appear at this stage of the Planning Process."

Critical submissions to the PAC by several NSW Government agencies and three local councils were released on the PAC website earlier this week, revealing major concerns over numerous aspects of BHP Billiton's Environmental Assessment on both environmental and economic grounds.

"Clearly there are massive holes in BHP Billiton Environmental Assessment," said Burgess, "especially in terms of the damage mining will inflict on swamps, cliffs and river systems and the company's promise that it can repair them."

BHP Billiton's apparent "behind closed doors" presentation to the PAC is particularly galling to the Southern Sydney Branch of the National Parks Association of NSW which had frequently requested that the PAC establish protocols that are fair to the community.

"BHP made a strategic decision that it could gain more concessions from the process," said Gary Schoer, NPA's Southern Sydney Branch secretary, "if it didn't have to publicly justify the extraction of coal beneath many significant swamps and creeks of Dharawal State Conservation Area."

# Latest News

## LAND CLEARING LAWS CHANGE – NO WAY



*Created on Monday, 01 February 2010 14:57*

A campaign by farmers to get compensation or remove land clearing laws will be fought all the way, Total Environment Centre said today. Farmers have already received millions of dollars and continued clearing rights over a lot of native vegetation.

“There’s been extensive clearing and we have to keep the best of what’s left but some farmers have never accepted that the wider community has a right to impose laws to prevent excessive land clearing of native vegetation. Their claim for compensation is a furphy as they deliberately avoid the truth that compensation has already been paid both financially and in the structure of the laws,” said Jeff Angel Director of the Total Environment Centre.

“In the case of the NSW laws the then Howard government provided tens of millions of dollars on the condition that NSW had land clearing laws. More was put in by the state. Similarly in Queensland there was a large adjustment fund. And both laws contain protections for clearing by farmers of native vegetation including regrowth, other than that deemed important for biodiversity.”

“Tony Abbot is going to have to be clear on his policy position. On the one hand he expresses sympathy for the farmers; while on the other he wants to plant lots of trees for carbon sinks. If you free up land clearing laws then the carbon emissions will overwhelm the potential carbon sequestration of tree planting”, Mr Angel said.”

“We also call on state governments and oppositions and the Rudd government to plainly state they will not be weakening land clearing laws.”

“Some farmers seem to think you can have a magic pudding and every time you complain you will get more money. They should get real.”



# Latest News

## REES MUST SOLVE SNOWY RIVER CRISIS



*Created on Tuesday, 03 November 2009 13:06*

NSW Premier Nathan Rees must act immediately to deliver crucial environmental flows for the Snowy River to avoid an environmental crisis and political backlash, the Total Environment Centre (TEC) warned today.

"Seven years after the decision to return environmental flows to the Snowy River the health of the river continues to decline," said TEC Director Jeff Angel. "With flows less than one third of what was promised, Premier Rees must personally intervene to save the river from environmental catastrophe".

Under the terms of the Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed environmental flows for the Snowy should have reached an average of 142 gigalitres this year. Actual flows to the river are languishing at less than a third of this level while NSW government indecision delays reforms to the Snowy Hydro Water License that could deliver these urgently needed flows.

"Recent reports by the Snowy Scientific Committee and NSW Fisheries Scientific Committee have highlighted the need for increased flows to prevent the environmental collapse of the river and extinction of a crucial population of the threatened native freshwater blackfish. With the spring snowmelt currently underway we need urgent action from the Premier to cut through the red tape and immediately deliver environmental flows," Mr Angel said.

TEC has also called on the Premier to restore the natural connection between the Mowamba and Snowy Rivers that is vital for the long term health of the Snowy River.

"Restoring a natural connection between the Snowy and Mowamba Rivers is vital for providing natural variability in flows for the Snowy River, and a link to natural alpine headwaters. Inaction over fixing flaws in the Snowy water License is also a major barrier to permanently restoring this vital connection," Mr Angel said.

TEC has warned the Premier that further inaction will create political backlash in the crucial marginal seat of Monaro.

"Snowy River communities are rightly angered by the failure to deliver promised environmental flows," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## BIG MISTAKE: TILLEGRA DAMNED



*Created on Wednesday, 16 September 2009 13:21*

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Tillegra Dam confirms the worst fears about environmental damage to the Williams River and sensitive habitat, while failing to demonstrate any need for the project or properly consider alternatives, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

“Groups opposing Tillegra Dam have argued all along that it would devastate the ecology of the Williams River,” said TEC Water Campaigner, Mr Leigh Martin. “It will inundate thousands of hectares of important habitat and seriously harm native fish populations. All these impacts and more are confirmed by the environmental assessment.”

The EA does nothing to counter arguments that the half billion dollar dam is not needed and that cheaper and less environmentally damaging options are available to provide long term drought security for the Hunter.

“A recent report by the Institute for Sustainable Futures and the University of Technology Sydney poured cold water on the Tillegra proposal and identified cheaper and better water security for the region. The EA does nothing to address these concerns or even properly assess alternatives.

“Meanwhile Hunter Water continues to provide massive discounts to discourage industry from switching to recycled water and refuses to pursue sensible water conservation measures that have proven effective elsewhere,” Mr Martin said.

The EA also fails to fully assess the greenhouse impacts of a new dam in the Hunter.

“It has been proven that large dams are major sources of dangerous greenhouse gasses such as methane from decaying vegetation and other matter. The EA fails to properly address this fact or compare emissions from Tillegra Dam with alternative water supply options,” Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the NSW Government and Hunter water to immediately abandon Tillegra Dam and plan for sustainable water management in the Hunter.

“If it goes ahead Tillegra Dam will subject Hunter residents to decades of higher water bills for a dam they simply do not need. Its time to stop this project and provide long term sustainable water management solutions for the Hunter,” Mr Martin said.

# Latest News

## SHAMELESS SNOWY HYDRO EXPOSED



*Created on Thursday, 27 August 2009 21:58*

"Snowy Hydro has been a major obstacle to restoring environmental flows to the iconic Snowy River, but its website features a glowing report of its contribution to water management," Jeff Angel, TEC Director said. "It also presents Snowy Hydro electricity as a renewable energy source. In fact, it does nothing to reduce current greenhouse emissions and fossil fuels are used to pump water around the scheme."

The misleading website materials unmasked by TEC include:

- An old, undated image of the Mowamba Weir overflowing with water, despite Snowy Hydro re-commissioning the Mowamba River diversion and robbing the river below the weir of precious environmental flows.
- References to 'flow augmentation' in the Murray River but no mention of the lack of progress in providing environmental flows for the Snowy River.
- Re-badging existing electricity generation as 'sustainable' 'Red energy', diverting customers from greenhouse-reducing GreenPower.
- Failing to mention the use of fossil fuels to pump water around the scheme to generate hydro-electricity.
- Claiming the Jindabyne Dam mini-hydro plant is an environmentally friendly energy source despite depriving the Mowamba River of natural flows. This is currently the subject of a complaint to the GreenPower accreditation body.

TEC has warned Snowy Hydro to remove the misleading statements and images within one week or face a complaint to Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

"Electricity customers are entitled to a full and accurate disclosure of environmental impacts to inform their purchasing decisions. Snowy Hydro's website is a shameless example of greenwash that must not be allowed to go unchecked," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## SNOWY FLOWS WON'T DAMN TOURISM



*Created on Tuesday, 28 July 2009 23:09*

"The program of restoring environmental flows to the Snowy River calls for staged increases in water releases, including around 6% of pre-Jindabyne Dam flows that are currently diverted into Jindabyne Dam," said Mr Leigh Martin, TEC Water Campaigner. "Whether this water is released from the dam or allowed to flow directly from the Mowamba River will make no difference to dam levels but it will make a huge difference to the health of the Snowy River".

The recent Snowy Scientific Committee report on the effectiveness of current environmental flows found little improvement in the state of the river. The only years in which significant improvements were observed were those during which the Mowamba diversion was switched off.

"The 40 year long artificial drought in the Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam is also costing the region valuable tourism opportunities," said Martin. The Snowy Water Inquiry noted major tourism benefits for areas below Jindabyne Dam if environmental flows are delivered.

"Providing natural variation in flow and connection to a montane headwater is crucial to the long term health of the Snowy River", Mr Martin said. "The amount of water the Mowamba River will contribute to Snowy environmental flows is modest, but the environmental contribution is enormous."

"Jindabyne Dam will remain and continue to provide an important recreation resource with environmental flows to the Snowy River. In addition the community will benefit through improved recreational and tourism opportunities in the Snowy below Jindabyne", Martin said.

# Latest News

## CATCHMENT STILL ENDANGERED



*Created on Saturday, 27 June 2009 02:57*

Big problems remain across the catchment, however, including the issue of secret preliminary licences that seek to establish damaging mine layouts before major projects are properly assessed and approved, TEC said today.

“Planning Minister Keneally is to be congratulated for making a decision that establishes significant protection zones around the undamaged section of the Waratah Rivulet and its Eastern tributary,” said TEC’s Natural Areas Campaigner, David Burgess.

“So much has been wrecked already by the miners and while not entirely ensuring the Rivulet suffers no further damage, the new layout sends a strong message to mining companies that they cannot expect to get away with the dodgy environmental assessment and damage that has occurred in the past.

Unfortunately, Mr Burgess said, a further 300m stretch of the Rivulet will be undermined because of a secret roading and venting approval gained from the Department of Primary Industries in 2007.

“This was clearly a blatant attempt by Peabody to lock in mine layout before full and independent assessment took place. It was carried out without public scrutiny. The Minister’s decision and independent panel review has exposed the poor assessment practices of the mining company and its consultants. The company should be embarrassed by the shoddy data and analysis it provided government and the community. The Government must take concrete action to stop these tactics from being used in future.”

The approval will also see the continued undermining and further damage of a significant cluster of upland swamps, but with some improvement in monitoring and further approval required.

“These swamps are vital to water supply and provide critical habitat to several threatened species. They are set to be mined heavily by all mining companies with access under the Woronora Plateau. The Department of Planning has been severely critical of Peabody’s assessment of the swamps within the approval area and there’s a clear admission that the miners and the recent Southern Coalfields Inquiry have not got it right.

“The drying out of swamps following mining has become a regular occurrence and protection outcomes need to be established in future.

“Pulling back from natural features will not affect the profitability of the mine,” Mr Burgess concluded.

# Latest News

## GARRETT SHOWS MUSCLE



*Created on Saturday, 14 March 2009 00:54*

"Mr Garret has not only taken a stand for threatened species by saving the vulnerable leafless tongue orchid which is indigenous to the land between Jervis Bay and St Georges Basin, he has preserved the popular Booderee National Park for the many thousands of visitors who enjoy it annually," said TEC director Jeff Angel.

The area, which has been judged by national park officials and environmentalists to be a vital wildlife corridor for native animals, has been under threat from the Heritage Estate, and a proposed shopping centre, which local businesses feared would spell the end of the Jervis Bay community.

A recent environmental impact report for the council concluded the rezoning and development would result in "significant impacts" on native animals and birds that use the national park, and that these impacts could not be effectively offset elsewhere.

"We hope the Minister's decision will put an end to the development speculation that has put this beautiful environment at risk. The land should now be preserved for future generations of people, flora, and fauna to enjoy," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## SNOWY SQUEEZED TO DEATH



*Created on Tuesday, 10 March 2009 05:41*

“In 2000 the Premiers of NSW and Victoria announced a program to restore the river,” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre. “There were high hopes that the Snowy Mountain Hydro scheme would subsequently cease to squeeze every single drop of water out of the Snowy Mountains to make money with irrigation and hydro-electricity.”

The Mowamba Diversion, which channeled the natural montane water flow of the Mowamba River into the Jindabyne Dam, wreaking ecological havoc downstream, was switched off in 2000. But due to a secret clause in the license it was quietly re-commissioned in 2005.

“The consequences for the health of the Snowy river systems have been disastrous,” said Mr Angel. “The diversion of the Mowamba River to the Jindabyne Dam has drastically reduced snow melt and rain water flow downstream to 1% of pre-dam levels.

“It has destroyed natural seasonal variations in flow, and encouraged introduced flora and fauna at the expense of indigenous plants and wildlife.”

The Snowy Scientific Committee (SSC) was appointed under the Snowy Corporatisation Act to investigate results from the environmental flow decision made in 2000.

“The government has suppressed the SSC report since last October,” said Mr Angel. “This report vindicates the concerns of environmentalists and the local communities of the Snowy River. Environmental flows are inadequate, and the vital connection between the Snowy and Mowamba Rivers, must be restored.”

Mr Angel said that the Snowy Water license, which is at the heart of the problems in the Snowy, is currently under review.

“Now is the time to have all the appropriate research made available,” he said. “The SSC Report states that current flow has encouraged the proliferation of exotic gold fish and the eco-menace mosquito fish.

“At the same time the native freshwater black fish, *Gadopsis marmoratus*, has been listed as a critically endangered species under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, because of the lack of flows in the Snowy.”

The report can be found on the Total Environment Centre website [here](#).

# Latest News

## PLANNING FIASCO IN LOWER HUNTER



*Created on Thursday, 12 February 2009 00:14*

The NSW Planning Minister's sanction of "Huntlee" deals a heavy blow to public confidence in the state's planning system, Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

"This should have been an easy development proposal to reject," said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC. "About 50% of the habitat of NSW's rarest plant (*persoonia pauciflora*) will be destroyed. The developer has also earmarked offset land for conservation which is contaminated. According to the Department of Environment and Climate Change, it poses a "significant risk of liability" to the NSW Government."

Moreover, the largest single new residential development in NSW will be a car-dependent town that reduces biodiversity and increases greenhouse gas emissions. There are no plans to increase the current four trains a day service and no obligations have been placed on Hardie Holdings to contribute to any upgrade.

"Government claims that Huntlee is positioned to take advantage of the rail network are barely credible," Mr Angel said.

"Because of the developer's large donations to the NSW ALP of nearly half a million dollars over six years, questions will inevitably be asked about the integrity of this decision," Mr Angel added, "especially since the Planning Minister's approval sees land set aside for conservation reduced by 160ha from the original proposal."



# Latest News

## Sydney Water Awards Helping Miner's Greenwash



*Created on Tuesday, 04 November 2008 22:37*

A recycled water pipeline installed at BHP Billiton's Dendrobium Mine near Wollongong is the reason for its win, but records of water pollution licence breaches on the Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) public register show that the mine ranks third worst out of eighty-one coal industry facilities across the state.

"A basic principle for any environmental award should be that the company is complying with the law. Sydney Water has done its award program a great disservice and its credibility is in question," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"This is also the mine whose longwall mining, only last year opened up deep metre-wide cracks in the rainforest floor within very close proximity to a major Sydney water supply dam. It has massive expansion plans further into the Sydney water supply catchment. Environmental controversy has dogged the mine."

"The Sydney Water awards will facilitate mining industry greenwash. In 2007 BHP Billiton's Appin mine won an Every Drop Counts award within a year of cracking the bed of the Upper Cataract River and causing methane emissions so that you could make fire come out of the water. Peabody Energy were also finalists and they have destroyed a swamp and cracked and drained the Waratah Rivulet for 2km of its length."

"While we note the awards are in recognition of specific projects within an operation, Sydney Water should review its criteria to include compliance with licence conditions and general environmental behaviour because the industry is using them to greenwash their bad environmental reputation in other areas such as harming the water supply catchments," Mr Angel concluded.

# Latest News

## Keneally Must Reject Offensive Mining Proposal



*Created on Thursday, 23 October 2008 21:28*

"This watercourse has already been subjected to some of the worst longwall subsidence damage ever seen in Australia. It comprises 30% of the Woronora supply catchment, which supplies water to the Sutherland Shire and the northern suburbs of Wollongong. Further damage to the Rivulet and nearby upland swamps is guaranteed by the mining scheme and totally unacceptable," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

In 2004 longwall mining upstream of the new proposal caused the Waratah Rivulet to drain for 2km of its length and, in the words Sydney Catchment Authority officers, left the Rivulet's feeder swamp "collapsed" and "totally compromised". Prior to being undermined the Rivulet was known to maintain year round surface flow including in periods of extended drought.

In 2007 Peabody admitted at hearings before the recently released Southern Coalfield Inquiry that their environmental strategy was "100 percent reliant" on remediation [their ability to repair the riverbed by injecting grout into some of the thousands of cracks]. But environment groups, along with numerous NSW Government agencies have for some time rejected remediation as a failed policy.

"Protection zones around key natural features are needed now as a matter of urgency."

"Peabody's plans describe avoiding damage to the Rivulet as the 'do nothing' option. A NSW Government approval of this proposal, or anything remotely close to it, will amount to a do nothing approach to environment protection and spinning the roulette wheel for water security," Mr Angel said.

To read TEC dossier 'What happened to the Waratah Rivulet?' or view Waratah Rivulet slideshow visit:  
[http://www.tec.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=659&Itemid=304](http://www.tec.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=659&Itemid=304)

# Latest News

## Hawkesbury–Nepean River Gets a Much Needed Helping Hand



*Created on Wednesday, 08 October 2008 22:37*

"The river system needs all the help it can get and certainly multiple and conflicting agencies have not helped. There have been attempts to solve this problem before through plans, strategies and committees, but hopefully this new arrangement can break through the barriers," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

The office, opening in Penrith in March 2009, will focus on coordinated management of the river's health and future developments, as well as its various garden, oyster and tourism industries, and provide a point of call for members of the local community.

The premier also announced a new \$29 million program to aid the river's health by improving 15 weirs along the river to allow fish passage and new and improved environmental flows.

"It will be important that the Office ensures river health is the overriding priority and not just an optional extra. Inconsistent decisions from government about the health of the river system would harm not only future environmental progress, but also the government's credibility," stated Mr. Angel.

"It will also be essential that the Office issues milestones for action so that it is not just managing process but pushing the boundaries to get worth while environmental results."

# Latest News

## Budget Good for Rivers & Environment, But Misses The Next Steps



*Created on Wednesday, 04 June 2008 19:55*

“Department of Environment and Climate Change emerged with similar levels of core funding. Their role is absolutely necessary to help solve some of the biggest environmental challenges now facing our future health and prosperity”, said Andrew Cox, NPA Executive Officer.

“NPA welcomes the continuing allocation of funds to the Department of Environment and Climate Change for the expansion of the national parks system through voluntary private land acquisition in poorly protected areas.

“The big boost of funds (now totalling \$137 million) for the purchase of environment water in the Murray Darling basin will make a tangible difference to inland wetlands such as the Macquarie Marshes, Lowbidgee Wetlands and the Barmah-Millewa Red Gum wetlands. These wetlands have suffered from an artificially amplified drought caused by the over-allocation of water to irrigators.”

“Also welcome is increased funding for new park establishment costs, and funds to support bushfire management, provided it is not used to construct unnecessary trails and infrastructure”, continued Mr Cox.

“The biggest absence in the budget is its failure to plan for new environmental initiatives such as the establishment of new national parks on the Murray River, and new Marine Parks. The long-awaited Biodiversity Strategy also fails to get a mention.

“Victoria is moving on protecting its Red Gum Forests in new national parks. There is now water being bought back to help them survive. NSW must now act to end the industrial-scale logging of the Red Gum forests and wetlands for sleepers and firewood.

Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre, said, “As the task of assuring this and future generations have sustainable environment becomes even more urgent, the additional funding for climate change and transport programs is welcome.”

“Such firm support for the environment department must continue in future budgets so we can build a greener future”, said Mr Angel.

“Department of Lands, who have embarked on a reckless sell-off and development of sensitive public lands have over-run last year’s expenditure by \$14m and sold-off an extra \$10 m to offset this. Lands cannot be trusted to safeguard the public interest”, concluded Mr Angel.

# Latest News

## Coal Mining 'on Steroids' - New Mines Under Sydney's Water Supply



Created on Thursday, 22 May 2008 19:54



**[MR]** Plans for new longwall mines in Sydney's water supply catchment recently posted on the ASX website by Indian coal mining giant Gujarat NRE are among the very worst of their kind and the NSW Government must resolve to stop mining damage to river systems without delay, peak and regional environment groups said today.

"This mining scheme is a scandal. Its impacts will be devastating and it has been released before the results of a major inquiry into longwall mining damage are reported to the government and the community. The Government must now summon the guts to act. The damage coal mining is causing to river systems and water resources is fast becoming one of its greatest environmental scandals," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

Maps and a document headed "Vision 2020: India on Steroids" reveal a mine covering approximately 50km<sup>2</sup> including directly under the stored waters of the Cataract Dam; longwall panels encroaching to within 500m of the dam wall, mining under the headwaters of two major tributaries of the Cataract River and under numerous upland swamps.

Another mine, southwest of Wollongong and anticipated to be of similar intensity, will impact upon the headwaters of the Nepean and Avon rivers, large areas of upland swamp and the Kangaloon Aquifer. The Avon Dam also falls within the potential mining area.

"This map and the tone of the document show that the company's concern for the environment, for a substantial portion of Sydney's drinking water, amounts to zero. To produce this at a time when the findings of a NSW Government inquiry into damage caused by mining are imminent, shows enormous arrogance on the part of Gujarat NRE," said Julie Sheppard of the Rivers SOS Alliance.

"Gujarat NRE was the only miner to keep their submission to the Southern Coalfield Inquiry confidential and now we know why. Should these layouts prevail the Cataract's tributaries will crack and drain, swamps will collapse and the structural integrity of the Cataract Dam will be placed in jeopardy. There is also the question of where the coal waste will go," said Colong Foundation Director Keith Muir.

Environment groups are also disappointed that the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has approved infrastructure works for mines yet to be approved.

"The NSW Government holds an inquiry into damage across the Southern Coalfield. The inquiry hears from NSW Government agencies and community groups that the damage is intensifying and needs to be prevented. But while everybody is awaiting the findings, the DPI is approving infrastructure at mines which haven't yet been approved," said Mr Muir.

"Mining companies have learned to rot the approvals process. Donations to the ALP, the appointment of a former Labor Premier to the board and the securing of infrastructure approvals before the mine has been approved all feature in the case of Gujarat NRE," concluded Ms Sheppard.

# Rivers & Water

## Snowy River Campaign



*Created on Monday, 23 April 2012 21:00*

Ten years have passed since the first return of environmental flows to the river in August 2002. Since then flows have been increased from less than 1% of pre-Jindabyne Dam levels to around 15%. Importantly there have been major flushing flows delivered to simulate spring snow-melt conditions and scour sediment from river channels.

Despite this progress much remains to be done and constant vigilance is needed to prevent backsliding on key commitments. Environmental flows are lagging years behind schedule, with the current 15% level well short of the legislated 2012 target of 21%. There has been no progress on restoring flows to the upper Snowy and other montane rivers.

The Snowy continues to be cut off from its tributary, the Mowamba River by the Mowamba Weir diversion. This diversion needs to be decommissioned to provide the Snowy with a natural, montane headwater.

Disturbingly the NSW Government has failed to re-appoint the Snowy Scientific Committee are deeply disturbing whose first three-year term expired in May last year. The Committee has a vital role in providing independent scientific advice on the environmental health of the Snowy River and the program to restore flows. The State Government has also cut the Snowy Flow Response Monitoring and Modelling Program which provides vital information to guide timing and volumes of environmental releases.

The major gains made over the last 10 years to restoring the Snowy could not have been achieved without sustained pressure from environment and community groups. The campaign will continue until the job of saving this iconic river is completed.

**To read about the The Snowy Regeneration Program click [here](#).**

To read about recent attempts to remove the only free flow into the River at Mowamba, download the January 2006 Briefing Note -"Snowy Needs the Mowamba Flow".

**Media Releases:** for a full list of releases enter 'Snowy River' in SEARCH

# Latest News

## BHP Billiton Claims Mask Years of Damage



*Created on Wednesday, 13 February 2008 11:00*



**[MR]** Allegations by BHP Billiton that Total Environment Centre is distributing “confusing and misleading” information about its longwall mining impacts are designed to cover-up more than a decade of environmental vandalism in the NSW Southern Coalfield.

The claims were issued via media release last week by wholly owned BHP Billiton subsidiary Illawarra Coal. They follow widespread media coverage of methane gas bubbling to the surface of the Nepean River where mining is currently taking place.

“There is nothing confusing about the bubbles on the Nepean’s surface. BHP Billiton have mined too close and cracked the bed of yet another river,” said TEC spokesperson David Burgess.

The issue of fugitive methane bubbling into a river in the Southern Coalfield was first noticed in 1996 when longwall mining by BHP cracked the riverbed of the Lower Cataract River. At the time BHP Billiton told New Scientist magazine that they were changing their mining methods so that “fracturing of the sandstone will be much less likely in future.” \*

“In the ten years since the New Scientist story BHP Billiton have moved on to fracture the riverbeds of the Georges River, the Upper Cataract, Native Dog Creek, Wongawilli Creek and now the Nepean River. They have done nothing to change their mining methods.

“Claims that millions of tonnes of coal have been ‘sterilised’ by not mining directly under rivers are greatly exaggerated. To compensate for withdrawing 80m from the Nepean, BHP Billiton opened up longwalls near the Upper Cataract River, which cracked as well. You cannot describe this as responsible,” Mr Burgess said.

Along with other mining companies, BHP Billiton intends to expand mining across enormous leases in the Southern Coalfield, including nearly all of Sydney’s southern water supply catchment.

“Let’s remember that the current impacts on the Nepean are only the very start of a mining operation that BHP Billiton expects to continue for many years to come. It is too early to tell the full extent of the damage and the next panel is also certain to have major impacts,” Mr Burgess said.

“It is no longer good enough for mining companies to say that damage is within predictions. Environment groups predicted it too and that’s why we opposed this particular project in the first place.”

“BHP Billiton claim to make their decisions based on facts. The fact is that rivers are being cracked and swamps drained. Mining is taking place too close to these important natural features and needs to be regulated to pull back to a position where damage is prevented.”

# Latest News

## BHPB's 'Zero Harm' Policy Sham - Premier Must Act



*Created on Friday, 08 February 2008 11:00*



**MR** BHP Billiton is a corporate hypocrite when downplaying its mining impacts on the Nepean River, which contradict the company's 'Zero Harm' policy in its 2007 Sustainability Report, Total Environment Centre said today.

TEC has also invited Premier Morris Iemma to examine the extensive damage in Sydney's southern water catchments.

BHP Billiton this week acknowledged that longwall coal mining at the Appin West mine has damaged the Nepean, but claimed that the 300m long plume of methane bubbles on the river's surface was within acceptable levels of impact and that the economic benefits of mining outweigh its environmental impacts.

"Apart from releasing unmeasured amounts of methane into the atmosphere, the bubbles on the Nepean tell you that the riverbed has been cracked in numerous places below the surface," TEC spokesperson David Burgess said.

"It is hypocritical that BHP Billiton states that damage to yet another section of river in the Southern Coalfields is acceptable while espousing a global policy of zero harm to the environment."

In the wake of the damage to the Nepean, Premier Iemma indicated that the NSW Government would investigate the incident.

"While welcoming the Premier's concern, we urge Mr Iemma to listen to what Member for Wollondilly, Phil Costa, told him this week, and also follow the recommendations of numerous NSW Government departments regarding this destructive form of mining. He should go and look at the damage to several streams for himself."

In 2004 the Hawkesbury-Nepean River Management Forum (under the then Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources) recommended that existing impacts from longwall mining on the catchment be eliminated, while only last year the Department of Environment and Climate Change said that damage must be prevented rather than managed.

"BHP Billiton and other companies in the region are running an agenda based on weakening regulation and intensifying longwall mining across the upper Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment, much of which is Sydney's water supply," Mr Burgess said.



## Latest News

# Snowy River Flows Threatened Unless Snowy Water Licence Changed



*Created on Monday, 04 February 2008 22:11*

TEC Water Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The current water licence granted to Snowy Hydro Limited could allow crucial environmental water releases to the Snowy River to be suspended or severely curtailed. This is despite agreement between the NSW, Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to provide staged water releases to increase flows and restore the Snowy River".

The current review of the Snowy Water Licence provides a crucial opportunity to reform the licence and safeguard Snowy River flows. Of particular concern is a so called "override provision" that allows Snowy Hydro and the NSW Ministerial Water Corporation to vary the volume of water targeted for release from Jindabyne Dam. Significantly, no criteria are provided by which such a decision would need to be justified.

"The program of releases to restore the Snowy River is the result of extensive community consultation and scientific investigation through the Snowy Water Inquiry. It is unacceptable that this program could be varied by simple agreement between the Ministerial Corporation and Snowy Hydro," Mr Martin said.

Also of concern are requirements for increased spills from Jindabyne Dam to be paid back from Snowy River water releases in future years.

"Dam spills in wet years should be regarded as a natural and unavoidable event. Requiring payback from Snowy River water releases could seriously disrupt the program of environmental flows for years to come and provide a major setback to the restoration of this iconic Australian river," Mr Martin said.

Another crucial issue is the need to restore connectivity between the Snowy and Mowamba Rivers. In 2002 an aqueduct diverting the Mowamba River into Jindabyne Dam was decommissioned, allowing the Mowamba to become a natural montane headwater for the Snowy system. In 2006, however, this diversion was recommissioned.

"Restoring connectivity between the Snowy and Mowamba Rivers is crucial to the long term health of the Snowy River. The Snowy needs a montane headwater with natural variation in flows. The licence should be amended to clearly require the permanent decommissioning of the Mowamba River diversion," Mr Martin said.

# Latest News

## BHPB Coal Mining to Further Wreck Water Supply Catchment



*Created on Thursday, 24 January 2008 11:00*



**[MR]** A proposal by BHP Billiton to massively expand the Dendrobium Mine between the Cordeaux and Avon Dams spells further disaster for the environment of the pristine Woronora Plateau and Sydney's water supply catchment, Total Environment Centre said today.

BHPB will be using longwall mining, which in numerous cases has cracked rivers, causing them to drain, created pollution and starved key wetlands of water. The Dendrobium Area 3 proposal will undermine about thirty square kilometres of bushland in Sydney's water supply catchment in an area containing rainforest and about twenty rare upland swamps.

"This is a massive and highly intensive expansion of longwall mining in the Southern Coalfield. It is certain to impact heavily on the environment and the water supply catchment," said TEC spokesperson David Burgess.

"We have already seen significant damage occur as a result of mining in Dendrobium Areas 1 and 2, including large surface cracks and cliff falls. New longwalls would undermine about twenty upland swamps and although BHP Billiton has avoided mining immediately under Wongawilli Creek, the longwall panels are still close enough to crack the riverbed.

"Upland swamps are known to play a vital role of regulating flow of water at the top of catchments across the Woronora Plateau. Previously undermined swamps have drained and BHP Billiton, who spruik their ability to repair this damage, admitted to the recent Southern Coalfield Inquiry that they knew of no ways to remediate a damaged swamp," Mr Burgess said.

A recent report by the Department of Environment and Conservation stated that over twenty animal species, primarily inhabiting upland swamps, are under threat by longwall coal mining. In addition, the Sydney Catchment Authority has stated that longwall coal mining will undermine 91% of Sydney's southern supply catchment. The Dam Safety Committee has also asked BHP Billiton to report on a major underground flooding incident at the Dendrobium Mine that coincided with the major rainfall events of last June.

"Only last week, BHP Billiton admitted that mining has recently cracked the riverbed of the Nepean River. The Dendrobium proposal is outrageous. This damage must be prevented rather than predicted with ineffective follow-up remediation attempts. We call on Premier Morris lemma to rein in this industry and his rogue Mining Department that endorses it," Mr Burgess concluded.

# Latest News

## 24 Animal Species Under Threat from Longwall Mining



Created on Tuesday, 15 January 2008 11:00



**[MR]**A report by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) shows that over twenty fauna species are under threat from underground coal mining in Greater Southern Sydney, Total Environment Centre said today.

The just released Threatened and pest animals of Greater Southern Sydney report is the most comprehensive assessment undertaken in the region, which stretches from the southern Blue Mountains to the Illawarra coast. Longwall coal mining, which causes the cracking and draining of rivers and wetlands, is extensively practised in the region and is set to massively expand.

"This major study further advances the case for the protection of rivers and upland swamps from longwall mining. It is pivotal that protection zones are established to prevent longwall mines from having significant impacts on these environments," said TEC spokesperson David Burgess.

Of great concern is the threat posed by mining to upland swamps, with most of the species listed totally or partially dependent on them for habitat. The greatest concentration of swamps is on the Illawarra Escarpment where they act as regulators for the flow of water into the upper Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment.

"Nearly all of these species depend upon upland swamps for their survival. We have already seen a number of swamps drain and erode as a result of mining and the evidence from the Blue Mountains shows a dramatic fall in the water table once mining has passed through," Mr Burgess said.

The DECC report states that mining will be 'very destructive' to upland swamps unless measures are taken now. One example is the Turquoise Parrot, with half of its Woronora Plateau habitat due to be undermined in the near future.

In the Southern Coalfield the coal industry has three mine proposals in the pipeline that would have significant impacts on upland swamps. The future of these proposals will largely depend upon how the NSW Government responds to the imminent findings of an inquiry held throughout 2007.

"We have seen the devastating impacts this form of mining has had, with cracked rivers and cliff falls within Sydney's drinking catchment and damage to man-made infrastructure. Far more subtle, though no less important, is the undermining of swamps. It is high time Premier Iemma listened to the advice of his own agencies and steps in to resolve this issue," Mr Burgess concluded.

Animals Listed by DECC as being Threatened by Longwall Mining in Greater Southern Sydney

### Highest Conservation Priority

Species	Threatened	Habitat	NSW Listing	Federal Listing	Coalfield
Eastern Bristlebird (Dasyornis brachypterus)	Upland Swamp	Endangered	Endangered	Southern	
Long-nosed Potaroo (Potorus tridactylus)	Upland Swamp	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Southern	
Southern brown Bandicoot (Isodon obesulus)	Upland Swamp	Endangered	Endangered	Southern/ Western	

### High Conservation Priority

Blue Mts. Water-Skink ( <i>Eulamprus leuraensis</i> )	Upland Swamp	Endangered	Endangered	Western
Broad-headed Snake ( <i>Hoplocephalus bungaroides</i> )	Rocky outcrops in sandstone woodlands	Endangered	Vulnerable	Southern/ Western
Large-eared Pied Bat ( <i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i> )	Subterranean roost sites	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Southern/ Western
Large-footed Myotis ( <i>Myotis adversus</i> )	Sandstone caves and waterways	Vulnerable	n/a	Southern/ Western
Littlejohn's Tree Frog ( <i>Littoria littlejohni</i> )	Upland swamps & other environments	Vulnerable	n/a	Southern/ Western

### **Moderately High Conservation Priority**

Beautiful Firetail ( <i>Stagonopleura bella</i> )	Upland Swamps	Protected	n/a	Southern/ Western
Turquoise Parrot ( <i>Neophema pulchella</i> )	Upland Swamps	Vulnerable	n/a	Southern/ Western

### **Moderate Conservation Priority**

Eastern Pgmy-possum ( <i>Cercartetus nanus</i> )	Upland swamps heath & sandstone woodlands	Vulnerable	n/a	Southern/ Western
Giant burrowing Frog ( <i>Heleioporus australiacus</i> )	Upland swamps	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Southern/ Western
Red-crowned Toadlet ( <i>Pseudophryne australis</i> )	Upland swamps heath & sandstone woodlands	Vulnerable	n/a	Southern/ Western
Rosenberg's Goanna ( <i>Varanus rosenbergi</i> )	Upland swamps heath & sandstone woodlands	Vulnerable	n/a	Southern/ Western
Southern Emu-wren ( <i>Stipiturus malachurus</i> )	Upland swamps	Protected	n/a	Southern/ Western
Tawny-crown Honeyeater ( <i>Giliciphila melanops</i> )	Upland swamps heath & sandstone woodlands	Protected	n/a	Southern
Highlands Copperhead ( <i>Austrelaps ramsayi</i> )	Highlands	Protected	n/a	Southern/ Western
Mainland Tiger Snake ( <i>Notechis scutatus</i> )	Wetlands and swamps	Protected	n/a	Southern/ Western

N.B.: Other animals potentially threatened by longwall mining subsidence in the Woronora, O'Hares Creek and Metropolitan Special Areas include the Australasian Bittern, Black Bittern, Green and Gold Bell Frog, Grey-headed Flying-fox and the Stuttering Frog.

# Latest News

## North coast threatened by development land grab



*Created on Thursday, 20 December 2007 21:58*

The amount of land identified for future residential development within the Strategy is more than twice that required to accommodate the Departments' projected population increases within a region stretching from the Clarence Valley to Port Stephens.

Some of the most astounding areas of inclusion in this planning exercise are North Arm Cove in the Great Lakes area, Bonville in the Coffs Harbour area, and West Yamba near Grafton. The Department of Planning has estimated that over the next 25 years enough new release land for 35,000 new homes will be required in Mid North Coast. However the Draft Strategy put on public display by the Government identifies enough land for over 70,000 homes!

Director of the Total Environment Centre Jeff Angel whose organisation is assisting local groups respond to the Strategy said the Draft was disappointing. 'We want people to be aware at this time of year when they are enjoying their favourite holiday places on the Mid North Coast – that this Draft Strategy will significantly detract from all the things our community values about the Coast. The clean water, the clean air and the wildlife will be adversely affected by this massive land grab by the property industry, given official status by the NSW Government.'

Mark Graham from Bellingen Environment Centre said 'This Strategy will exacerbate the ugly sprawl of Coffs Harbour and impact significantly on important wildlife habitat.'

Helen Tyas Tunggal from Valley Watch said 'The inclusion of flood prone areas susceptible to sea level rise in West Yamba and other locations are unacceptable to the local community.'

Jacqui Keats from the Great Lakes Environment Association said 'The inclusion of over 700ha at North Arm Cove for risky development will destroy important habitat and constitute a scattered pattern of development which is unsustainable.'

Penny Marshall from the Port Macquarie-Hastings Residents Action Network said 'We are very concerned at the amount of forested land being proposed to be released for housing in the Hastings area. It is obviously an oversupply in comparison to what will be required for sensible growth.'

Mr Angel went on to say; 'We are assisting local community groups understand the scale of development proposed by the Draft Strategy and make submission by February 8th 2008. We encourage everyone to look at the maps on the Departments' website and contact the TEC for more information.' Mr Angel said.

## Latest News

### BHP Billiton bullies to weaken environmental safeguards



*Created on Tuesday, 11 December 2007 23:27*

In the report's introduction Illawarra Coal President, Colin Bloomfield, bluntly states, "... our main challenge remains the regulatory environment - the lack of security around our right to mine and our ability to secure mining approvals."

Mr Bloomfield's comments follow threats made during his oral presentation to the recent Southern Coalfield Inquiry that if the mine approvals process were to be seen as "some sort of [environmental] negotiation process, BHP Billiton would submit less sensitive plans." The Inquiry is expected to hand down its findings early in the New Year.

"Using a Sustainability Report as a lobbying platform for weakening environmental standards is inappropriate and bizarre behaviour to say the least," said TEC spokesperson David Burgess.

"Mr Bloomfield and Illawarra Coal must get it out of their heads that they have some inherent right to mine. We're talking about Sydney and the Illawarra's water supply, aquatic ecosystems, important road and rail infrastructure, indigenous heritage and the hydrological health of the entire Woronora Plateau here."

"BHP Billiton also states that they have voluntarily 'sterilised' 12 million tonnes of coal by avoiding mining under the Nepean River. But to compensate themselves, they went and mined near the Upper Cataract River and damaged that instead, hardly a sustainable outcome," Mr Burgess said.

Environment groups have told the Inquiry that the approvals process needs to be strengthened rather than weakened and that mandatory protection zones be put in place to protect rivers, swamps and aquifers from mining impacts. Other NSW Government agencies submitted that up to 91% of Sydney's southern supply catchments will be affected by mining, that company efforts to repair the existing damage have met with little (if any) success and that future ramifications for Sydney and the Illawarra's water supply are unknown.

"Companies mining in the Southern Coalfield have shown little concern for the damage that is occurring to key water resources. The NSW Government must listen to its own agencies and introduce concrete measures to prevent the destruction from continuing to spread across the whole region," Mr Burgess concluded.

TEC is currently running cinema advertisements in NSW to highlight the issue.

## Latest News

### Mining lobby group engaging in doublespeak



*Created on Tuesday, 06 November 2007 02:37*

"Claims today by the Minerals Council that underground coal mining poses no threat to the catchments are based on a lack of evidence rather than knowledge that it is having no impact. It's a classic case of doublespeak," said

TEC campaigner David Burgess.

Longwall coal mining has expanded rapidly in the southern coalfields since the mid-1990s. It is known to have caused major damage to numerous rivers, creeks and swamps and the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) recently informed the NSW Government's Southern Coalfield Inquiry that up to 91% of Sydney's southern supply catchments could be undermined in the lifetime of the coalfield.

The Minerals Council has claimed that the SCA's data shows no evidence of water loss but TEC has obtained evidence that the SCA has commenced its own monitoring program in the Waratah Rivulet (Woronora Dam catchment) because it doesn't trust the monitoring conducted by mining company, Peabody Energy. The SCA has also included a section on longwall coal mining in its 2007 Leakage and Loss report.

"The Minerals Council also fails to mention that both the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the SCA are seeking to have impacts to water dependent ecosystems prevented. Along with the SCA, the Department of Water and Energy has also questioned whether efforts by mining companies to repair damaged rivers actually work at all," Mr Burgess said.

"Five years ago the Minerals Council was telling us that less than 1% of the southern catchments was affected by longwall mining. Now we hear it will be as high as 91% and the Minerals Council is calling it a necessary 'trade-off' between the environment and the economy.

"You only have to see a drained swamp or a dry, cracked riverbed with what water there is left stained bright orange, and methane gas bubbling to the surface to know there is something very wrong. We are not seeking an end to mining, but rivers and swamps need protection zones and the industry and Department of Minerals have proved to be incapable of self-regulating," Mr Burgess concluded.

# Latest News

## Devastating longwall damage exposed



*Created on Tuesday, 06 November 2007 02:09*



A Sydney Morning Herald story and slideshow on the widespread fracturing of the Waratah Rivulet's riverbed caused by longwall coal mining has been met with a fierce response from the mining lobby. TEC has responded to the industry claims.



# Latest News

## Pull back from rivers and swamps mining inquiries told



*Created on Thursday, 30 August 2007 02:03*

"Longwall mining must be pulled back from rivers and swamps. The damage continues to spread and has serious consequences for the future of Sydney's water supply and the health of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system as a whole. Protection zones must be legislated and enforced", said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"The Carr Government attempted to improve policy on subsidence damage to rivers in 2004 but the policy has failed. The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has proven incapable of self-regulating, acting to facilitate mining approvals rather than avoiding impacts to water resources and ecosystems."

Under the current approvals regime new longwall panels are approved solely by the DPI, with a committee made up of other NSW Government departments providing advice. Larger underground mine approvals are determined by the Minister for Planning.

"We have evidence that in the past year DPI has ignored the advice of other government agencies to pull proposed mining away from rivers and knowingly approved defective mine plans. The department spruiks monitoring and remediation as the solution, but we also have evidence that monitoring programs are flawed and that the success of any remediation work is highly dubious", Mr Burgess said.

"The situation has reached crisis point. There is a queue of new mining projects that threatens to spread the impacts of longwall mining rapidly across the Upper Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment, including water supply areas providing Sydney with 20% of its water. Coal mining companies in the region are posting record profits yet have been shown to be unwilling to avoid major environmental damage. Protection zones are the only solution."

The TEC also opposes a proposed longwall mine and coal handling facility in the Wyong Shire on the grounds that it will have a negative impact on the ability of NSW to meet emissions targets, could impact up to 50% of the Central Coast's water supply and poses health threats in one of Australia's fastest growing regions.

# Latest News

## Our Forests, Our Future: A question of politics?



*Created on Thursday, 30 August 2007 00:41*



Balmain Town Hall, Sydney 10am-5pm Saturday 15th September 2007

Speakers include: Greens Senator Bob Brown, Alec Marr (The Wilderness Society), Dr Judith Adjani (Australian National University) and more to be confirmed.

Admission free, lunch \$5 on the day.

RSVP at [www.nccnsw.org.au/forests](http://www.nccnsw.org.au/forests) by 7th September.

Proudly presented by the Nature Conservation Council of NSW

Supported by: The Forest Campaign Group, Wilderness Society, North East Forest Alliance, South East Region Conservation Alliance, National Parks Association and Total Environment Centre.

Authorised by Cate Faehrmann, Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Level 2, 301 Kent St, Sydney NSW 2000

To RSVP click [here](#)

# Latest News

## Shoalhaven on notice but more controls needed



*Created on Tuesday, 10 July 2007 21:28*

In a letter to Shoalhaven City Council last week, Mr Sartor urged the Council to put more care into the consideration of planning issues and to make a genuine effort to reconcile differing community and stakeholder views. The letter followed the council's poor performance in preparing a Development Control Plan for Huskisson and its role in the Comberton Grange development.

"We have recently received an alarming number of reports by members of the community alleging inappropriate behaviour by councils in relation to planning and development matters on the south coast", said TEC spokesperson David Burgess.

"Shoalhaven Council is now on notice. It was prominent among the complaints made to TEC and it is good the Minister has acted. But there are numerous other issues that are of great concern throughout the region."

Matters brought to the attention of the TEC by members of the public include general compliance issues throughout the Shoalhaven LGA, overdevelopment and rezoning problems in towns such as Bermagui in the Bega Valley LGA, the release of land in the Bega area that is not demand driven, and individual developments on sensitive lands such as Meads Bay and the Tathra River.

"It is not yet a year since the implementation of the South Coast Regional Strategy so it is very important that the NSW Government clamps down early on councils and developments that are prepared to fly against the aims and objectives of the plan. This strategy will shape the region over the next twenty-five years", Mr Burgess concluded.

The TEC is preparing a report on current planning issues, developments and the implementation of the South Coast Regional Strategy.

# Latest News

## Tree vandals deserve swift prosecution



*Created on Tuesday, 03 July 2007 22:35*

In response to media reports that irresponsible landholders have chopped down 4,000 trees and will double efforts every day, Minister for the Environment, Phil Koperberg said on ABC Radio this morning that he would prefer to talk with the organisers in preference to taking strong legal action. The NSW Farmers Association has failed to condemn the vandalism and industry lobby groups like the Australian Beef Association are actively supporting it.

“This minority of farmers are destroying their own properties and are a perfect example of why we need the tree protection laws. They are also destroying the reputation of the majority of farmers and their associations who claim farmers are environmentally responsible.”

“The NSW and Queensland Governments promised to enforce and retain the tree clearing laws at recent state elections and we expect them to do just that.”

“Environment groups have vowed to investigate all legal options to protect the environment and make the general community aware and active on this issue. If these farmers think this stunt is a free ride to exert political pressure, then they should think again. We expect the community will be demanding even more stringent laws as a consequence of this episode,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.”

“Land clearing remains the number one cause of wildlife extinctions, the number one cause of dryland salinity, and a significant cause of global warming.”

“The good name of farmers is being tarnished here by a fringe element. We call upon leading farming bodies including the National Farmers Federation, Agforce and the NSW Farmers Association to pull these guys into line and sideline them”, said Turner.

“The public supports farmers who care for the land in the interests of the whole community. Nobody supports wanton destruction of vulnerable habitats and ecosystems in the name of petty revenge,” said Georgina Woods of the Hunter Community Environment Centre.

Environment groups are calling for a criminal investigation into the activities of all individuals and groups who have publicly incited illegal landclearing, and for action to be taken against the ringleaders.

# Natural Areas

## Killalea - Community opposes sell-off of precious public land



*Created on Thursday, 28 June 2007 00:19*

Killalea State Park, an area of Crown land covering 8km of coastline between Kiama and Shellharbour, is dedicated for public recreation and its natural features include rainforest, extensive areas of coastal wetland and migratory bird habitat. It is managed through the Department of Lands by the Killalea State Park Trust, who is entrusted to provide a range of facilities while maintaining and enhancing the natural environment.

On the 30 April, the Minister for Lands, Tony Kelly, announced that a development agreement had been signed allowing Killalea Coastal Investments, a subsidiary of Mariner Property Partnerships, to submit a development application. He also indicated that final approval of the development will lie with the Planning Minister Frank Sartor and will not be put before Shellharbour Council.

A 52-year lease to the developer is now virtually guaranteed, providing, in the Minister's words, "they get a DA up". This is the virtual equivalent of selling the public land for private development, when in 52 years, no one (they hope) will recall what has been lost and it will be just another developed area that can be rezoned.

Local organisations and residents, angry about the lack of community consultation that surrounded the plan, have formed the Save Killalea Alliance (SKA) to oppose the development. Concept plans have been kept closely under wraps with unusually strict confidentiality agreements that had to be signed by members of the Trust. Although the public is still unable to see these plans, a television news crew was allowed to film them. Stills from the footage showed motel style units, two or three swimming pools, restaurants and a range of from 80-120 villas, as well as car parks and other amenities.

The NSW Greens also placed a motion to parliament calling for the release of papers regarding the 52-year lease. However the Government, with the help of the Shooters Party and Christian Democrats, defeated this. SKA is currently pursuing the documents through other avenues but are concerned that this will not entail the full and genuine disclosure of information that was being sought through parliament.

Details of the lease are now expected to be posted by the NSW Government on the internet this Friday 29th June. If you are concerned about the "selling off" to developers of Killalea State Park, please send an urgent email, a fax or a letter to the following:

The Minister for Lands  
The Hon. Tony Kelly  
Level 34 Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Fax: 02 9228 3988

The Mayor  
Mr David Hamilton  
Shellharbour City Council  
PO Box 155 Shellharbour City Centre  
NSW 2529  
Fax: 4256 0503

# Latest News

## Waratah Rivulet Rally Postponed



*Created on Friday, 15 June 2007 22:14*

Regretfully, we have been forced to postpone the Southern Coalfields Day of Action that was to have been held on Sunday, June 17. The Waratah Rivulet has flooded, the SCA have closed the catchment and conditions on the riverbank would be wet and dangerous. A meeting will be held in Helensburgh on Sunday to determine a future date to be announced as soon as possible.

# Latest News

## Coffs Harbour surf event to wreck dune



*Created on Thursday, 05 April 2007 19:56*

"It's a disgrace," said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

A map prepared by Coffs Harbour City Council and leaked to local conservationists last month indicates that 20 hectares of coastal vegetation on Boambee Beach, including an endangered ecological community and mature banksia forest, will be bulldozed to facilitate the hosting of the championships. The council has stated that it is dealing directly with the Premiers Department on the issue.

"The clearing of an endangered ecosystem and sand dune vegetation to build seven car parks, three toilet blocks and vast picnic areas is totally inappropriate and should not even be considered as a viable development.

The proposal impacts on land covered by the Harbourside Project concept plan, for which a public submissions period was held until February. Yet no mention was made in the Harbourside Project of the Surf Life Saving Championships. It will also impact upon areas with indigenous heritage values.

"The working up of this proposal has been clouded by secrecy and dubious information. TEC has written to the main parties today, asking them to clarify their position", Mr Burgess continued.

"Nobody is against the Life Saving Championships in general. However this development will have an enormous impact upon the coastal environment and would call into question SLSA's commitment to environment issues as outlined in their Ecosurf policy. We encourage the parties to go back to the drawing board and come up with a sustainable plan that doesn't involve coastal landclearing."

# Latest News

## BHP longwall consultation rort



*Created on Friday, 23 March 2007 21:37*

The comments come in response to a member of the committee handing in her resignation on Tuesday night after BHP Billiton tabled a proposal to gag members from speaking about the damage longwall mining is causing to the cliffs and riverbed of the Upper Cataract River.

"What we have here is a situation where BHP Billiton's longwall mining has damaged yet one more river within Sydney's southern drinking catchments. The buffer zone put in place to protect the river was woefully inadequate and instead of acknowledging that, the company has chosen to embark down the path of censorship and intimidation", said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"Engaging with the community is meant to be just that and the representatives on community consultation committees should be free to disseminate information to the sections of the community they represent. BHP Billiton's reference to 'group goals' can only mean that the company wants to keep the damage out of the public eye and continue to make enormous profits from coal mining at the expense of our rivers and water supply."

"The TEC will raise this and other longwall mining issues with the next Minister. The Appin 3 mine, which has caused the latest damage to the Cataract River, is quickly gaining a poor reputation. Sydney Catchment Authority recommendations for bigger buffer zones were ignored and BHP Billiton was less than forthcoming with information during the approval process. The NSW Government's approvals process is clearly flawed", Mr Burgess concluded.

The BHP Billiton website states:

"Communication is the key to forming relationships, sharing ideas, debating issues and resolving conflicts ... We are committed to engaging effectively with our host communities and other stakeholders including governments, NGOs and academic institutions ... with the intent that effective, transparent and open communication and consultation is maintained..."



# Latest News

## Longwall information clamped



*Created on Thursday, 22 March 2007 05:00*

A member of the committee in the southern coalfield resigned yesterday after speaking to a newspaper about the cracking, pollution and cliff falls that have occurred to the Cataract River near the Appin 3 mine. The member resigned after BHP Billiton attempted to insert a clause in the group's constitution that information should not be used to generate adverse publicity for the company and that such behaviour would be viewed as a breach of trust.

"After damaging yet another river in Sydney's drinking catchment, BHP Billiton now appears to be focussing its efforts on gagging and intimidating members of the community who speak out about what longwall mining is doing to our river systems", said TEC campaigner David Burgess.

"BHP Billiton's behaviour is undemocratic and flies in the face of what community consultation is all about - informing the community of what's going on. What's the point of community consultation if the community is unable to be told what's happening to our rivers?

"BHP Billiton is clearly worried about the destruction their longwall mining is wreaking upon their reputation and don't want the damage to Sydney's drinking catchment and aquatic ecosystems to come further under the spotlight. Rather than spending their time bullying members of the public they should change their practices to avoid all damage to water resources. And if they can't, the next NSW Government should make them."

BHP Billiton were granted an approval for Appin 3 last August by the Department of Primary Industry. The approval allowed the company to mine within 80m of the Upper Cataract despite the recommendations of an independent consultant engaged by the Sydney Catchment Authority that mining come no closer than 350m.

Minutes of the Interagency Review Committee meeting that preceded the approval also revealed that BHP Billiton had been "difficult to obtain information from" and that when information was forthcoming it was "minimal with no backup information."

# Latest News

## More river damage caused by DPI



*Created on Thursday, 08 March 2007 01:35*

"The DPI is on record as having been told as part of the approval process that mining should not come within 350m of the Cataract River. Yet they ignored this advice and approved mining to come within 80m.

It is becoming increasingly clear that Minister Ian Macdonald and his department cannot be trusted to approve longwall mining", said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"The only way to stop the destruction of rivers by longwall mining is to enact legislation enforcing clear protection zones and to strip the DPI of its powers as the sole approving body. There is a massive conflict of interest when the collector of mining royalties for the NSW Government approves mining that continually damages our water resources".

Numerous rivers and creeks in Sydney's drinking catchment, the Hunter Valley and rare swamps in the Blue Mountains continue to be damaged by longwall mining, despite it being listed as a key threatening process in 2005. The NSW Government attempted to address the problem by introducing the new approvals regime but the latest damage proves that the new policy has failed.

The NSW Government responded to further incidents of damage by announcing a southern coalfields inquiry late last year. The NSW Liberals yesterday issued calls for the inquiry to be made more independent.

"The call by the Shadow Environment Minister for greater independence is welcome but an inquiry isn't going to prevent the ongoing damage. There should also be a moratorium on new longwalls. Rivers and other water resources are being damaged with every new approval and these approvals are being made in the full knowledge of what will occur", Mr Burgess continued.

"Comments made by Frank Sartor today are also intemperate and unhelpful. This isn't just 'one crack' and members of the community concerned about repeated damage to water catchments are not 'headless chooks'. There are thousands of Longwall induced cracks, pollution and damage taking place to ecosystems across the catchments. He should get his facts right."

# Latest News

## Miners and government in longwall denial



*Created on Thursday, 08 February 2007 04:35*

"The industry and the mines department are engaged in greenwash. Their response to our recent report is selective and displays a lack of understanding of the approvals process. The evidence is clear - longwall mining is having a disastrous impact upon rivers and creeks, including many in Sydney's water supply catchment and the mines agency is the approval body for subsidence," said TEC natural areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"Despite the damage to numerous rivers since the mid 1990s and calls for protection by government agencies and community groups the DPI still rejects the idea of a formally enforced buffer zone to protect water resources."

"The department is operating as a law unto itself and has an inherent conflict of interest as the sole regulator of subsidence management. An example can be found last year with the approval granted to BHP Billiton's Appin 3 mine. Independent consultants employed by the Sydney Catchment Authority were employed to determine a suitable buffer to protect the Cataract River from mining, yet the 350m buffer recommended was ignored by the DPI and mining was allowed to come within 80m of the river."

"All too regularly we are seeing a riverbed cracked and drained and Minister Macdonald and his department saying that the water is 'coming back downstream' or that the river will be 'fixed'. It's greenwash - you cannot repair a damaged riverbed", Mr Burgess continued.

"BHP Billiton likes to use Marhynes Hole as the flagship of their remediation projects. The truth is that there is no long term evidence the area has been fixed and the damage to our rivers is not remediated. Agencies including the Sydney Catchment Authority have stated that they have little confidence in remediation methods. The Cataract River's flow never returned to normal since remediation was carried out and you wont hear BHP mentioning that as an example of their good work. Indeed, BHP's own studies have concluded that it is not always possible to determine where damage has even occurred", Mr Burgess concluded

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# Latest News

## Coalition's Vision - a bulldozed landscape



*Created on Saturday, 03 February 2007 04:40*

Wednesday's native vegetation policy launch by the NSW Coalition has been slammed by environment groups as a policy that will set NSW back years in the quest to end land clearing.

The Coalition has vowed to scrap native vegetation rules that seek to end broadscale land clearing.

"This policy will guarantee the destruction of further bushland, increase the rate of wildlife extinctions and lead to further greenhouse gas pollution as trees are bulldozed, burnt or left to rot", said Reece Turner from The Wilderness Society.

"The Liberal National Party has become captive to the extremists in the tree clearing lobby. It's a recipe for massive greenhouse emissions and biodiversity loss. They are going to gut the state's land clearing laws just when they are starting to have a good impact", said Jeff Angel from the Total Environment Centre.

"If implemented, this will lead to further pressures for our struggling wildlife, rivers and farmlands. It is a vision of a bulldozed landscape for NSW's bushlands and will not assist the long-term interests of rural NSW" said Cate Faerhmann from the NSW Nature Conservation Council.

"The science on land clearing is clear: the practice is currently posing the greatest threat to the nature of NSW. Land clearing is the number one cause of wildlife extinctions, the number one cause of dryland salinity and it greatly exacerbates the impacts of drought", concluded Turner.

# Latest News

## New Report: longwall mining destroying NSW rivers



*Created on Friday, 26 January 2007 02:57*

The 'Impacts of Longwall Coal Mining on the Environment in NSW' is the first full state survey and shows that longwall mining, which causes surface subsidence, has damaged many rivers and creeks in all of NSW's major coalfields; is destroying waterways in Sydney's supply catchment; that remediation work to repair the damage is largely ineffectual; and the Department of Mineral Resources is inappropriate as the approval body for new mining projects.

The report sets out the requirements for an Act to protect rivers and calls for its passage as soon as parliament resumes after the State Election. It also reveals that recommendations by an expert government committee to protect the Cataract River have been ignored by the Minister for Mines.

"The NSW Government cannot be taken seriously on water issues until it stops the destruction being wrought upon our catchments by longwall mining", said TEC Natural Areas Campaigner David Burgess.

"Numerous rivers and creeks within Sydney's southern catchments have been cracked and drained. Our latest discovery was the Waratah Rivulet, which makes up to 30% of the Woronora Dam Catchment and supplies Sutherland with its drinking water."

"Water is the issue at the top of the political agenda but the lemma Government is simply allowing it to drain through the cracks in areas where longwall mining is taking place. There are no measures being taken to prevent the damage. Mining companies and their Minister Ian Macdonald are making incorrect statements saying that rivers can be 'fixed' or 'repaired' but more mines are being approved with more damage inevitable," he said.

Areas threatened by future longwall mining activities include the Wyong supply catchment, under the Woronora dam itself and the Liverpool Plains near Gunnedah.

Impacts of Longwall Coal Mining on the Environment in NSW (2007)

# Latest News

## TEC supports more Gosford CBD consult



*Created on Thursday, 11 January 2007 01:14*

'TEC supports the concerns of community groups that they are being cut out of important discussions on the draft CBD Plan released on Friday 11th November by the Cities Task Force under the direction of the Department of Planning. It's clear to us NSW Planning in refusing to adequately consult on the draft Gosford CBD plan, particularly since the new plan adopts previously rejected developments and runs counter to well researched public views,' said Director, Jeff Angel.

"We have written to Frank Sartor, Minister for Planning seeking his intervention."

The Plan covers the main part of Gosford including the western gateway and to the south to Duke Street.

Community Environment Network Chairman John Asquith said: "The Department of Planning is avoiding the community on this plan and not justifying the case for such a huge increase in scale. In addition, information, maps and drawings made available to the community are not adequate for the scale of the changes to Gosford CBD proposed. Local residents are generally unaware of the proposals and their impact on the quality of life in Gosford."

"This level of consultation is inadequate and is in distinct contrast to the level of community consultation for the existing Gosford CBD plan adopted in 2004," he said.

# Latest News

## Nepean longwall threat



*Created on Wednesday, 22 November 2006 04:17*

The NSW Department of Primary Industries yesterday granted conditional approval to four longwall panels at BHP Billiton's Douglas Area 7 mine. The longwall panels in Douglas Area 7 are orientated perpendicular to the river, which is known to cause maximum subsidence damage.

Environment groups, who have been asking the NSW Government to establish a 1km protection zone around rivers and creeks underlain by longwall mining, have vigorously opposed the mine.

"BHP Billiton is embarking on a project that will further damage the Nepean River through events such as cracking of the riverbed, water loss and cliff collapses", said Natural Areas Campaigner, David Burgess.

The new mine's longwall panels come to within 180m of the Nepean River. In the case of the nearby and geologically similar Appin 3 mine an independent consultant to the NSW Government had recommended that mining not come within 350m of the Cataract River to prevent cracking of the riverbed.

"The NSW Government's Subsidence Management Plan approvals process continues to operate as a rubber stamp for new mining proposals. All that new approvals promise to do is monitor the inevitable damage caused to rivers, streams and aquifers by longwall mining.

"We know that damage is going to occur. Key scientific data and independent advice are routinely ignored in favour of BHP Billiton in the southern coalfields. The Government needs to step in to protect the rivers and drinking water catchments of NSW", Mr Burgess concluded.

TEC is about to release a report on the environmental damage caused by longwall mining in NSW. The report will call upon the NSW Government to introduce a mandatory 1km mining exclusion zone around rivers and groundwater aquifers in all mining licences by 2010.

# Latest News

## Bega environment suffers for development on the South Coast



*Created on Friday, 27 October 2006 00:13*

“While bringing reasonable protection to key areas of native vegetation, the recommendations still favour overdevelopment, lack infrastructure planning and rely upon developers to deliver best environmental practice”, said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

Good environmental outcomes are recommended for key sites around the Merimbula and Wallaga Lakes, however the report also gives a green light to developments at the Tathra River Estate and Wollumla West in areas that had been nominated for conservation.

“In the Bega Valley there is a gross oversupply of land already zoned for urban subdivision and there is no need for the expansion of Tathra Rivers Estate into a further 300 lots. The recommendations also assume that developers can deliver best environmental practice – a very risky assumption”, Mr. Angel continued.

In its submission to the Panel TEC rejected 15 of the 17 south coast sites as being unsuitable for future development on the grounds that they are inconsistent with the Draft South Coast Regional Strategy. Key principles such as adjoining major towns or growth centres to maximise efficient use of infrastructure; avoiding fire risk and traffic problems have not been adhered to by the Panel.

“In addition we continue to oppose use of the so-called Sustainability Criteria in the Draft Regional Strategy. They will be used to justify more development on the South Coast, spreading urban sprawl even further.”

“We will be calling on the State Government to strengthen the environment protection and sustainable planning outcomes for the sites and produce a omprehensive conservation plan for the region”, Mr. Angel concluded.



# Latest News

## Lower Hunter Strategy lacks sustainability



*Created on Wednesday, 18 October 2006 23:22*

The Lower Hunter regional Strategy has benefits for the natural environment, but also risks to sustainability that should be eliminated, environment groups said today.

The decision to convert over 20,000ha of State owned land into National Parks or conservation area, along with potentially thousands of hectares of private land is an achievement that may never have eventuated without a strong community campaign over many years and the opportunity provided by the Strategy.

"There will be substantial new Parks in in Port Stephens, The Green Corridor, and in the Cessnock LGA," said James Ryan, ECCHO Coordinator.

"Government has done deals with the 'large landholder group' who have caused much community angst over the years with massive and damaging proposals. While this group is not getting their big ambit claims, some of the development areas in the Strategy (particularly at Catherine Hill Bay, Ellalong and Sweetwater) could cause anger in local communities and may be a recipe for ongoing conflict."

Additionally the government has to explain how the large increase in isolated greenfield sites will fit with community needs for better public transport. There will be a lot of problems in the future if young families and retired people cannot get access to community services."

"While the Strategy has provided the catalyst for some great parks – we estimate it will result in the destruction of up to 5000ha of bushland. Mr Ryan said. 'It's a bit like a Star Wars movie with Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader"

"There will also be an ongoing concern about how secure are the agreements to deliver private land to conservation and protection of natural values in the interim."

# Latest News

## Private loggers to self-regulate?



*Created on Thursday, 27 July 2006 10:00*

"The long-awaited code clearly fails to protect the timber resource and important environmental areas for the long term," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"It will disappoint all those people who were hoping for a significant advance from today's chaotic and controversial industry. It won't bring stability for the timber industry that needs to plan for the future and avoid future environmental conflict, said the state's key environment groups."

"The Code aims to protect endangered species, rainforest, old growth and habitat trees but expects landholders to identify and protect these values themselves. And at the end of the logging period (which could be as short as one year) the protection areas can be cleared for other purposes – it's a farce," said Mr Angel.

Andrew Cox, NPA Executive Officer said, "Much of the existing private logging will have generous phase-in provisions meaning that none of the environmental rules will apply at all for another two years. Most threatened forest species and ecosystems in NSW still don't have enough habitat protected to save them from extinction, so why is the Government waiting to act? In addition Forest Management Plans that could set sustainable extraction rates won't be required for up to 5 years."

Cate Faehrmann, Director of Nature Conservation Council of NSW said, "The Code allows for progressive clearfelling with no site inspections. Loggers regulate themselves, hidden from public scrutiny. This undermines the Government's promise to end landclearing and gives us little confidence that the system will not be abused."

"The proposed rules are nowhere near as stringent as those in State Forests. There is no reason why rivers and creeks on private land should have weaker protection."

"We predict a rush to liquidate the best timber and environmental areas as the Government twiddles its thumbs with a Code that has many escape hatches for irresponsible loggers," said Ms Faehrmann.

# Latest News

## Sensitive south coast sites should be off limits



*Created on Friday, 21 July 2006 20:24*

A series of meetings being held on the South Coast and in Sydney this and next week week is hearing the community's concerns about the future development of the 17 sensitive urban lands in the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Council areas.

Director of the TEC, Jeff Angel addressed the Panel in Sydney and said, "The community needs to have their confidence restored in the planning process. The recommendations of the Independent Panel to the Minister of Planning is an opportunity to get the planning right on the South Coast after years of poor decision making at all levels of government."

He continued, "TEC rejects 15 of the 17 sites for future development on the grounds that they are inconsistent with the principles behind the Draft South Coast Regional Strategy in that they do not adjoin major towns or major growth centers or they are environmentally constrained and lack infrastructure. We also reject the Sustainability Criteria in the Draft Strategy, which allow future evasion of the Strategy, as creating more unwanted uncertainty in the community."

"The South Coast deserves better than ad hoc development and urban sprawl and the TEC will continue to advocate an environmentally sustainable outcome."

"There is more than enough cleared and suitably located land available for any future demand on the coast, as well as consolidation possibilities in existing urban centres. Now is a perfect time to put an end to approvals of rezoning and new subdivision development in high conservation value vegetated landscapes."

Copy of TEC submission

# Latest News

## Snowy backflip a victory for the community and the environment



*Created on Saturday, 03 June 2006 00:14*

TEC Director Jeff Angel said “The proposed Snowy sale came at a crucial time for the future of the Snowy River and placed in jeopardy the future of environmental flows needed to restore the iconic river. A strong campaign by a wide range of environment and community organisations has forced a rethink by the governments involved”.

Following the Snowy Water Inquiry in 1998 a package of staged environmental flows to restore the health of the Snowy River was agreed by the NSW, Victorian and Federal Governments. There were serious concerns that privatisation would see this package threatened as the quest for profit overwhelmed environmental concerns.

“Public ownership of Snowy Hydro means that the governments can be kept accountable for their commitments to environmental flows. It would have been much harder to ensure that a private company delivered the environmental flows needed to return the river to health”, Mr Angel said.

With the governments having responded to public concerns over the sale of Snowy Hydro, TEC has called on them to also listen to calls to restore environmental flows to the Mowamba River, a crucial tributary of the Snowy River.

“Environmental flows were restored to the Mowamba River downstream in 2002 amid much fanfare by the NSW and Victorian Governments. In the lead up to the proposed sale, however, this flow was switched off and the water diverted into Jindabyne Dam in an effort to boost the value of the scheme. With a sale now off the agenda the governments should immediately return this crucial flow to the Mowamba and Snowy Rivers”, Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## Government and Opposition hear coastal demands



*Created on Tuesday, 16 May 2006 10:00*

“Coastal protection is clearly an issue of state significance particularly with the release of draft 25 year strategies that put developers in the drivers seat. They have upset a lot of people and we want the Premier and Leader of the Opposition to hear about sensible planning that caters for population growth as well as environment protection.”

“The coast can head in the developer direction of urban sprawl, towns stranded from essential services, destruction of native vegetation and pollution of coastal lakes – or take a different path – that delivers clean water, preserves bushland and creates healthy communities.”

“The current draft strategies designate major development over important remnant bushland and allow developers to completely change the plan through big loopholes. There is no point in having a plan if developers can then obtain a massive spot rezoning that tears the plan to pieces.”

“We intend to keep the spotlight on the coast in the coming months as the strategies are rolled out for the entire coast. The Lower Hunter will be the first to go to Cabinet.”

# Latest News

## 160 groups reject coastal strategies



*Created on Monday, 01 May 2006 20:40*

“This government has created a massive problem for itself by taking planning and the coastal strategies so far into the developers’ camp so that there are only crumbs left to protect the environment and residential amenity,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

“It is highly dangerous for a government to put offside so many groups from so many parts of NSW, that are active and passionate about coastal protection. They represent the majority of community opinion,” Mr Angel said.

“Major developers and their peak lobby organisations, who can afford to pay thousands of dollars for a seat at a table with the Planning Minister at ALP fundraisers get most of what they ask for,” Cate Faehrmann, Director of the Nature Conservation Council said.

“Regional strategies and planning laws are supposed to ensure that future growth will be for the long term survival of the environment and of communities. These changes to planning laws no longer protect local communities and fragile areas like the coast from the clutches of developers,” Ms Faehrmann said.

“When added to all the recent planning changes introduced to speed up DA approvals and cut environmental protection and public concerns, the strategies simply entrench the perception that the government is only interested in working to benefit the property industry,” Mr Angel said.

Key problems of the regional strategies include:

- failure to protect native vegetation and biodiversity,
- the ability for development to occur anywhere as long as it fits some wishy washy criteria
- adoption of “investigation zones” that will benefit land speculators who have pushed for them
- lack of detail, data and maps showing conservation and natural hazards
- failure to account for climate change impact
- failure to protect low key settlements
- lack of public transport and service provisions.

Copy of letter

# Latest News

## Coastal strategy greenwash exposed



*Created on Thursday, 20 April 2006 01:21*

In a first of many expected schemes, a major developer in the Hunter is pushing for a rezoning of inappropriate land not designated for development, through use of loopholes (called 'sustainability criteria'). The draft strategies released for the Lower Hunter, Far North Coast and South Coast all have these highly suspect criteria.

Advice from the Environmental Defenders Office, a public interest law firm has confirmed; "The sustainability criteria allow the clearly designated areas and planning for development in the Strategy to be avoided...the criteria are merely "considerations" and have significant potential to undermine the purported environmental protection goals of the Lower Hunter regional Strategy."

The environment groups said: "The criteria must be removed, if there is to be any hope for protection from overdevelopment and "urban sprawl" for our coastal regions. They don't achieve sustainability, but have been inserted to give developers what they want under vague, unenforceable and dangerous provisions. It's a transgression of good environmental planning - it's a simple case of greenwashing," they said.

The Hunter scheme located at Paxton near Cessnock is being promoted by Hardie Holdings. It fails on a number of key grounds including - accessible transport options; creates pollution risks for an endangered freshwater wetlands complex; will clear two endangered ecological communities; and is unconvincing on regional and local employment criteria. The local community is actively opposing this development.

The Department of Planning had already rejected the site as being unsuitable for development due to its distance from public transport and community services.

"The inclusion of these "sustainability criteria" create uncertainty for the community, planners and local councils. The developers might win, but it's a loss for everyone else," the groups said.

# Latest News

## Clearing compliance actions supported



*Created on Friday, 14 April 2006 02:52*

This week's raids by the Department of Natural Resources on suspected illegal clearing in the Warren and Coonamble areas were absolutely necessary to get the message out that land clearing laws are to be taken seriously, Total Environment Centre said today.

"The vast majority of farmers are law abiding and thousands are already working with Catchment Management Authorities to restore the natural landscape. The very few who undertake illegal clearing, should be targeted for vegetation remediation orders and prosecution. Their actions cast a slur on the rest of the farming community," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"Actions taken by the department will be the proof in the pudding of the new compliance policy released last week. The government needs to commit sufficient resources and staff to its implementation so that there is a level playing field for everyone."

"It took a long process of negotiation to get the new land clearing laws off the ground. This work should not be wasted because of the actions of a few recalcitrant land owners. If people from the farming or environmental side have problems with the new laws, there are sufficient inbuilt measures to review and improve," Mr Angel said.



# Latest News

## Minister for Illegal Clearing



*Created on Friday, 24 March 2006 11:00*

A Minister without a compliance and enforcement policy for land clearing laws is a 'Minister for Illegal Clearing', in waiting, Total Environment Centre said today.

"This is the fate that awaits NSW Primary Industry, Ian MacDonald who has been sitting on his hands since his appointment last year. We have made numerous attempts to get the compliance policy resolved but to no avail. His inaction gives encouragement to those who wish to breach the law," said Jeff Angel Director of the Centre.

Recent satellite data showed thousands of hectares suspected to have been cleared illegally and the department responsible for the Native Vegetation Acts has failed to act on hundreds of complaints. The central and north-west of the state are particular problem areas. Handling of compliance has previously been found to be inadequate by a NSW Audit Office report (2002).

"The lack of a compliance policy undermines the positive actions of thousands of farmers who are working with Catchment Management Authorities to restore the landscape and comply with land clearing requirements. Why should people work with the system if they see their neighbour getting away with illegal clearing?"

"A compliance policy needs to be:

- focussed on repairing environmental damage;
- avoid loopholes for lazy departmental officials to excuse inaction;
- allow some high focus prosecutions in the courts; and
- ensure the removal of inappropriate regional influences on compliance action,"

Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## Snowy River loses out



*Created on Tuesday, 07 February 2006 02:46*

"The Corporation's recommissioning of the Mowamba River aquaduct has deprived the Snowy River of a natural source of flow and a connection to its upper catchment at a time when it has been showing huge improvements in health. The continued connection to the Mowamba is vital in the overall plan for this iconic River's recovery," said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Even this relatively tiny 6% of freely flowing water was too much for the Snowy Corporation to accept in its eagerness to own every last drop prior to privatisation," said Ms Kelly.

"For decades the Snowy Hydro, has taken all but 1% of the Snowy River's flows from above Jindabyne, turning this once deep and mighty river into a drain. It still can't see the value in allowing a small amount of water to bypass its dam for the sake of the river, despite all the visible and scientific evidence of its benefits."

"The support for this by the NSW Government is also shameful, considering the fanfare that accompanied its announcement of the Mowamba aquaduct decommissioning and the huge sums of money that have been poured into works accompanying the flow improvements."

"The Total Environment Centre is talking with other concerned organisations about the many options open to challenging the decision. This won't be the end of the matter. Too much time and effort and support went into clawing back environmental flows for the Snowy," said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## Snowy River loses out



*Created on Tuesday, 07 February 2006 02:48*

"The Corporation's recommissioning of the Mowamba River aquaduct has deprived the Snowy River of a natural source of flow and a connection to its upper catchment at a time when it has been showing huge improvements in health. The continued connection to the Mowamba is vital in the overall plan for this iconic River's recovery," said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

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# Latest News

## Snowy River flows under threat



*Created on Tuesday, 07 February 2006 00:56*

Total Environment Centre warned today that the proposed privatisation of the Corporation was a driving force behind the decision and the cut off of the Mowamba from the Snowy was "imminent".

"The natural environmental flows, coming direct from the Mowamba River, have been the river's lifeblood over the past few years, with the Snowy's health improving enormously following decades of it being treated as a ditch. Now however the greed for profit has again reared its ugly head," said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The Snowy was dying. It only had 1% of its flows being released due to the Snowy Hydro taking the rest. After a major community campaign former NSW Premier Bob Carr and Victorian Premier Steve Bracks released the first flows in 2002 with great fanfare from the Mowamba River. This was a vital part of the overall health recovery plan."

"Money, time and effort has been poured into bringing the river back to life since then. There is visible and scientific proof that the river's health has improved enormously. "The NSW Premier Morris lemma should take charge of this fiasco and demand that the Corporation and his Minister responsible "â€" Ian MacDonald "â€" put the Snowy River's health ahead of a few extra bucks for shareholders. The decision will harm the Premier's efforts to establish a reputation that is sympathetic to the environment. There will be a community backlash."

"The whole concept of environmental flows will be turned on its head because instead of the environment being the first beneficiary, it will be profits for the Snowy Corporation as the water will be taken by them before being released through a pipe in an unnatural and far less beneficiary form."

# Coast Protection

## TEC Coastal Reports



*Created on Friday, 23 December 2005 21:50*

Concreting the coast [PDF 637Kb]

Coastal Law [PDF 488Kb]

Environmental principles for coastal planning [PDF 57.8Kb]

Compensation and environment protection zoning [PDF 133Kb]

# Rivers & Water

## State of the River reports



*Created on Tuesday, 20 December 2005 22:27*

- 4 Rivers Report
- Belongil Map
- Clarence Map
- Hunter Map
- Shoalhaven Map

# Latest News

## Parks for Profit - economic rationalism threatens future of National Parks



*Created on Monday, 29 November 1999 11:00*

The Total Environment Centre, National Parks Association, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, The Wilderness Society and the Nature Conservation Council today condemned Government moves towards commercialising the parks and "restructuring" some of the most effective and experienced staff out of the NPWS.

"The Environment Minister Bob Debus and the head of the NPWS Brian Gilligan, are simply pandering to Treasury by cutting resources and finding ways to make our National Parks make profits" said Total Environment Centre director Jeff Angel.

"The NPWS are losing the best and most experienced staff, the parks will be more and more commercialised and developed and the flora and fauna protected in it will suffer as a result " he said.

"National Parks make up only 6% of the State. With land clearing and development eating up what is left it is essential the environment is given priority. National Parks play a crucial role in protecting biodiversity, wilderness and stunning landscapes. They need experienced conservation managers not political yes men and bean counters" said National Parks Association Executive Officer Noel Plumb.

"One of the worst aspects of this restructure is the abandoning of wilderness in the form of the NPWS Wilderness Unit and the Wilderness Act - that clearly signals the NSW Government is moving away from conservation towards commercialisation in the NPWS." said Colong Foundation director Keith Muir.

"National Parks are the jewels in the conservation crown of this State" said Nature Conservation Council director Kathy Ridge, "The restructure is a backward move putting economy before the environment".

"The Wilderness Society is appalled at the direction the NPWS chief Brian Gilligan and his boss Bob Debus is taking. What is the point of boasting about the number of parks they have created, then undermining the purpose of the parks by commercialising them?" said TWS campaign coordinator Marian Spencer.

# Latest News

## Domestic Cattle Trashing Blue Mountains National Park



*Created on Wednesday, 01 March 2000 11:00*

Total Environment Centre natural areas campaigner Frances Kelly said the privately owned and tame cattle herd was well-entrenched in the national park and wilderness around Breakfast Creek and Carlon Creek which run into the Cox's river in the Blue Mountains.

"This particular herd, including a bull and calves, have been given free rein of this public land, effectively turning it into a weed-infested wasteland." said Ms Kelly

"Their dung is everywhere, including in the streams running into the Cox's River. They are eating the understorey and regrowth, and easing the spread of noxious weeds deep into the national park. Where the cattle are roaming blackberry and other weeds have taken over, and native vegetation is disappearing."

"This is one herd. How many other domestic cattle herds are being released into this and other national parks to subsequently trash them." said Ms Kelly.

"And this is occurring at a time when weed and feral animal control is taking effect in other Blue Mountains park areas thanks to the effort of local NPWS staff, bushcare volunteers and council staff" said Ms Kelly.

"Ms Kelly called on the NPWS Director General to investigate how the incursion occurred and stop this and possible other illegal exploitation of public national park land by farmers and park neighbours.



# Latest News

## Kilometres of coastal land being ploughed up for millionaires' playgrounds - local communities ignor



*Created on Wednesday, 24 May 2000 10:00*

"There is a mad rush on right now to subdivide, build out and generally develop all those areas of undeveloped coastal land that have so far escaped the bulldozer. Local communities are not being properly consulted, if at all. " said Total Environment Centre director Jeff Angel.

"In the worst hit areas - Tweed Shire in the north and Shoalhaven in the south - thousands of proposed housing, shopping and resort developments will devastate public and environmentally sensitive land. The State's Coast Protection Policy is being flouted" Mr Angel said.

Other areas under threat include resort and headland developments at Scotts Head, ribbon development in Eurobodalla, headland development near Port Macquarie - you name it - its happening," said Jeff Angel.

"Councils that are happy to do deals or secret handshakes with developers are rushing unsustainable overdevelopments through left, right and centre. Local communities don't know there will be massive increases in population, traffic and pollution. They are being disenfranchised," said Mr Angel

"Tweed Shire Council is currently rushing through a millionaire Gold Coast style concreting of an entire 7 km undeveloped beach and coastal lake. These developments are the first of a massive overkill of the area with thousands of units and housing, four huge resorts, absolute beachfront housing, a proposed airport runway extension from the Gold Coast, and a further residential and resort development around an adjoining lake for an extra 30,000 people" said MrAngel.

"To the south Shoalhaven Council has thousands of residential and resort developments proposed or recently approved around its beaches, bays, coastal lakes and catchments" he said.

"It comes down to whether NSW really wants to end up becoming an extension of the Gold Coast or whether we protect our remaining coastal areas by restricting appropriate development to within existing urban, cleared areas" said Mr Angel.

## Latest News

# NSW COMMUNITY APPEAL TO PREMIER TO PROTECT THE COAST



*Created on Monday, 21 August 2000 10:00*

The appeal comes close on the heels of a report by the NSW Coastal Council urging that action be taken to protect the coast and reign in the development industry's cowboys.

It also follows a recent report by the Co-operative Research Centre that has found that half of Australia's coastal waterways are suffering erosion, contamination and changes in waterflow.

There are currently 100s of large-subdivisions, rezoning proposals, and commercial and tourist developments proposed or approved for different regional council areas along the NSW coast. Many are planned in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, headlands, beach fronts and coastal lakes.

In addition, urban strategy settlements are being prepared for future development in these areas, which in some cases are looking at a massive growth in urban development and population over the next 20 years. This will result in further impacts on coastal aquatic and terrestrial systems.

The groups have urged the Premier to revise, tighten and enforce the Government's Coastal Policy which covers coastal areas outside the Greater Sydney zone from Tweed to Port Stephens in the north and Kiama to Bega in the South.

They have also called for the Premier to direct councils to be more accountable to the community, to review old inappropriate LEPs, review lands to assess which ones urgently need removing from development threats by rezoning or acquisition and to consider bringing in a state planning instrument setting clear boundaries for development assessments and approvals.

# Latest News

## WORLD HERITAGE RECOMMENDATION FOR SOUTH COAST LAKES



*Created on Wednesday, 18 October 2000 11:00*

Total Environment Centre today welcomed the recommendation as timely in face of the growing threats from residential and commercial development to the south coast and its lakes.

"The recommendation will be enthusiastically incorporated into our coastal campaign. It covers a very significant area of the south coast giving the lakes system, coast and the crucial tourism industry badly needed protection against threats such as foreshore and lakeside residential and commercial development, pollution, and accelerated eutrophication", said Natural Areas Campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Lake Wollumboola was recently given breathing space when the State Government stepped in to prevent a 3000 lot residential development from destroying its relatively pristine shores. This nomination should help prevent further pressures on Wollumboola and other coastal lakes, by developers wanting to make megabucks from lakeside and coastal views at the expense of the natural environment" said Ms Kelly.

Wollumboola is at the northern tip of the south coast lakes recommendation which includes Swan, Conjola, Burrill, Tabourie, Termeil, Meroo, Wilinga and Durras.

"Each of these lakes, bar Lake Durras which is protected by National Park status, is suffering from varying degrees of development pressure" said Ms Kelly. "In fact recently Lake Conjola was found to contain an rapidly spreading an noxious algae that was threatening the lake bed. World Heritage listing would provide a strong level of protection to the lakes as well as turning international attention on their beauty"

## Latest News

# NSW ENVIRONMENT GROUP CONDEMNS NATIONAL PARKS BOSS FOR BOWING TO 4WD BULLY BOYS



*Created on Friday, 20 October 2000 11:00*

"The deal between the NPWS and the Recreational Four Wheel Drive Clubs of NSW and ACT giving a privileged say over national park management should be condemned for the 'rights' it delivers to a high-impact but minority group of park users," said natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"This MOU seems to be a letter of defeat from the head of NPWS to a group that has done nothing but unjustifiably criticise the Service and national parks relentlessly over the past few years. What a great precedent it sets," said Ms Kelly.

"Following the logic in this MOU, every possible interest group could get special rights and attention from the NPWS regardless of how damaging their wishes are. What about MOUs with two-wheel-drivers to tar over all dirt roads so they can get access too, or MOUs with developers wanting to build hotels in national parks?" said Ms Kelly. Why stop at four-wheel-drivers?"

"National Parks make up about 5% of the State and are meant to be primarily for nature conservation. The key to protecting these areas from impacts such as rubbish dumping, firewood and bushrock removal, arson, and vandalism is controlling vehicle access, but this MOU flies in the face of this," said Ms Kelly.

"Four-wheel-drivers already have enormous access rights to thousands of kilometres of road through national parks and State Forest. They don't need more," said Ms Kelly.

"When is the NPWS boss going to get the guts to stand up to groups that don't represent the interests of the vast majority of parks users and who believe parks are primarily for their use and not for their intended purpose - nature conservation," said Ms Kelly.

## Latest News

# NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL - DAMNED IF THEY DO AND DAMNED IF THEY DON'



*Created on Friday, 03 November 2000 11:00*

"When the NPWS culls ferals there is an outcry and if they don't do anything they are accused of not controlling ferals by the same people. They are damned if they do and damned if they don't. What do NPWS critics want?"

"The outcry by local landowners and the RSPCA over legitimate and necessary feral animal control programs carried out by the NPWS at Guy Fawkes National Park should be read for what it is - uninformed hysteria," Total Environment Centre natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly said today.

"The simple fact is feral horses were overrunning the park, they had to be culled to limit the extensive damage already occurring there and the quickest, most efficient and humane way of doing this is by helicopter shoots - even the RSPCA has admitted this"

"Why aren't local landowners and the RSPCA consistent? Why don't they start bleating about all those foxes and rabbits, dogs and pigs that are culled on private and public land - because that is how ridiculous this whole thing is," said Ms Kelly.

"Unless feral animal control - by the easiest and quickest method possible - is carried out, we are condemning native wildlife to death by habitat and food destruction - as the horses were in Guy Fawkes - or by being preyed upon directly," said Ms Kelly.

Ms Kelly also condemned Minister for the Environment Bob Debus for "bowing to the hysterical demands of NPWS-bashers and talk back radio"

## Latest News

# WARNING BELLS SOUNDED OVER ALARMING SPECULATIVE GROWTH IN COASTAL POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT



*Created on Wednesday, 17 January 2001 11:00*

Alarm bells over the projected massive population rise and associated growth in residential developments along the coast have been raised by the Total Environment Centre, following an inspection of local government settlement strategies that are meant to guide the future direction of planning up and down the coast.

Most of the strategies represent a wish list for developers, real estate agents and those councillors sympathetic to perpetual growth and development, said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

They are, in our view, developer-driven with land sharks set to make windfalls from the rezoning of environmentally sensitive land. Some of them unfortunately are already approved but could be redrawn, while others can be rejected if the NSW Government has the will, said Ms Kelly.

To justify the rezoning and massive growth in development, councils and developers are entrenching the myth that thousands of people are demanding to live on new estates in the most environmentally sensitive areas along the coast. This is not an acceptable reason for environmental destruction and the local and wider community and visitors to the area do not want to see the coast changed beyond recognition, said Ms Kelly.

The whole planning process is back to front. Development is guided by past growth trends or hoped-for high growth rates by councils and developers, while the land's capability and suitability takes a back seat.

The result is that wetlands, headlands, foreshores, coastal lakes, estuaries, heritage sites, floodprone land and natural coastal bushland are being replaced by concrete, said Ms Kelly.

An urgent review and overhaul of coastal management practices needs to be undertaken by the NSW government, including the need to come up with a statutory blueprint that sets down firm rules and guidelines, applicable to all council areas along the coast, said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## Drinking water protection ? Delayed!



*Created on Wednesday, 14 March 2001 11:00*

On March 8 the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) announced that the Regional Environment Plan (REP) for Sydney's Drinking Water Catchments would not be finalised until the end of 2001.

The REP is a fundamental tool for the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) to eliminate pollution threats to the drinking water supply of 4 million people.

This issue is of concern for all Sydney-siders. No one wants to see a repeat of the 1998 water contamination or other new incidents, said Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre.

We are calling for rapid and sweeping changes in development control and land-use management in the catchments, he said.

To illustrate the extent of the problem, the Warragamba catchment supplies over 80% Sydney's Drinking Water. SCA's Annual water quality monitoring report 1999/2000 revealed that low water quality in some parts of the catchment are indicative of considerable human impact. The sources need to be addressed now.

Stalling by DUAP and SCA is a response to political pressure from land-users in the catchments. Protecting the health of water consumers by maintaining and improving catchment ecosystems should be the priority issue. Solutions are available now, the government needs to take action in implementing them, said Kathy Ridge, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

Improvements in water quality will take time to become evident even after controls are in place. The present process could lead to there being no coordinated approach to water quality impacts ? up to 4 years after the Sydney Water Inquiry recommended that water quality should be the primary consideration for decision making affecting the catchments, said Ms. Ridge.

Changes needed include: water quality guidelines on new development which are prescriptive and binding on all government approval bodies; absolute protection of in-stream and riparian ecosystems, binding commitments to remediate impacts of existing development and adequate and strategic funding for catchment improvement works, Ms. Ridge said.

# Latest News

## NSW GOVERNMENT COASTAL REPORT POINTS TO COUNCIL FAILURES



*Created on Friday, 16 March 2001 11:00*

The Council's recently released 2000 Annual Report condemns local councils for disregarding the State's Coastal Policy and carrying out business behind closed doors when assessing applications from developers.\*

"The report points to a key problem encountered by community groups and residents on the ground who are fighting to have some say in the direction in which their local towns or villages are taken," said Total Environment Centre natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"In addition those who call for sensible planning and development decisions that reflect the natural environment's capability and suitability, as well as the long term sustainability of an area, are being brushed aside for developers' interests." said Ms Kelly

"Councils such as Shoalhaven and Tweed give rise to the biggest number of complaints with decisions made behind closed doors, community views ignored and development pursued at all cost no matter how damaging it may be or where it may be located," said Ms Kelly

"But there are others that don't come far behind. Hastings, Ballina, Nambucca Heads, Kempsey, Great Lakes, Port Stevens, Lake Macquarie, Wollongong and Eurobodalla are some of the many councils with which residents are becoming increasingly frustrated."

"It's about time the NSW Government took over the controls when it comes to sustainable planning and development decisions along the NSW coast. Until they gain the backbone to do so, ad hoc, damaging and totally unsuitable developments will continue to destroy the coastal landscape." said Ms Kelly

\*" The Coastal Council is regularly being made aware of particular councils, up and down the coast, who would appear to regard the Policy as irrelevant when assessing DA's. We are aware of one council which has delegated determination of DA's ....to staff. This has the potential for by-passing debate at a council meeting excluding not only the community but elected representatives; there have also been occasions when local councils have not referred DAs to adjoining landowners or consulted with appropriate agencies..." - Coastal Council of NSW Annual Report 1999-2000 (p27)



## Latest News

# PORT MACQUARIE HIGH RISES BLITZ THE COAST WHILE PLANNING REFORMS GET DELAYED



*Created on Wednesday, 21 March 2001 11:00*

Total Environment Centre believes the high rise tourist-residential complex is being rushed through before Hastings Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) is reformed to change height limits to 14 metres, in line with the NSW Coastal Policy and before the Coastal Policy itself is given more teeth.

"Stretching over seven blocks right opposite Town Beach, this massive development will dominate the area. If Hastings Council approves the application, it will set in train further similar developments until Port Macquarie duplicates the Gold Coast". said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly

"It is frustrating to say the least, that while the NSW Government is expressing concern over inappropriate and over-development along the coast, and sits on its hands while it ponders reform, various councils are approving all manner of blatantly over the top proposals, regardless of environmental impacts or community desires". Said Ms Kelly.

"This over the top development along this stretch of coast should not even have been able to get past first post, yet it is being seriously considered by Hastings Council".

"This development is an example of why the Coastal Policy urgently needs to be given real teeth and set in legislation so it can override out of date DCPs and ensure true coastal protection occurs. But we also call on the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning to urgently reform Port Macquarie's DCP to prevent this happening again" Said Ms Kelly

## Latest News

# FERAL HORSE HERITAGE STUDY ROAD TO RUIN FOR NATIONAL PARKS



*Created on Wednesday, 21 March 2001 11:00*

The Total Environment Centre (TEC), which - with other peak environment groups - has called on the government to restore the option of aerial culling feral horses in national parks, has demanded the Government start putting national park protection and scientific facts ahead of talk back opinion.

"We can't believe that the government is going this far. First it prevents effective control of feral horse numbers by banning the previously condoned method of aerial culling. Now it wants to give the run of national parks to these destructive feral animals," said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Why doesn't the Government go the whole way and call for heritage protection for rats, pigs, goats, rabbits, foxes or any other introduced feral. After all anything could be considered heritage to anyone who feels sympathy for it, but it doesn't mean it should therefore be protected," said Ms Kelly.

"Everyone is aware of the huge damage done to the natural environment by large hoofed feral animals - soil erosion, damage to creeks and rivers, loss of habitat and food for native animals are some of the impacts. The Government should be protecting the natural environment in our national parks, not condemning it to further destruction."

"Anyone who wants to protect these animals should keep them on their own private land not in the 6% of NSW that has been set aside for nature conservation in our National Parks," said Ms Kelly.

"If the Government was really serious about protecting what is left of our natural environment, it would be defending our national parks and the National Parks and Wildlife Service for doing a great job in managing them, not making it hard to protect them," said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## Coastal Development Councils Face Backlash



*Created on Monday, 07 May 2001 10:00*

"Resident- based groups are getting more active, new ones are regularly being formed and huge numbers in the community overall are expressing their concern up and down the NSW coast in response to decisions that are clearly in favour of developers at the expense of the community and the environment," said Total Environment Centre campaigner Fran Kelly.

"We are constantly receiving complaints from residents about approvals being given for inappropriate developments regardless of the impacts that development would have on the environment and residential amenity," said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly

"Whether the developments are massive resorts on ocean frontages or housing estates on headlands or around lakes and wetlands the result is the same: The environment suffers, the community is ignored and in the end no one but the developer wins," said Ms Kelly.

"This trend is occurring wherever councils are comprised of a majority of councillors that place vested interests first. The result has been a loss of faith in the planning process and a rise in anger at those councillors who are so blatantly ignoring community concerns," said Ms Kelly.

"Every inappropriate development proposal that is approved is fuelling community anger and action. At the next local government elections that anger will translate into a backlash against those councillors perceived not to represent the community and the environment. The biggest backlashes will be suffered by councillors supporting the most inappropriate developments while simultaneously failing to listen to the community," said Ms Kelly

Ms Kelly listed Tweed, Ballina, Nambucca, Great Lakes, Gosford, Wollongong, and Shoalhaven as the councils causing the most community concern and action. But said there were many others causing concern.

Examples of inappropriate developments along coast that have caused widespread community concern:

Tweed Council - An avalanche of development applications have come before council, and been approved since a pro-development team took control at the last elections aided by major funding, (including more than \$65,000 from one developer). Against community and environmental concerns the mayor has pushed for for a Gold Coast airport extension into Tweed, and the Council take over of Cudgen Nature Reserve from the NPWS. Major developments approved include resort and residential "concreting" of coast from Kingscliff to Bogangar, further staged subdivisions for Koala Beach. Proposals being considered by the same team include major development for Crown land at Kingscliff, another 12-18,000 person residential estate and two major marina resorts in Tweed River.

Ballina - approval given to a large headland development at Iron Peg on an inholding surrounded by Crown Land which is contrary to NSW Coastal Policy and has caused enormous community concern. A proposed bike track through littoral rainforest along the coast and large subdivisions also causing huge community concern.

Bellingen, Nambucca and Kempsey - approval of ongoing large subdivisions in coastal zone - eg Scotts Head, South West Rocks and Urunga. Kempsey Shire Council was recently forced to reverse its support for a proposed prawn farm and hatchery following community uproar.

Hastings - recent attempt to push through a 10 storey building at Port Macquarie opposite ocean, and rezoning proposals along the coastal zone around Bonnie Hills and Lake Cathie.

Greater Taree - concerns over subdivision at Old Bar/Wallabi Pt and around Hallidays Pt

Great Lakes Council - major concern in community over loss of natural bushland for large scale development.

Include rezoning proposal for North Hawks Nest, huge subdivision and development in Tea Gardens along Myall River, and rezoning of Fame Cove for subdivision. Also subdivision in North Port Stephens

Lake Macquarie - major concern over coastal subdivision - eg at Wallerah .

Gosford - Major community concern (demonstrated in a meeting attended by 600 people recently) against

proposed spot rezoning for a massive and obtrusive multi-storey/ residential/retail development opposite the ocean at Terrigal. 2000 letters and petition signatures against proposal.

Wollongong - Huge community concern over subdivision and other development in North Wollongong eg Sandon Point.

Shoalhaven - huge concern over ongoing development proposals and failure to listen to community concerns - eg subdivision and development at Callala Bay, St Georges Basin, Wollomboola, Vincentia and Wollamia.

Eurobodalla -community concern over rezoning of Community land for resort development at Moruya.

# Latest News

## Leading climate policy expert to give Milo Dunphy Memorial Lecture



*Created on Wednesday, 16 May 2001 10:00*

Climate change is back in the headlines. The US has dumped the Kyoto Protocol, and the Australian Government sympathises with this position.

Hear an insider's view on Australia's policies and role in international climate change negotiations from Bill Hare, Climate Policy Director of Greenpeace International. Bill leads the Greenpeace delegations to meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and has participated in all negotiating sessions of this body, including negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Widely regarded as the best climate lobbyist in the world, Bill Hare "is on the one hand a trained atmospheric scientist able to engage climate scientists in debate at the highest level and on the other - rare for a scientist - possessed of a prodigious political acumen".

- Jeremy Leggett, *The Carbon War*

The lecture will be opened by Bob Debus, NSW Minister for Environment and followed by a panel discussion and the opportunity for audience questions. The lecture is hosted by Total Environment Centre, phone 9299 5599. [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au)

Bill Hare, Climate Policy Director of Greenpeace International, will give the lecture entitled:

Climate change: Australia's role on the world stage

Saturday 2 June 2001, 3.00 - 5.00pm

Seymour Centre, Cleveland Street (cnr City Road), Chippendale

Cost: \$22 Concession \$11 (includes GST)

Bookings: Seymour Centre 9351 7940 (9.30am-7.00pm Mon-Sat)

# Latest News

## National Party likely to lose Federal seat of Richmond



*Created on Wednesday, 06 June 2001 10:00*

"This highly unpopular proposal has been prevented in the past due to massive community opposition. But it now appears the extension will be approved by Federal Transport Minister John Anderson following relentless lobbying by local National Party identities against community wishes," said TEC campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Larry Anthony and Tweed Shire's National Party Mayor Lynne Beck went into bat for Gold Coast developers following last year's failed attempt to push the airport through. It appears it will now go ahead thanks to their behind the scenes lobbying," said Ms Kelly

"This is despite previous National Party State MP Don Beck, being voted out at the 1999 elections due in part to his support for the airport. So far Larry Anthony has shown he is happy to go the way of Don," said Ms Kelly.

"It seems the National Party team are pulling out all stops to get this airport through before the community has had time to blink," said Ms Kelly. "It is sneaky and selfish and Larry Anthony deserves to lose his seat if he doesn't have the guts to stand up against it" said Ms Kelly.

"Even if the runway is slightly shorter than previously proposed, by the time road access, industrial buildings and so forth are added, the airport will be well and truly brought into the vicinity of residential areas and over wetlands and other environmental protected lands in Tweed."

# Latest News

## BHP leads attack on water catchments



*Created on Wednesday, 20 June 2001 10:00*

The mine is a clear sign that BHP and the coal industry are intent on intensively mining our pristine catchment areas - and we have embarked on a major campaign to protect these areas, the groups said.

"While the Government is spending millions of dollars protecting the catchments and urging Sydney residents to conserve water, BHP's proposed Dendrobium mine in the south west catchments, will defeat these efforts," said Mr Keith Muir, Director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

"We fear national parks will be next; they are in a direct line after the current mining leases have expired. According to the latest research, river beds will be cracked, wetlands drained, cliffs will collapse and pristine aquatic ecosystems destroyed. Several months ago we sought urgent action from the NSW Minister for Mines, but he has ignored us. The community should be informed about this growing environmental disaster," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"BHP has put its plans before the needs of society for clean water. The Government has little choice but to reject this proposal - our great natural areas and the water supply to four million people is not worth the greenhouse polluting coal supplies. BHP's proposed mine would damage Sydney's inner catchments that for decades have been considered so sensitive that any public entry is strictly prohibited," said Andrew Cox, Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of NSW.

The proposed Dendrobium underground coal mine, located between the Avon and Cordeaux Dams, would use longwall mining machines that have already cracked and drained upper parts of the Georges River, the Nepean River and the Cataract River.

BHP's environmental report on subsidence advises that the cliff lines will fall, creek beds crack and rock pools starved of water. The report also mentions soil slumping and landslides into creek beds and stored waters could degrade drinking water quality, upland swamps will be drained and coal gas may kill the native vegetation.

The subsidence report also warns that drainage of water from the Avon and Cordeaux Dams is possible and the potential for an inrush of water into the mine is also noted - (this is similar to the Gretley Mine disaster scenario that killed six miners at Wallsend near Newcastle).

This proposed mine total disregards environmental and water quality concerns and should be quickly rejected by the Government

# Latest News

## Control of Local Council Planning and Development Excesses taken out of Developer's Hands



*Created on Wednesday, 27 June 2001 10:00*

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said local residents had had enough of watching their council?s bowing and scraping to every developer that came forward with a coastline subdivision, resort, or residential estate development.

Over the past year or so an avalanche of complaints from local residents have come through to us adding up to nearly 150 large or inappropriately located development proposals and approvals along the coast. This State Government initiative should be congratulated as a means of preventing developers lining their pockets at the expense of the environment and local community.

We have been assured by the Minister that there will be public consultation on development applications and he is keen to hear about sensitive environments needing protection? said Ms Kelly.

Judging by the huge turnouts at public meetings opposing developments, the massive growth in new resident action and environment groups and opinion polls showing overwhelming support for coastal protection it is the developers and their backers on council that are out of touch with local desires.

Apart from destruction of wetlands, estuaries, headlands, foreshores, and other fragile areas, the rush of speculative development proposals was also threatening the character of local towns and villages along the coast. No one but those who put profits before people and the environment wanted this to continue. The fact is we cant sacrifice the coastal environment on the alter of population demands said Ms Kelly.

Ms Kelly said the most complained about councils are those most likely to be doing the most complaining about this State Government initiative on behalf of their developer mates. She named Tweed, Ballina, Hastings, Nambucca, Greater Taree, Great Lakes, Port Stephens, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Gosford, Wollongong, and Shoalhaven as those councils causing most complaints.



# Latest News

## COASTAL PACKAGE WELCOMED



*Created on Wednesday, 27 June 2001 10:00*

The development pressures on the coast are enormous and more than 60 groups have been campaigning to bring the pressures under control.

"Over the last 15 months there has been a tidal wave of damaging and speculative development schemes, often embraced by developer controlled councils. The outrage from local communities and the evidence of severe environmental threats has been rapidly growing. The Carr Government is right to act," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Councils such as Tweed, which are embracing a Gold Coast philosophy; Shoalhaven which seeks to avoid public scrutiny; Newcastle which is privatising the foreshore for high rise and others such as Ballina, Port Stephens and Great Lakes are facing a development binge. There has to be a breathing space to review such activities and today's announcement creates that."

"The new state environmental planning policy will establish an urgent review process and better environmental planning principles for the future; the coastal assessment will find out what has to be protected and the additional policies will help protect water quality, bushland, wetlands, fishing resources and beaches," Mr Angel said.

"We intend helping local groups to participate in the new processes and vigorously oppose attempts by developers and their local government allies to water down the package."

# Latest News

## Proposed increase in Kangaroo Exploitation leads to commercialisation of all wildlife



*Created on Wednesday, 18 July 2001 10:00*

Total Environment Centre natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly said "the keenness to kill off wild kangaroos or turn them into yet another commodity, will make it easier to add other species to the list of acceptable disposable wildlife, whether they are to be exploited for skin, meat or sold as pets here and overseas".

"By painting kangaroos as one great homogenous mass of pests, then describing their slaughter as "sustainable management" we are being led to believe that this proposal is a sensible vision for the future of NSW". said Ms Kelly

"Instead it shows a severe lack of vision by setting a dangerous precedent for the exploitation of all wildlife - a proposal already on the table via proposed changes to legislation such as the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

The last time there was mass slaughter and trade in wildlife products in this country many species were driven to the brink"

"All pretences that this will be a monitored, sustainable and selective commercialisation of kangaroos is not credible because there is no way to adequately control the exploitation of a species once it has been so thoroughly endorsed for slaughter." Said Ms Kelly.

"The reality of the market economy means that its exploitation will have to increase in order to keep returning a profit to those who have invested in it. Any attempt to reduce or even ban such a venture in the future will be met with vigorous political opposition by those who have built a living around it" said Ms Kelly.

"Killing and trading in kangaroos or any other wildlife won't solve the real problems with the rural environment which includes a massive increase in clearing and destruction of native vegetation, and over use of water and pesticides for crops such as cotton. Don't let's add our precious wildlife to the list of destruction"

# Latest News

## State Government urged to intervene on Albion Park subdivision proposal



*Created on Thursday, 02 August 2001 10:00*

The Total Environment Centre (TEC) and Nature Conservation Council (NCC) have sought the assistance of the Minister for the Environment, Bob Debus, Minister for Land and Water Conservation, Richard Amery and Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Andrew Refshauge, to ensure that the environmental impacts of the proposed 11 lot residential subdivision are properly assessed.

"Council's botched response to the recent destruction of the threatened plant species *Zieria granulata* has shown that it is totally incapable of dealing with threatened species and other environmental issues. Yet they have consistently refused to involve the relevant State agencies," Mr Leigh Martin TEC Urban Campaigner said.

Council was recently alerted to the destruction of the threatened plant species *Zieria granulata* as a result of vegetation control activities on the site. Council officers inspected the site but failed to detect any damaged specimens. An inspection two days later by National Parks and Wildlife Service staff revealed up to twelve plants damaged or destroyed.

To make matters worse Council advised residents that a valid consent had been issued to allow the work. It appears, however, that the consent did not apply to the lot on which work was undertaken.

"Only the intervention of the National Parks and Wildlife Service prevented any further loss of *Zieria granulata*", Mr Martin said.

NCC executive officer, Kathryn Ridge, urged the public to oppose a development application for the site, now before Shellharbour Council.

"This development is going to chip away at the environmental integrity of the area until there is nothing left, and it will be a development based on incompetence and not the greater interest of the environment or the community," Ms Ridge said.

## Latest News

# GOVERNMENT CALLED ON TO STOP SURGE OF LAND CLEARING ON NSW COAST



*Created on Monday, 03 September 2001 10:00*

Total Environment Centre natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly said that in some council areas, reports of such clearing were so common that it seemed as if landowners wishing to subdivide and develop their land had been advised to clear their land to destroy its conservation values and any possible threatened species potentially easing approval.

"We urgently need strong intervention by the State Government, where this is happening, to put a halt to the tide of clearing occurring in some areas" said Ms Kelly

"In some cases the land clearing is extensive and repeatedly illegal in other cases where zoning does allow minimal clearing it is entirely inappropriate for small high conservation value parcels of coastal land to be cleared and zoning provisions and laws need to be changed to prevent this" said Ms Kelly.

"Such action seems to coincide with efforts by landowners to get their land rezoned for subdivision or approved for developments. What a smart way to ensure there will be no species left to asses - bulldoze every plant and animal off your land then describe that land as being of no conservation value and improving your chances of approval.

Ms Kelly said the worst affected council areas that she knew of so far appeared to be Great Lakes and Greater Taree Councils but other council areas in which similar problems had been reported included Wollongong and Nambucca. She believed the problem would be found along the entire coast to greater or lesser degrees.

# Latest News

## BUSHLAND CLEARING MINISTER GETS NO CONFIDENCE VOTE



*Created on Monday, 24 September 2001 10:00*

Six peak environment groups today announced they had passed a no confidence motion in the NSW Minister for Land and Water Conservation, Richard Amery.

The vote is the result of the Minister's failure to resolve long running concerns about administration of the Native Vegetation Conservation Act. With land clearing a major public concern, a massive loss of confidence in the Government's credibility on environmental matters is rapidly developing, the groups said.

The Minister is a bushland clearing Minister. We have had one incompetent action after another, from him and his Department. The extent of land clearing is grossly understated; information is kept from the community vegetation committees; the register of land clearing consents required by the law is incomplete keeping information secret from the public; conservation targets delayed time and time again; and the Minister tells rural people he does not favour prosecution for illegal clearing, said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

The sense of disenchantment with the Minister is pervasive. We have tried to make the relationship with the Minister work, but we can't ignore what our representatives on the vegetation committees tell us about the incompetent servicing by his Department. Some of our most senior people have resigned from the committees that are supposed to produce plans that protect native bushland from clearing, said Kathy Ridge, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

Spokesperson, Susie Russell for the North Coast Environment Council said, Our groups are in revolt over the handling of land clearing and private forestry matters. The Minister and his Department are intent on clearing native forest for plantations and applying much weaker environmental controls on private land logging than those that apply to public state forest. And they are promoting a scheme that allows clearing of intact native bush to be offset by artificial plantings. It's an environmental scandal.

The groups represent more than 150 local and regional environment organisations and several hundred thousand people in the country and city.

# Latest News

## Metropolitan water supply under threat



*Created on Tuesday, 30 October 2001 11:00*

A key feeder stream into Lake Avon, the sole supply of Wollongong's water has been seriously damaged by coal mining, environmentalists revealed today.

"We have inspected Native Dog Creek in the Metropolitan Catchment, on two occasions in the last month and it has stopped flowing. There are serious cracks in its rock bed as well as draining of a major rock pool, that must be full to allow transmission of water to the Dam. The damage is directly related to longwall coal mining at the BHP-Billiton Elouera Mine. For the sake of Wollongong's water supply, the damage must be stopped," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"On our last visit it had rained three times in the previous two weeks but still no water flowed. The damage is shocking and a pristine stream that should be capable of supplying water forever is in bad shape. Other streams are also being damaged by the mining, with no effective remediation possible," said Keith Muir, Director of the Colong Foundation.

"The situation has reached a crisis in the protection of the water catchments.

The government's mining advocate has the sole say over longwall mining, while the supposed catchment protector, the Sydney Catchment Authority is powerless. The top priority should be the drinking water supply of millions of people in Wollongong and Sydney," said Mr Angel.

"The catchment situation will worsen greatly if the go-ahead is given to the proposed BHP-Billiton Dendrobium Mine. It has the largest longwalls ever seen in the region and even the company's consultants admit there will be stream damage. It is greedy mining with no regard for catchment protection," said Mr Muir.

The two groups said they will be intensifying their campaign to protect the catchments and stop the Dendrobium Mine.

# Latest News

## Failure of government report into Dendrobium mine



*Created on Thursday, 01 November 2001 11:00*

"The integrity of the catchments that supply 20% of Sydney's water; the Shoalhaven area and all of the Illawarra's, is still under severe risk. For example, the COI recommends protection for some downstream reaches of the supply area but unless the upstream areas are also secured, water flow cannot be guaranteed. You can't place a Berlin Wall on part of the system, it is an integrated ecosystem," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The Inquiry has vindicated our views that the so-called rehabilitation methods for stream damage (cracking of rivers, draining of pools and swamps) caused by longwall mining, are not proven nor effective. It also supports our submission that the regulatory system used by the Department of Mineral Resources to manage environmental damage is seriously faulty.

Given the exacerbated risks that Dendrobium creates, a much tougher approach to catchment protection including extensive mining prohibition zones is necessary, " said Keith Muir, Director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

The two groups will be seeking to have discussions with the NSW Government on the COI report and the future of the mine proposal. They regard the decision on the mine as an important measure of the Carr Government's capacity to protect drinking water supplies.

# Latest News

## Coal mining and catchments battle goes cyber



*Created on Thursday, 01 November 2001 11:00*

The new website is intended to show people the growing environmental and water supply disaster caused by coal mining and signals a renewed effort to save the catchments, after a Commission of Inquiry failed to provide protection.

"When you show people the damage being caused by intensive longwall mining -they are outraged at the cracking of rivers, draining of wetlands and pools. The catchments are intended to supply water to millions of present and future generations of people living in Sydney and the Illawarra. We have to get the protection regime right otherwise future mining will expand and cause grave damage to sustainable water supplies," said Keith Muir, Director of the Colong Foundation.

"The proposed BHP-Billiton Dendrobium Mine is a key test case for better catchment protection. Already its sister Elouera Mine has severely cracked two streams, so that no water can flow. We have to learn from the mistakes of the past," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Unfortunately, the recent Commission of Inquiry report into Dendrobium failed to safeguard the catchments - even though it agreed with our submissions about their high value; the inevitable damage from mining; failure of so-called remediation; and the inadequate Department of Mineral Resources regulation. An extensive system that protects all streams and wetlands is the only way," he said.

The website contains photographic evidence of damage to rivers; analysis of mining impacts; failure of protection measures; and lobbying advice.

It is found at: [www.colongwilderness.org.au](http://www.colongwilderness.org.au) -  
Saving Sydney's water catchments



## Latest News

# URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO STOP FURTHER SPREAD OF NOXIOUS SEAWEED FROM LAKE CONJOLA



*Created on Wednesday, 07 November 2001 11:00*

The warning comes following no sign of serious or effective action being taken 18 months after the first reports of outbreaks.

"Despite the known serious nature of this noxious seaweed, and the speed and ease with which it spreads, choking other aquatic life in its path, Shoalhaven Council, Government departments and other bodies that should be acting - are still chewing the cud" said TEC natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Do those who have the authority to act really believe it will just go away - or do they not care if the lakes and estuaries under their control just collapse? "This weed has spread to Burrill Lake and Narawallee Inlet already. In less than a year the area infected appears to have doubled in size from 10 to 20ha. Urgent action is needed now"

"At Conjola - the mayor is still promoting dredging of the lake, there is still use of high speed personal water craft, there are still boats coming in from outside the area to fish and use the lake for other purposes, and there are still development proposals that will add nutrients and feed and expand the weed further.

"Most recently a crazy, unsustainable sewerage strategy - putting sewage water into sand dunes behind the lake and placing an STP close to a nearby nature reserve and in the sensitive back dune area been put forward for approval - is there no end to the short sightedness?"

Ms Kelly said: "the lake should be immediately quarantined while action is taken to reduce the weed. Following that any boats from outside Conjola should be banned, no dredging should occur, high speed water craft should be banned and a management strategy put in place on how to deal with the lake in future to contain the weed.

In addition she said, all planning should be reviewed to prevent new zoning and development around the lake and in its catchment. And the sewerage strategy should be scrapped in favour of a broader plan that looks thoroughly at how to deal with existing sewage problems rather than adding to them

## Latest News

# NSW GOVERNMENT URGED TO CALL IN GIANT ARTIFICIAL POLLUTION LAKE AT BALLINA



*Created on Sunday, 11 November 2001 11:00*

"We have asked Planning Minister Andrew Refshauge to call in this development as it is totally inappropriate for the location" said TEC campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Not only is a 3 ha artificial pollution lake wrong for this North Creek location, it is just the beginning of an extensive development of nearly 800 housing lots, a commercial and recreation area and tavern. The whole proposal should have been lodged together to give residents a clear indication of what is really going to happen to their area" said Ms Kelly

"In our view this proposal amounts to a virtual destruction of natural supposedly protected wetland systems by replacing them with what looks like a canal estate."

"Ballina Nature Reserve, the adjoining creeks, and wetlands could be unrecognizable in a few years time if this goes ahead. Instead of the extent of flora and fauna currently relying on the area there are likely to be mosquitoes, weeds and ferals," said Ms Kelly.

"With current pressure on a sewerage system that is almost bursting, Ballina Council's short sighted proposal to just keep on pumping wastewater into the ocean, and other recent controversial development proposals we would have thought Council might have by now started looking at long term sustainable planning for its Shire"

"Instead residents and the natural environment are being landed with these ad hoc over the top grand schemes a la Gold Coast . This artificial giant lake and surrounds is one example," said Ms Kelly

# Latest News

## Speculators and Developers eating away at Taree Coast



*Created on Wednesday, 21 November 2001 11:00*

TEC campaigner Fran Kelly said Council's latest approval for rezoning on the headland at North Redhead was a major example of council's lack of vision and environmental care. We'll be calling on the Minister for Planning to restore the zoning. "

"The last thing this part of Greater Taree needs is yet another rezoned coastal headland or foreshore allowing more carbon copy developments" Ms Kelly said.

"The rezoning for development at North Redhead will join Blackhead, South Redhead and Diamond Beach together if it goes ahead, and eventually even Tallwoods to the west will join the lot of them, as more and more landowners are allowed to become land speculators" said Ms Kelly.

"This is totally contrary to Council's previous strategy to keep all villages and towns separate. And providing token strips of "wildlife" corridor which aren't wide enough to swing a cat in is not a legitimate way of providing that separation," said Ms Kelly. "What has happened to all the previous plans for putting aside lands of environmental significance and meaningful wildlife corridors?"

"We question whether the council senior planners, managers and councillors that keep stating they are doing everything in the best interest of Greater Taree should have the confidence of the community that has a more balanced and environmentally responsible vision for the region" said Ms Kelly.

"When you add urban development pressure and major rezoning plans further north in Old Bar, Wallabi Point and Harrington Waters to the Hallidays Point developments and rezonings, there isn't a lot left to play with"

"This seems like a matter of council bowing to the greed and demands of out of town and local property developers and others who don't give a dam about the future sustainability of the area"

# Latest News

## HASTINGS COUNCIL - REQUEST FOR STATE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AND INVESTIGATION



*Created on Wednesday, 12 December 2001 11:00*

Council's handling of a number of issues in the Shire and an external investigation into the way it handles matters such as developer contributions.

TEC campaigner Fran Kelly said the request followed strong complaints from the community over several issues in the Shire. These included the proposed development of the Town Green Post Office site, the continued "stacking" of the Hastings Urban Growth Strategy's Advisory Committee with developer interests and the decision to appoint its own councillors to investigate outstanding developer contributions.

"It is time the State Government said enough is enough. This council is a joke," said Ms Kelly. "It appears to act with utter contempt for the community, makes up the rules as it goes along with regard to developments such as the Post Office site, and fails to deal appropriately with matters that should be simple such as developer contributions"

"The community, understandably is angry. They are angry that the Council treats them as if they don't exist, unless they are developers. They are angry that their elected representatives ignore their concerns, and put greed and self-interest before good planning and management." Said Ms Kelly.

"We have asked the Planning Minister to intervene and look into a number of matters including the breaking of Development Control Plans, the lack of balance on the HUGS committee, and to lobby the Local Government Minister to investigate matters such as outstanding developer contributions"

"At the very least the Council should be directed to do the right thing. Failing this, an administrator should be sent in, the council sacked and new elections held now the community has an insight into how unrepresentative most councillors are. They should be warned against continuing in such a manner," said Ms Kelly.

## Latest News

# STRONG SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NSW COAST



*Created on Friday, 21 December 2001 11:00*

A peak environment group has lent strong support to a report that proposes guidelines for coastal design to prevent the worst excesses of coastal development.

Total Environment Centre campaigner Fran Kelly said a never ending torrent of development proposals, approvals, rezonings and other actions made on the local council level had resulted in "vast areas of the coast being turned into concrete sprawl or ugly block developments".

"The type and rate of development has largely been done without any thought for village or town character or the natural environment. This report by the NSW Coastal Council is a welcome step to remedying this vast and well recognised problem," said Ms Kelly.

"Residents along the coast will welcome this move to protect their amenity and fragile and sensitive areas of coastal forest, wetlands, heath, headlands and foreshores among other areas," said Ms Kelly.

"In more built up areas like Newcastle residents have found huge high rises along the ocean front that block out all behind them are one of the biggest problems. In less built up areas or undeveloped areas the ongoing destruction of small village character and natural landscapes has been the biggest problem"

Ms Kelly said the latter problem was prevelant in most council areas along the coast, but those that particularly stood out included Tweed, Ballina, Nambucca, Hastings, Greater Taree, Great Lakes Council, Wollongong and Shoalhaven.

"We congratulate the Coastal Council and urge the Government to adopt these guidelines in full. It would be a positive move by the Planning Minister and the Premier to protect the coast, as promised with the announcement of their coastal package last year," said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## GREEN UMBRELLA FOR COAST ESSENTIAL



*Created on Thursday, 24 January 2002 11:00*

"Clearly the voluntary system encompassed by the current Coastal Policy is not working. While we welcome the Minister calling-in the most suspect development plans, a full scale green umbrella needs to be placed over the coast. Otherwise the endemic problems causing the extensive threats will not be removed," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The Coastal Council points to several key problems including bushland clearance without consent; inappropriate development proposals and ill-conceived planning schemes. And the lack of cooperation by a number of councils and state agencies with the Coastal Council, is a another glaring alarm bell that must be heeded."

"Total Environment Centre has been in contact with over 100 local environment and community groups in the last year about threats to the coast. The flood of concern cannot be ignored," Mr Angel said.

"We have identified dozens of unacceptable developments in the last several months. We'd like to find some good developments with high standard environmental outcomes, but it is very hard. Most of the time environmental matters are simply treated as greenwash in publicity brochures, with very little to back them up."

# Natural Areas

## Lower Hunter



*Created on Thursday, 15 December 2005 05:04*

### **Environment groups response to the final Lower Hunter Strategy(17/10/06):**

- The Lower Hunter regional Strategy has benefits for the natural environment, but also risks to sustainability that should be eliminated.
- The decision to convert over 20,000ha of State owned land into National Parks or conservation area, along with potentially thousands of hectares of private land is an achievement that may never have eventuated without a strong community campaign over many years and the opportunity provided by the Strategy.
- There will be substantial new Parks in in Port Stephens, The Green Corridor, and in the Cessnock LGA.
- Government has done deals with the 'large landholder group' who have caused much community angst over the years with massive and damaging proposals. While this group is not getting their big ambit claims, some of the development areas in the Strategy (particularly at Catherine Hill Bay, Ellalong and Sweetwater) could cause anger in local communities and may be a recipe for ongoing conflict.
- Additionally the government has to explain how the large increase in isolated greenfield sites will fit with community needs for better public transport. There will be a lot of problems in the future if young families and retired people cannot get access to community services.
- While the Strategy has provided the catalyst for some great parks – we estimate it will result in the destruction of up to 5000ha of bushland.
- There will also be an ongoing concern about how secure are the agreements to deliver private land to conservation and protection of natural values in the interim.

### **Past submissions**

Lower Hunter environment groups have issued a position on the future of the region, reviewing population projections; calling for integrated land use and transport; and new conservation reserves.

Over 20 local groups have produced the Hunter Coalition Submission on the draft plan (Jan 2006)

October 2005 submission

What's wrong with the draft plan (summary Jan 2006)

TEC commissioned a report on The State of the Hunter River

# Natural Areas

## Central Coast



*Created on Thursday, 15 December 2005 05:07*

TEC's submission to the draft Central Coast Regional Strategy.

The sale of exhausted mining leases is fuelling urban sprawl. TEC commissioned a report on environmental conservation to advocate an alternative future:

Central Coast mining and natural areas Map

In order to increase development potential in a water constrained future, Wyong Council is pressing for mobile desalination plants. We have proposed an alternative approach - Alternative to Central Coast Desal.

The **Draft Wyong Conservation Strategy** (2003) was developed as a major contribution to future urban and subdivision planning in the Wyong Shire on the NSW Central Coast. It is an objective and professional document. However, the current Councillors have decided to ignore the Strategy and withdraw it from use. Total Environment Centre has placed the document in the public domain here, in the interests of community right to know and good planning.

On 1 December 2004 the Council requested TEC not display the draft Wyong Conservation Strategy on our website. TEC will not be complying and key parts are:

1. Introduction
2. Policy Context
3. Study Area
- (4/5 - not reproduced).
6. Threatened Species
7. Wildlife Corridors
8. Conservation Assessment
9. Conservation Assessment Results
10. Elements of a Conservation Strategy



# Natural Areas

## South Coast/Illawarra



*Created on Thursday, 15 December 2005 05:10*

Submission to draft South Coast Regional Strategy (June 2006)

Part of the draft Strategy targeted sensitive lands proposed for urban development for further review. TEC's submission to the Review Panel called for environmental protection of 15 of the 17 sites. Panel Report.

See media releases for responses to the Inquiry.

# Latest News

## WEST YAMBA DEVELOPMENT PLANS



*Created on Friday, 08 February 2002 11:00*

Total Environment Centre campaigner Fran Kelly said the plan "showed a profound ignorance of the environmental impacts of dredging, filling and destroying such a hazardous location".

"In the year 2002 most people would be aware that the last places capable of sustainable development are flood affected, low lying wetland areas which, in the process of requiring a complete transformation to allow any sort of building, would result in the destruction of water quality, fish and other habitat systems and increase possibility of flooding elsewhere" said Ms Kelly.

"Such an area should not have its planning driven by developer demands dressed up as jobs and progress" said Ms Kelly.

"The land's capability and suitability should drive what goes on as a flood storage area bordered by SEPP 14 wetlands and close to national park and estuaries its residential development capacity is zero. The place should be retained in as natural a state as possible for the long term good of the environment, fishing industry and community, including visitors to the area"

"Even more astounding is the proposal to dredge the ever suffering Clarence River for fill. The river is taking a beating left right and centre from over use, over dumping of pollutants and nutrients through direct and indirect sources - yet here we have a proposal to mess with it even further. The river needs to be protected not degraded. The use of polluted fill would also have negative consequences"

# Latest News

## MAITLAND GREENING PLAN A BLUEPRINT FOR BUSHLAND CLEARING



*Created on Tuesday, 26 February 2002 11:00*

At tonight's meeting Council will consider a report from its Environment Committee that recommends allowing the loss of 341 ha of the scarce Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest (LHSGIF) as part the 'Greening Plan'.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "It beggars belief that anything purporting to be a 'greening plan' could allow so much destruction of forest that has been nominated for listing as an endangered ecological community".

Only 1204 ha of the original LHSGIF community, which has been nominated as an endangered ecological community, remains. Loss of a further 341 ha would reduce the community to only 6.75% of its original distribution.

Council has received advice from the Hunter Catchment Management Trust that the community meets the criteria for listing as endangered ecological community under both the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, and that further loss of this community should be minimised.

Despite this council officers have sought to justify allowing the loss of 341 ha on the basis that consideration of the nomination has not yet been finalised.

"It appears that Council officers are trying push through approval for destruction of large tracts of this scarce forest community before the listing can be finalised. This flies in the face of the precautionary principle and makes a mockery of the nomination process", Mr Martin said.

TEC has written to all Maitland City Councillors urging them to reject clearing of the LHSGIF community and protect the entire remnant forest.

"The treatment of the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest is a litmus test for Council's greening plan. Council must ensure that this remnant forest community is given the strongest possible protection" Mr Martin said.

# Latest News

## Hunting Bill Should be Ditched



*Created on Wednesday, 06 March 2002 11:00*

A peak environment group has warned that a bill endorsed by Bob Carr and coming before parliament next week will allow vast areas of public and private land to be declared exclusively available for recreational hunting and virtually give hunters, shooters, pig doggers and other blood sport lovers unlimited powers to carry out their sport".

Total Environment Centre natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly said the Game Bill of NSW 2002 was "the equivalent to handing over public land management to the tens of thousands of gun owners and recreational hunters out there and creating a Department of Hunting and Shooting with Agriculture Minister Richard Amery at its head".

"The Bill undermines pest management programs, encourages animal cruelty, amends and weakens other Acts and agencies, and puts the powers, control and regulation of hunting opportunities into the hands of hunters" said Ms Kelly.

"Minister Amery - the new Minister for Hunting has handed over huge public funding, resources, powers and opportunities to hunters and shooters at the behest of hunting groups, and Shooters Party MLC John Tingle" said Ms Kelly "No wonder the National Party are declaring to its constituents that the Labor Party has stolen its policy,"

"There is no reason or need for this Act other than to provide any private or public land and moving targets for the tens of thousands of blood sport enthusiasts to do what they want. The only land so far excluded are national parks and shooting groups and the National Party are already lobbying for those to be opened up"

"This Act is a pathetic cowardly piece of legislation, that was obviously initiated, and drawn up by shooters and hunters aided by a Minister who either has lost the plot or had a gun held at his head" said Ms Kelly

"No matter how much Amery wimps on about it doing no harm, the facts are there in the Act. Millions of ordinary NSW citizens would be shocked to also learn that their Premier has endorsed such an Act. They have every right to get angry and to demand to know what is going on," said Ms Kelly,

# Latest News

## 27 international, national and NSW groups oppose game bill



*Created on Monday, 11 March 2002 11:00*

Major international, national, and NSW environment, animal welfare and gun control groups have come together to demand the withdrawal of a State Government Bill that hands vast powers, land and opportunities over to recreational hunters in NSW.

The groups are furious that the Carr Government is pushing the Game Bill for the exclusive benefit of shooters and hunters and to the detriment of the public, wildlife, animal welfare and environment.

Total Environment Centre director Jeff Angel said the Bill "was nothing short of a free ticket to shooters, hunters, and pig doggers to carry out their blood sport almost anywhere in NSW with the only regulation involved being carried out by the hunters themselves. It's like giving Dracula the keys to the blood bank. There is so much political fuel in this issue there are significant political dangers for the Government."

"The Bill allows almost any bit of public land to be secretly declared available for hunting, at the exclusion of the public and to the detriment of wildlife and the environment. It undermines pest control programs, and undermines and amends a multitude of other Acts and land agencies in the control, monitoring, licencing and regulation of hunters," said Mr Angel.

World League for Protection of Animals spokesperson Halina Thompson said the Bill "facilitates and encourages animal cruelty with its endorsement of any method, instrument or animal being used in the stalking, hunting, capture, and killing of so called "game" animals. And it also endangers other animals that aren't listed as game"

There is no chance to independently monitor or regulate against animal cruelty, it undermines the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and its very nature encourages cruelty. No animal, whether it is listed or not, is native or introduced, will be safe from harm under this bill" said Ms Thompson.

Gun Control Australia chairman Randall Marshall said "this Bill takes away the responsibility of the parliament for shooter misbehaviour and greatly reduces the accountability of parliamentarians to the public. As such it is a deplorably irresponsible piece of potential legislation and, with its creation of a shooter dominated Game Council, seeks to give gratuitous hunters a degree of legitimacy" .

"Our experience over several decades is that shooting organisations pretend to be concerned with public safety as a diversion from their real aim which is to ensure as great an access to guns as possible. We point out that this Bill is likely to lead to an increase in the NSW gun inventory." Mr Marshall said.

# Latest News

## Game Bill, Botched



*Created on Tuesday, 12 March 2002 11:00*

Total Environment Centre campaigner Fran Kelly said the Bill contained lists of native and introduced birds that could be hunted and killed, yet some were not even found in the wild in NSW, others were protected from hunters 20 years ago because they were becoming endangered, and others were banned in most circumstances when recreational duck shooting was pulled back because so many non listed birds were shot.

"No matter who wrote this Bill, whether it was someone in a shooting or hunting organisation or some faceless Minister's advisor working with such groups, they should have made sure they got some major basic facts right first" said Ms Kelly "

"How is anyone who is out to kill birds going to find species that don't exist unless they introduce them and so break the National Parks and Wildlife Act? How are endangered birds going to be protected from hunters if they are listed as ok to shoot. And how anyway, are shooters going to tell the difference between some species and others when many look so similar?" said Ms Kelly

"It doesn't matter how many rules and regulations the hunters lay down for hunters to comply with - the bill is about providing opportunities - any opportunities - for shooters to go out and kill our birds - native and introduced. All birds have come under fire in the past when recreational shooting has been permitted, and all birds will come under fire again" said Ms Kelly

"What is worse this time is that any monitoring or regulation of protected bird hunting is entirely in the hands of the perpetrators themselves - the hunters. This Bill is a farce, a joke, from beginning to end," said Ms Kelly.

Ms Kelly said the introduced birds not found in the wild in NSW were the California quail, pheasant, partridge and peafowl, the birds that were becoming endangered in the past were the native quail both listed and non listed. And the four species of ducks were some of many birds that were shot during duck hunting season.

This type of blood sport was banned because it caused such a furore in the past, swans, pelicans, anything, was shot -and it will be again under this pathetic excuse of a piece of legislation.

# Latest News

## National parks next target for hunters



*Created on Monday, 25 March 2002 11:00*

Recreational shooters, pig doggers and other hunters across NSW have National Parks within their grasp following the Coalition's keen support to spread hunting opportunities to these lands under the controversial Game Bill.

"National Parks, including the very popular Blue Mountains, Kosciusko and Royal would become stomping ground for blood sports enthusiasts if this Bill takes hold", said Fran Kelly of the Total Environment Centre

"It is sickening to see Coalition MPs joining Government MPs in Parliament, as they fall over themselves to offer more and more to this small but violent section of society as they debate the Bill. Commonsense has gone out the window" said Ms Kelly.

"The Government and Opposition are selling this whole Bill as feral animal control, but it will worsen pest problems not alleviate them as recreational hunters gain more and more access to public lands, including national parks. They have a vested interest in retaining and spreading pests for their blood sport enjoyment, not controlling or eliminating them and wildlife will undoubtedly be caught in the crossfire." Said Ms Kelly

The Carr Government have so far excluded national parks under the Bill but with the Coalition champing at the bit to include them, it won't take long before they too go to hunters. The only way to prevent this from happening is for Carr to stop the Bill now before it goes any further, " said Ms Kelly.

"As the Carr Government is responsible for introducing the Bill they should also take equal responsibility if national parks end up becoming hunting grounds rather than areas for wider public enjoyment and conservation," said Ms Kelly.

## Latest News

# ENVIRONMENT, ANIMAL WELFARE AND GUN CONTROL ALLIANCE SAYS MP's VIEWS ON BLOOD SPORT BILL WILL COUNT



*Created on Tuesday, 09 April 2002 10:00*

The alliance have sent a letter to every MP asking them whether they support or oppose the Bill, which returns to Parliament this week. They intend to publicise the results in each electorate in order to inform the public of their representative's views.

"We believe that once the broader public is aware of the cruel, unnecessary and pathetic intent of this legislation they would be horrified if they discovered their local representative backs it" said Total Environment Centre director Jeff Angel on behalf of the anti- Game Bill alliance.

"There is no rhyme nor reason for this blood sport Bill, other than to fulfil a deal made between the Carr Government and John Tingle of the Shooters Party," said Mr Angel. "It is a Bill written by recreational hunters for recreational hunters, and promotes shooting, pig dogging and other hunting of native and introduced species on public and private land across NSW."

"The Government and Coalition are claiming the Bill is about regulation and pest control yet it will serve to undermine and weaken both. As declared game, pest species are more likely to be retained, introduced or dispersed by recreational hunters, as happens already, than controlled or eliminated. And regulation is a joke when every aspect of hunting under this Bill is run by the hunters themselves," said Mr Angel

"It also allows almost any public land to be declared exclusively available for hunting without prior public knowledge, undermines other legislation and government agencies, encourages animal cruelty, gun ownership and violence, and creates a powerful sub-government department run by hunters for hunters."

"In view of the impact this Bill will have on our wildlife, the further promotion of guns and violence, and its alienating of public land from the broader community into the hands of shooters and hunters - I am sure most MPs will want to express their opposition in the strongest terms" said Mr Angel.



# Latest News

## CENTRAL COAST ENVIRONMENT GROUPS TALK STATE ELECTION STRATEGY



*Created on Sunday, 12 May 2002 10:00*

The environment is set to take a front seat in marginal seats along the Central Coast, after a meeting between local groups and peak environmental advocate, Total Environment Centre.

At the invitation of local environmental campaigners, Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre meet with Central Coast environment groups this week, to discuss the future of the region and the State Election. They discussed election strategies and the likely flow of preferences in marginal seats.

Jeff Angel said; "There is clear developer influence in coastal development and communities are being forgotten in a surge of concrete. The next four years will be crucial to the future environment, water, sustainable development and urban amenity of the Central Coast. I recall that Total Environment Centre supported the initial election of ALP MP Grant McBride, many years ago. The advice from local groups now about the actions of Mr McBride appears to show that this was a mistake."

Sylvia Turner, President of the Wyong Shire Ratepayers and Residents Association also attended the meeting. She said; "Chris Hartcher is now very senior in the Opposition and as a former Minister for the Environment, the Central Coast should be able to expect a better deal in Opposition policies!"

# Latest News

## TWEED COUNCILLORS SHOULD STEP DOWN



*Created on Thursday, 20 June 2002 10:00*

The Total Environment Centre has long urged the State Government to take over Tweed Council planning powers because of the myriad of highly questionable decisions and the clear link to developer interests that have come to light since the council took power at the last elections.

"Beck and Brinsmead and their five counterparts that form a majority on council have spat in the face of the community, ignored good planning, environmental and residential concerns, and gone full speed ahead to give any developers anything they wanted with a land that they treat as theirs to do as they please," said coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"It is about time they were forced to step aside and now is the perfect time to get rid of them - at least while questions remain regarding their alleged highly inappropriate behaviour," said Ms Kelly.

"The frustration and concerns that have been felt and expressed by the broader community over the actions of these councillors since they took over with their other developer-backed counterparts are now finally being recognised. A strong message needs to be sent that to push for developer interests at the expense of all else is unacceptable. Beck and Brinsmead should go," said Ms Kelly

## Latest News

### Recreational Hunters' Dispersal Of Feral Pigs Should Make Scrapping The Blood-Sport "Game" Bill A Pr



*Created on Thursday, 20 June 2002 10:00*

The recently reported widespread dispersal of breeding feral pigs across NSW by hunters and shooters should make scrapping the Game Bill a priority a peak state environment group said today.

The Total Environment Centre said recent government agency reports of recreational hunters breeding and dispersing feral pigs across the Sydney Basin and other previously pig free areas should put an end to the only excuse given for the Game Bill - that giving more opportunities to recreational hunters will help reduce pest numbers.

"Rather than solving pest problems, the pro-shooter Game Bill makes it easier for such irresponsible activity as the dispersal of breeding feral pigs to occur. Its reliance on hunter self-regulation, the increase in lands that can be used by recreational hunters and its undermining of agencies and Acts that try to prevent such irresponsible hunter action are just some of the areas where the Bill falls down," said TEC campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The Game Bill is simply a sop to the recreational hunter and shooter fraternity - it legitimises and eases pig dogging and other hunting activities . The irresponsible actions by so many hunters should lead to an increase in legislation and action that stops such activity, including making pig dogging and other forms of pig hunting by anyone other than contracted professionals and agencies illegal," said Ms Kelly.

"Warnings of the continued dispersal and breeding of the favoured targets of recreational hunters - mainly pigs and deer - and the diseases such as foot and mouth that they can spread if they ever get hold should serve as a red light to the Government to switch the path it is following. Instead of doing whatever it can to please recreational hunters it should be giving out a clear signal that their activity is unwelcome in NSW. A start would be the scrapping of the Game Bill," said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## Critical Habitat, Cyanide and Little Penguin



*Created on Friday, 21 June 2002 10:00*

"The penguin colony is very special and designation of critical habitat will ensure its interests are properly brought to bear in action to clean up the cyanide and ongoing leachate management, as well as other threats.

It is quite likely that the colony suffered from cyanide poisoning before the rehabilitation currently in place, so its future recovery must have all the planning and environmental tools, available," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"Critical habitat listing is an essential tool - and option 2 in the NPWS proposal is the way to go."

"I am sure the Minister for Environment would not want to be seen as ignoring the Little Penguin's plight by refusing critical habitat listing and preventing the use of the full suite of tools to combat environmental threats. It is urgent he give a strong signal that the Government cares about the Little Penguin and is genuine about its recovery from endangered population to secure population," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## Rescue for Coastal Lakes



*Created on Friday, 28 June 2002 10:00*

Calling for the immediate Government adoption of the recommendations in the Healthy Rivers Commission's Final Report into Coastal Lakes, the Total Environment Centre said there are problems besetting the State's coastal lakes and we need to lift their position on the political agenda.

"All that is needed is for the Government to immediately adopt all recommendations made by the Commission and include them in its overall coastal protection package," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Among the most far-sighted recommendations is the call for lake by lake assessments and management plans to match, the establishment of an Independent Coastal Lakes Expert Group, far stronger statutory controls and regulations over current and future planning and development decisions affecting lakes, and, best of all, the formalising of these and other recommendations through a State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) to give them the backbone they need," said Ms Kelly.

"It is no longer a matter of questions over whether development affects coastal lake health or not - the comparison of pristine Nadgee in the far south which has no development in its catchment with over-developed and used Lake Ainsworth in Ballina Shire where oxygen is being pumped in to keep it alive - says it all. There needs to be a massive shift in the way lakes are treated and this Inquiry has shown a way it can be done." Said Ms Kelly

"The Commission has taken a very sensible approach to dealing with each lake, classifying them according to their current state of health and recommending realistic actions and outcomes suited to restoring and preserving each one," said Ms Kelly

"It is sad but true that all but one of NSW's 90 coastal lakes are suffering to varying degrees from impacts of human activity and development. From blue-green algae problems on Myall Lakes to oyster contamination from polluted run off on Wallis Lake to the over urbanisation of lakes around Sydney, each one can only be restored and preserved as far as is practical," said Ms Kelly

"Only 16 lakes are in relatively pristine condition. They have been given Comprehensive Protection classification requiring strong limits and controls on any further development or activity in their catchments and their restoration to as pristine a state as possible. Another 27 have been given Significant Protection classification where recommendations for restoration and protection are almost as strong,"

"The lack of recognition of the fragility and finite nature of coastal lakes, the disgusting state that some of them have been allowed to fall into, the continued blatant disregard for protecting them by many councils along the coast as more and more development with its side affects is approved has meant the Coastal Lakes Inquiry recommendations are needed now," said Ms Kelly.

Following is a list of NSW coastal lakes and the classifications they have been given. There are likely to be one or more in each local area so reference can be made to them. The Report is available from the Healthy Rivers Commssion (tel 9231 2977) or can be seen on their website: [www.hrc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hrc.nsw.gov.au) if further details are needed.

Classification 1: Comprehensive Protection (highest category for healthy or near pristine lakes)

Coastal Lakes: Arragan, Bondi, Bournda, Brou, Brunderee, Durras, Hiawatha, Meroo, Minnie Water, Nadgee, Nargal, Nelson, Saltwater Lake, Tarouga, Termeil, Wollumboola.

Outcomes: - ALL natural ecosystem processes restored and preserved, drinking quality water (where relevant) and existing villages maintained within boundaries in the catchments.

Classification 2: Significant Protection

Coastal Lakes: Back, Baragoot, Bingie (Kelly's), Bunga, Cakora, Candlagan, Conjola (inc. Berringer), Corunna, Cuttagee, Dulhousie, Deep, Goolawah, Innes, Meringo, Middle (Tanja), Mummuga (Dalmeny), Myall, Oyster, Queens, Smiths, Swan, Tabourie, Wallagoot, Wapengo, Willinga

Outcomes: CRITICAL natural ecosystem processes restored and preserved, minimal risk for oyster growing (where relevant), existing villages maintained within current boundaries and sustainable fishing

(Back may be changed following further assessment)

Classification 3: Healthy Modified Conditions

Coastal Lakes: Avoca, Bullengella, Burrill, Brush (Swan), Cathie, Cobaki-Terranora, Cockrone, Coila (Kyaily), Congo, Cudgen, Curalo, Hearn, Kianga, Killalea, Koloa, Little (Wallaga), Long Swamp, Merimbula, Mullimbulla, Murrah, Nangudga, Narrabeen, Marrawallee, Pambula, Saltwater Lagoon, St Georges Basin, The Broadwater, Tilba Tilba, Tuross, Wagonga, Wallaga, Wallis, Wamberal, Watsons Taylor, Werri, Woolgoolga

Outcomes: KEY natural and/or highly valued modified ecosystem processes to be rehabilitated and retained and urban/village/rural residential areas maintained and/or expanded within defined limits

(Burrill, St Georges Basin, Tuross, Wagonga, Wallaga could well change classification following further assessment)

Classification 4: Targeted Repair (lakes in worst health)

Coastal Lakes: Ainsworth, Bellambi, Corindi, Curl Curl, Dee Why, Illawarra, Little (Narooma), Macquarie, Manly, Terrigal, Tuggerah (inc. Munmorah and Budgewoi).

Outcomes: Habitat conditions for key selected species established, reduce algal bloom frequency, existing urban areas retained or expanded within defined limits, and aesthetic value and amenity value maintained.

# Latest News

## Spencerville Controversy Highlights Need For Councils To Abandon Developer-Driven Planning



*Created on Tuesday, 02 July 2002 10:00*

"High bushfire risk areas and areas containing threatened species such as this site should never have been zoned to allow development. Had a proper, visionary and sustainable planning process, based on comprehensive environmental studies been in place, the site would have been zoned Environment Protection," said natural areas campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Basing Local Environment Plans on guessed population figures and demands from developers is wrong every time," said Ms Kelly.

"The end result is the environment suffers, wildlife suffers, human life and property is put at risk by bushfire, existing residents lose out with loss of amenity such as turning a village into suburban sprawl and no one ends up being satisfied."

"Our preference in this case would be for Kempsey Council to rezone the land for protection. Failing this the size of the development should be reduced to the point that impact is negligible which might mean as few as 10 lots are permitted and strict covenants put in place such as banning cats and dogs and limiting vehicle activity," said Ms Kelly.

Ms Kelly said TEC would be writing to the Planning Minister, Dr Andrew Refshauge, requesting his intervention if Kempsey Council decides to approve the development without a Species Impact Statement and in its current form.

# Latest News

## Coastal Lakes Recommendations Should Lead Way



*Created on Tuesday, 02 July 2002 10:00*

Calling for the immediate Government adoption of the recommendations in the Healthy Rivers Commission's Final Report into Coastal Lakes, the Total Environment Centre said there are problems besetting the State's coastal lakes and we need to lift their position on the political agenda.

"All that is needed is for the Government to immediately adopt all recommendations made by the Commission and include them in its overall coastal protection package," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Among the most far-sighted recommendations is the call for lake by lake assessments and management plans to match, the establishment of an Independent Coastal Lakes Expert Group, far stronger statutory controls and regulations over current and future planning and development decisions affecting lakes, and, best of all, the formalising of these and other recommendations through a State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) to give them the backbone they need," said Ms Kelly.

"It is no longer a matter of questions over whether development affects coastal lake health or not - the comparison of pristine Nadgee in the far south which has no development in its catchment with over-developed and used Lake Ainsworth in Ballina Shire where oxygen is being pumped in to keep it alive - says it all. There needs to be a massive shift in the way lakes are treated and this Inquiry has shown a way it can be done." Said Ms Kelly

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"Only 16 lakes are in relatively pristine condition. They have been given Comprehensive Protection classification requiring strong limits and controls on any further development or activity in their catchments and their restoration to as pristine a state as possible. Another 27 have been given Significant Protection classification where recommendations for restoration and protection are almost as strong,"

"The lack of recognition of the fragility and finite nature of coastal lakes, the disgusting state that some of them have been allowed to fall into, the continued blatant disregard for protecting them by many councils along the coast as more and more development with its side affects is approved has meant the Coastal Lakes Inquiry recommendations are needed now," said Ms Kelly.

For more information contact Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel on 9299 5599 or 9299 5680

Following is a list of NSW coastal lakes and the classifications they have been given. There are likely to be one or more in each local area so reference can be made to them. The Report is available from the Healthy Rivers Commssion (tel 9231 2977) or can be seen on their website: [www.hrc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hrc.nsw.gov.au) if further details are needed.

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Outcomes: - ALL natural ecosystem processes restored and preserved, drinking quality water (where relevant) and existing villages maintained within boundaries in the catchments.



#### Classification 2: Significant Protection

Coastal Lakes: Back, Baragoot, Bingie (Kelly's), Bunga, Cakora, Candlagan, Conjola (inc. Berringer), Corunna, Cuttagee, Dulhousie, Deep, Goolawah, Innes, Meringo, Middle (Tanja), Mummuga (Dalmeny), Myall, Oyster, Queens, Smiths, Swan, Tabourie, Wallagoot, Wapengo, Willinga

Outcomes: CRITICAL natural ecosystem processes restored and preserved, minimal risk for oyster growing (where relevant), existing villages maintained within current boundaries and sustainable fishing

(Back may be changed following further assessment)

#### Classification 3: Healthy Modified Conditions

Coastal Lakes: Avoca, Bullengella, Burrill, Brush (Swan), Cathie, Cobaki-Terranora, Cockrone, Coila (Kyaily), Congo, Cudgen, Curalo, Hearn, Kianga, Killalea, Koloa, Little (Wallaga), Long Swamp, Merimbula, Mullimbulla, Murrah, Nangudga, Narrabeen, Marrawallee, Pambula, Saltwater Lagoon, St Georges Basin, The Broadwater, Tilba Tilba, Tuross, Wagonga, Wallaga, Wallis, Wamberal, Watsons Taylor, Werri, Woolgoolga

Outcomes: KEY natural and/or highly valued modified ecosystem processes to be rehabilitated and retained and urban/village/rural residential areas maintained and/or expanded within defined limits

(Burrill, St Georges Basin, Tuross, Wagonga, Wallaga could well change classification following further assessment)

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Outcomes: Habitat conditions for key selected species established, reduce algal bloom frequency, existing urban areas retained or expanded within defined limits, and aesthetic value and amenity value maintained.

## Latest News

# NSW Government Urged to Call in Mollymook Beach Development and Review all Shoalhaven's Plans



*Created on Thursday, 04 July 2002 10:00*

TEC has called on the State Government to call in a proposed large coastal development at Mollymook and to urgently review all of Shoalhaven's planning instruments to prevent further such inappropriate proposals from being approved.

"Yet again we have a stretch of beach front bushland being turned into a dense tourist/residential development by an out of town developer. This should never have been zoned for such development in the first place," said TEC campaigner Fran Kelly.

"It is time the NSW Planning Minister stepped in to the Shoalhaven area, took a long hard look at all of the Council's planning instruments and adjust them where necessary to put the land's capability and suitability first, rather than the demands of speculative landowners and developers," said Ms Kelly.

"This latest Mollymook development proposal is on land that is too close to the beach, will impact on an adjoining creek and the beach, will rely on on site sewage disposal which is absolutely inappropriate on such land and will require the destruction of some of the last areas of natural coastal bushland in Mollymook.

"Just because land has been zoned to allow development, as this land was some time ago, does not mean the owner and developer have an automatic right to go ahead and develop it in any way they want," said Ms Kelly.

"We have requested the Government call this controversial proposal in as a matter of urgency because Shoalhaven Council have a record of rushing through such proposals using delegated authority," said Ms Kelly.

"The sooner the coastal environment and residential amenity are protected from inappropriate development the more chance there will be that the future along this most beautiful part of NSW will be sustainable," said Ms Kelly.

"If the current direction continues, eventually there will be no more land to release, rezone and develop at the behest of developers, and everyone will lose. Let's plan sensibly and with an eye on the long term, not on short term profits for a few speculators and developers," said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## Government Urged to Rewrite Development Strategy to Stop Destruction of Hallidays Point



*Created on Thursday, 04 July 2002 10:00*

The NSW Government has been urged to place a moratorium on all rezoning and inappropriate developments occurring under the Hallidays Point Development Strategy and to rewrite the strategy to reflect environmental and coastal protection.

Total Environment Centre campaigner Fran Kelly made the call because of Greater Taree Council's "one-sided attitude towards the Strategy by allowing every piece of land identified for release to be rezoned for development while ignoring environmentally significant land,"

"Added together, the actions by Taree Council towards the Strategy in recent years has been a joke. When it comes to development it treats the Strategy as a sacred cow, but when it comes to environmental protection it ignores it" said Ms Kelly

"In other words, no matter how many environmentally friendly sounding statements are coming out of council, they are following one rule for speculative landowners and developers and another for the environment and existing residential amenity,"

"The absolutely inappropriate North Redhead development is one example of where unquestioned support for development proposed under the Strategy has been given despite being contrary to the NSW Coastal Policy. While the approval of development of environmentally significant land such as along Tallwoods Drive is another example of this two-faced policy," said Ms Kelly.

"We have requested the Planning Minister step in and stop the clock with regard to rezoning and inappropriate developments in Hallidays Point while the Strategy is rewritten to put coastal and environmental protection and residential amenity first, rather than the demands of speculative landowners and developers," said Ms Kelly.

"If the Strategy is to be followed, it had better be a Strategy that is based on sustainability not speculation," she said.

## Latest News

# SHELLHARBOUR COUNCIL INACTION CAUSING DESTRUCTION OF RARE PLANT



*Created on Saturday, 03 August 2002 10:00*

Failure by Shellharbour Council to stop vegetation removal on a site in Nepean Place, Albion Park is likely to cause the destruction of a rare plant species the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has warned.

"Vegetation removal on the site is destroying a vital stand of threatened *Zierra granulata*, however, resident's pleas to stop the environmental damage are being ignored. It is appalling that Council can stand by and allow such environmental destruction to go unchecked", Mr Leigh Martin TEC Urban Campaigner said.

The site in Nepean Place, Albion Park is home to a population of the threatened plant species *Zierra granulata*. Vegetation removal on the site began on August 22 under the guise of lantana control. Several *Zierra* plants were damaged or destroyed along with other native vegetation. Under pressure from local residents Council Officers inspected the site and asked that clearing be stopped. Since that time vegetation removal has recommenced, however, Council has failed to take any further action.

Council has previously refused a development application for subdivision of the land into residential lots. The application is now subject to proceedings in the Land and Environment Court, however if vegetation removal continues unchecked the threatened plant species will be wiped out.

"Unless Council acts immediately to stop the clearing there will be nothing left to defend in the Land and Environment Court. Council must immediately put a halt to the destruction and vigorously defend its decision in Court", Mr Martin said.

This latest incident is the second time that *Zierra granulata* have been damaged or destroyed by vegetation removal on the site and the second time that Shellharbour Council's response has been woefully inadequate. In July last year (when the subdivision application was still being assessed) residents alerted Council to vegetation removal. Council Officers inspected site but failed to detect any damaged specimens.

An inspection two days later by National Parks and Wildlife Service staff revealed up to twelve plants damaged or destroyed.

"Shellharbour Council appears unable or unwilling to protect threatened species. If they are to maintain any environmental credibility they must issue an immediate stop work order and require rehabilitation of the site", Mr Martin said.

# Latest News

## Tweed's grandiose high rise schemes labelled "deluded and one-dimensional"



*Created on Tuesday, 13 August 2002 10:00*

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner, Fran Kelly, said: "the proposal for a 61 metre concrete block rising out of the Tweed would benefit almost no one but those in the development game currently being played out in the Tweed . Talk of it being an economic miracle for the area are deluded and one-dimensional."

"Latitude 28. Where on earth did that slick name come from? Perhaps it refers to the latitude that has been applied in the effort to approve this monster. It is higher, bigger and more obtrusive than anything allowed under existing regulations yet, predictably, is being promoted by the development-hungry councillors in control of the Tweed," said Ms Kelly.

"The extent of inappropriate development in the Tweed is already like a bad dream. It's bordering on the tragic in terms of the effects it will have both socially and environmentally in the not too distant future," said Ms Kelly.

"Each time such a proposal such as this appears, everyone is told the project must happen immediately or else a scenario similar to the end of the world will occur. In most cases, the opposite is true. Bad planning and developments have caused major costly and often irreversible problems such as foreshore erosion, flooding, property loss, overflowing and collapsing infrastructure, and the loss of fisheries, public access, water quality, scenic values and wildlife," said Ms Kelly.

"At the same time as this proposed building rising into the north coast sky is being touted as the answer to all Tweed's problems, another proposal is in the background to fill in, slice up, destroy and develop more than 200ha in the flood plains of the Tweed River," said Ms Kelly.

"What will it take for the council to be stripped of its planning powers? Add the latest high-rise and lowland destruction proposals onto everything else that has happened since the current councillors took hold and we might as well call the Tweed "Gold Coast II,"

Ms Kelly said TEC would be calling on the NSW Government to reject the Latitude 28 project in its current form, to prevent remaining flood plains around the river from being filled in, and to remove planning powers from the councillors as was done in the 1980s.

## Latest News

# TWEED'S "SALT" BEACH DEVELOPMENT MORE LIKE "SHIFTING SANDS" SAYS ENVIRONMENT GROUP



*Created on Tuesday, 27 August 2002 10:00*

"A proposed 73 hectare beach front development in Kingscliff, which includes a 213 apartment hotel run by a Hawaiian outfit, 160 houses, a huge shopping centre and 300 car parking spaces, plans to pump more than half a million cubic metres of sand from the Tweed River over the site to raise the houses for ocean views," said Fran Kelly, - Total Environment Centre's coastal campaigner

"I cannot believe the backers of this development proposal are serious. Have things become so blatant, so bad in the Tweed that there is now a manic dive to the bottom, a collective suicide by those wanting to destroy every last inch in the Shire before someone steps in and stops it."

"This latest Kingscliff beachfront concept is to be called "SALT" - a village life by the sea. It would be more true to form to call it Shifting Sands - destruction by the sea," said Ms Kelly. "Is this for real. Have any of those pro development councillors and developers heard of beach erosion, or unstable foundations," said Ms Kelly.

"The proposal extends north of an existing overdevelopment - along another 1.2 kms of beachfront, backing onto Cudgen Creek and up to dunes in front. Nothing should be built near dunes - they're the natural protection for the land against the sea. This development should not be allowed to go ahead in any form let alone in this half-baked fashion involving the dredged bottom of the Tweed River," said Ms Kelly

"The sheer audacity of developers in the Tweed now is mind boggling - pumping river sand to raise house site views beside a beach is hard to believe but sadly seems to be a serious part of this proposal. The development must be stopped," said Ms Kelly.

"Once again we will call on the NSW Government to take over the planning reins at Tweed Council, once again we will ask it to step in to ensure another highly inappropriate development does not go ahead when the DA is submitted," said Ms Kelly

# Latest News

## Land Clearing Audit reveals maladministration



*Created on Monday, 21 October 2002 10:00*

In a damning report, The NSW Auditor-General has found such grave instances of inadequate administration of land clearing laws, that it amounts to a case of environmental vandalism, Total Environment Centre said today.

"Land clearing regulation is a basket case in NSW. They don't know how much bushland and what types there are; they don't know what is being cleared; they can't audit consents and prosecute breaches; there is a conflict of interest with the D-G also being in charge of State Forests; regional staff are not consistent in clearing judgements; and the lack of conservation targets means there is no program to protect threatened bushland communities," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"The worst fears of the environment movement have been realised. As each day passes more land is cleared in what is essentially a policy and regulatory vacuum. Frankly the cleaners should be put through the Department of Land and Water Conservation."

"Land clearing will be a key State Election issue and unless there is a genuine attempt by the government to curb land clearing, for example by urgently adopting conservation targets, then it will stand condemned."

"The Audit report contains a 'response' from the Department but this is largely window dressing. It solves nothing," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## Coast law welcomed



*Created on Monday, 28 October 2002 11:00*

The Carr Government's coastal protection policy has been welcomed by a peak environment group that has been working for the last few years to prevent the worst excesses of coastal development in NSW. TEC also said "it would monitor the implementation of the SEPP.

Total Environment Centre's coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 71 was a "desperately needed coastal protection measure in the face of rampant clearing, development and destruction of the NSW coastline."

"For the past few years we have been urging the NSW Government to take control of coastal planning powers in some of the worst council areas, where councillors see fit to approve almost anything no matter how damaging," said Ms Kelly.

"We have received numerous complaints from local residents, and seen 100s of inappropriate developments that are too big, out of character, too destructive or simply in the wrong location. Wetlands, coastal forests, dunes, beaches, creeks, headlands, estuaries and coastal lakes have all suffered from excess subdivisions, apartments or resorts built around or over them," said Ms Kelly.

"From the Gold Coast style of Tweed Council where the trend is to concrete thwe coast, to the clearing of anything that resembles native vegetation in Taree and Great Lakes to the excesses of Shoalhaven's develop-at-any cost attitude, the problems are the same."

"There has been no thought for the future, for the ability of the natural environment to cope with this destruction, for wildlife, good planning, or sustainability. It has been all about satisfying and bowing to developers' demands," said Ms Kelly.

"Although this SEPP won't solve all the problems, it is a fantastic start and will go a long way to reining in the worst excesses that we have seen. At last things are taking a turn for the better and there is some hope for the future of the coast. The quality of implementation will be important and TEC will be working with local groups to monitor the performance of the State Governemnt and local councils under the SEPP," said Ms Kelly.



# Latest News

## TANK PADDOCK DECISION A RECIPE FOR ONGOING CONFLICT



*Created on Friday, 13 December 2002 11:00*

A decision by Newcastle City Council to consider residential development of parts of the Tank Paddock will seriously compromise proper planning in the Minmi area and lead to ongoing community conflict the Total Environment Centre has warned.

"Newcastle Council's decision is a recipe for ad hoc planning and assumes that parts of this ecologically important area should be sacrificed for residential development. It ignores the vital regional importance of the site by considering it in isolation from other lands nearby", Mr Leigh Martin TEC Urban Campaigner said.

Conservation groups have called for the development of a detailed strategy to identify lands in the Minmi area capable of supporting development and those which should be conserved for environmental protection.

"Sustainable development of the Minmi area requires a detailed strategy to determine the most appropriate uses of all lands in the area. By considering the Tank Paddock in isolation Council is seriously undermining the development of a regional conservation strategy. They have also ignored previous advice from Council Officers not to consider rezoning of the Tank Paddock until the strategy is completed.

Conservation groups have warned that ad hoc decision making on the Tank Paddock issue will lead to ongoing conflict.

"Conservation groups have previously offered to work with Council to produce a strategy for all lands in the Minmi area. Last night's decision to pre-empt the development of a regional conservation strategy effectively rejected this offer and ensures that planning decisions in the Minmi area will be the subject of controversy and conflict for years to come", Mr Martin said.

# Latest News

## Carr Government Fails Environmental Hot Issues Test



*Created on Monday, 13 January 2003 11:00*

The groups\* had written to the Premier last October seeking concrete actions before the end of 2002 on river health, land clearing, forests, wilderness, and greenhouse issues. At the time the groups informed the government that conservationists would be assessing the government's performance in response to the hot issues via a publicly released report card.

"The government had every opportunity to resolve these issues that have a broad impact across the NSW landscape during 2002. It is very disappointing that bar one, there has been either no green action on these six critical areas or, worse, severely regressive policies," said Total Environment Centre Director, Jeff Angel.

The government's response to requests for better river health gets the worst score, an F, whilst land clearing, forests and western woodlands receive an E. Only the electricity greenhouse benchmarks scheme, which passed through Parliament on the final sitting day last year, gained an A.

"The government can retrieve its poor performance by releasing some good election policies, but in the case of rivers we are on a collision course," said Kathy Ridge, Executive Officer, Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"They have abandoned their commitment to ensure that adequate water was returned to rivers to save them from collapse."

The groups are committed to a major election campaign and will be undertaking further full and frank assessments of all parties' policies.

\*(Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Total Environment Centre, Australian Conservation Foundation, National Parks Association of NSW, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, and The Wilderness Society)

# Latest News

## A great day for old growth forests



*Created on Sunday, 02 February 2003 11:00*

"The icons are irreplaceable, eminently worthy of protection and the plan brings a more stable future for the timber industry on-line. These forests have justifiably been a rallying point for forest campaigners over the last 20 or more years and their exclusion from the 1999 north east forest agreement just intensified the battle", said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Its impressive that a few years later, the Carr Government can 'push the edge of the envelope' in arriving at decisions on such hard issues and deliver results for both protagonists. Boral who have been concerned about resource stability have clearly also recognised this in their MOU with the Government."

"Old growth forests are embedded in Australia's psyche - a symbol of how much has already been destroyed; and too valuable to lose - it's the sign of a community that is embracing a new environmental ethic."

"The job of course, is not yet complete and we still have to protect the forests of southern and western NSW, but it gives hope that the community can find a way to preserve these areas for future generations," Mr Angel said.

## Latest News

# NSW GOVERNMENT WIMPS OUT AS TWEED APPLIES ZERO TOLERANCE TO ITS NATURAL COASTLINE



*Created on Monday, 28 April 2003 10:00*

The Total Environment Centre has accused the new Planning Minister Craig Knowles of "wimping out" by failing to prevent Tweed council from continuing to approve extreme overdevelopment, most recently the highly controversial "Salt" development at Kingscliff.

"The worst council on the NSW coast is applying a kind of "zero tolerance" to its natural coastline by encouraging and passing every overdevelopment that comes before it, and the State Government has failed to call in an obvious target against the advice of its own local MP and many others" said TEC Coastal Campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The Salt development will be highly destructive to the stretch of coast along which it will be erected. Its approval will mean a development involving the dredging and pumping of more than half a million cubic metres of sand from the Tweed River and the creation of almost an entire new town along fragile dunes will go ahead, despite all countering advice and an already over-developed Tweed," said Ms Kelly.

"This is all about greed and complete disregard for the natural environment. Next in line for approval are further subdivisions over natural habitat at Koala Beach."

"About 80% of Tweed's native vegetation on the coastal plain has been removed already, how much more is the Council willing to exchange for concrete and how much longer will the NSW Government fail to do anything about it?" said Ms Kelly.

For further information contact Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel on 9299 5599/5680

# Latest News

## Shoalhaven Council's Development-At-Any-Cost Stance Results in Environmental Disaster in Jervis Bay



*Created on Tuesday, 03 June 2003 10:00*

The Total Environment Centre has called for immediate State Government intervention to stop further development and obtain rehabilitation funds from the developer following the collapse of a huge retention basin on the clear felled sloping site of a large subdivision at Old Erowal Bay

"The collapse at the 300 lot Henry Kendall Retirement Village, following recent heavy rain has seen the suffocation, siltation and pollution of surrounding environmentally fragile and supposedly protected SEPP 14 wetlands, creeks and the Bay with untold damage to wildlife and water quality on a much broader scale," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Not only does Shoalhaven Council fail on common sense grounds by approving such developments in such crazy locations, it also fails to ensure that adequate controls are used when building them," said Ms Kelly.

"The State government should place an immediate Stop Work Order on the site, and order the developer to rehabilitate the area at their own expense. Then they should consider holding Shoalhaven Council to account for the disaster they allowed to be unleashed."

"This is not the first or last inappropriately located and over the top development for this area. And this is unlikely to be the last disaster as a result," said Ms Kelly

"There is wholesale clearing and approval for quite a number of similar subdivisions right now in the whole Jervis Bay region, eating into forests, wetlands, around lakes, creeks and on slopes. A large number of these are around the St Georges Basin where Erowal Bay is located; others are for areas close by. Clearly something has to change," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## COSTA'S RAIL CUTS A CRUEL BLOW TO LONG SUFFERING COMMUTERS



*Created on Wednesday, 18 June 2003 10:00*

The NSW Minister for Transport Services Michael Costa is in danger of becoming known as a public transport wrecker following comments favouring closure of the Newcastle rail line, attempts to abandon the Parramatta to Chatswood rail link and chronic system performance and maintenance problems the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has warned.

"In a little over two weeks Michael Costa has supported the closure on the Newcastle rail line and signalled plans to abandon the Parramatta to Chatswood rail link. Combined with a failure to address chronic system deficiencies its hardly an encouraging trend for commuters crying out for better public transport in NSW", Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said,

In a speech to Newcastle Business Club Mr Costa expressed support for closing the Newcastle rail link. This follows earlier announcements of a review of the Parramatta to Epping component of the already behind schedule Parramatta to Chatswood rail link.

"It appears that the Minister is more interested in short term cost cutting and appeasing the commercial property sector who want to carve the Newcastle rail corridor up for development than addressing the needs of long suffering commuters and expanding public transport services", Mr Martin said.

Lack of effective public transport and chronic service deficiencies are forcing increased dependence on private vehicles and a viscous cycle of poor air quality and worsening traffic congestion throughout Newcastle, Sydney and the Illawarra.

"The public are crying out for improved services and new transport infrastructure. Instead of answering the call the government now appears intent of walking way from commitments to create new lines and scrap long established services. The result will be worsening transport chaos and poor air quality for years to come", Mr Martin said.

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## Latest News

# GOVERNMENT URGED TO CALL IN SOUTH WEST ROCKS SUBDIVISIONS AS PLANNING IGNORED BY KEMPSEY COUNCIL



*Created on Monday, 23 June 2003 10:00*

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the subdivisions would only exacerbate the problems inherent in a town that was fast heading towards being over-developed and unsustainable, impacting on wildlife, endangered species and residential amenity alike.

"It is essential the Planning Minister does not signal the breaks are off," said Ms Kelly. "Calling in these DA's are one way of showing he is serious about coastal protection".

"South West Rocks is a prime example of what should never be done in terms of planning. The entrance to the town is fast becoming a major eyesore and a turn off to residents and visitors alike as forest is rapidly being turned into concrete-only estates." said Ms Kelly.

"These subdivisions will further destroy endangered species habitat and corridors running between the Macleay River and Hat Head National Park."

"There is still plenty that is beautiful about the area - not least its surrounds - but unless Kempsey rediscovers the true meaning of the word "planning" there won't be much beauty left," said Ms Kelly.

"Good planning should look at an area over the long term and decide what areas can be developed and what that development should be like. Subdivisions and single developments that retain a sense of the place they are in, that allow wildlife corridors and areas of bushland to remain and that fit with the shape of the land and town character are a first point to consider. Nothing like that is happening right now" said Ms Kelly.

"We believe these latest applications should be looked at in terms of fitting in to a long term plan for South West Rocks, and they shouldn't be approved unless they do.  
For more information contact Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel - 9299 5599 or 9299 5680.

## Latest News

# ENVIRONMENT GROUP URGES PLANNING MINISTER TO VISIT MICALO ISLAND TO SEE WHY MASSIVE PRAWN FARM PROPO



*Created on Monday, 21 July 2003 10:00*

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said during her visit to the site late last year it was clear how serious the impacts of such an intensive aquaculture operation would be should it proceed.

"The mess still remaining from a far less intensive operation more than 13 years ago should be lesson enough that no further attempt should be made at this, let alone an attempt that could multiply the problem many times," said Ms Kelly.

"Micalo Island is one of a complex of islands in the Clarence Estuary. The wetlands, channels, marshes and creeks that are part of this complex are the last place to propose an extremely polluting and problem-ridden industry," said Ms Kelly.

"Prawn farming has yet to prove it is sustainable> It has a short life span and usually leaves extensive damage in its wake. The regular waste from such an operation is loaded with chemicals, antibiotics and nutrients. This ends up in the estuary impacting on wild aquatic life including fish and birds. The potential for infectious disease is high in such intensive farming and the feed given to prawns requires far more take from the wild than the weight produced," said Ms Kelly.

"Added to this is the extremely fragile nature of this area. Much of the island is zoned Environment Protection for special reason - due to the easily upset nature of its wetlands, salt marsh vegetation and the creeks surrounding it. The fact that it is a highly flood prone low lying island does not exactly bode well for pond based aquaculture and the island has areas that are mapped as acid sulphate soil risk," said Ms Kelly

"We are urging the Minister to inspect the island before allowing a bureaucratic rubber stamp from far-away Sydney. We believe anyone with any sense will understand the island is absolutely the wrong place for this proposal," said Ms Kelly.

For further information contact Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel on 9299 5599 or 9299 5680.

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# Latest News

## BOURDA SUBDIVISION COULD SET PRECEDENT FOR URBAN SPRAWL ON RURAL LANDS



*Created on Thursday, 07 August 2003 10:00*

A peak NSW environment group has warned that a proposed large subdivision on forested land near Bourda in Bega Shire could set a precedent for intensive sprawling development of rural zoned land anywhere in the Shire.

The Total Environment Centre said there was no way the 121 lot subdivision, with its own private sewage treatment plant on rural zoned land would even be able to pass first post if it had not been described as a Community Title project.

"The proposal is clearly a large subdivision that would not have been possible to propose except in this fashion. Community Title refers to developments for a community with some compelling common interest. People buying into houses on the same subdivision does not equate to "community" in this sense. If this goes ahead, so could any proposal, anywhere using the same tactics," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Should this DA be approved there will be another large chunk of urban sprawl, through the centre of an essential wildlife corridor, on the edge of Bourda Nature Reserve, dominating the local scenery and impacting on the waters of Wallagoot Lake. The on site private STP will certainly not be a simple thing to control or monitor once lots are sold as well," said Ms Kelly.

"The Total Environment Centre congratulates Bega Council for its draft rural lands review that recommends the proposal not be approved while the future zoning of all such lands in the Shire is being considered,"

"We have asked the State Government to ensure that this strategic planning process is not overridden by this proposal," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## NATURAL COASTLINE BEING WIPED OUT BY DEVELOPER GREED AND GOVERNMENT INACTION



*Created on Tuesday, 12 August 2003 10:00*

The NSW coastline is being lost at an unprecedented rate as developer demands and pro-development councils overwhelm the environment, Total Environment Centre said today when releasing the results of a survey of development and clearing proposals, approvals and activity along the NSW coastline.

"The results indicate that an environmental and social disaster are in the making. And the speed with which proposals are being lodged has already outdated the survey, which involved surveying over 450 cases outside Sydney and consulting with over 130 community groups," said Fran Kelly, the Centre's Coastal Campaigner.

"Those who have the power to strengthen regulatory instruments should do so as a matter of urgency. In particular the State Government needs to act to show it can protect community and environmental interests."

"The combination of land prices spiralling out of control, with intense speculation, pre-emptive clearing and a mega development push, shows there is little sense of a sustainable future. Good planning and the land's environmental constraints and capability are given short shrift compared to demands by developers and land owners for rezoning and development approvals."

"While the natural coastline with its native vegetation, wildlife, creeks, rivers, lakes, dunes, beaches, wetlands, forests and headlands are being turned into great sprawling concrete housing estates, small low cost coastal cottages are being turned into empty investment mansions depriving long term residents and younger generations of affordable housing. The increase in flooding incidents from the hardening and loss of permeable surfaces, creeks and natural drainage lines and collapsing infrastructure such as overflowing sewage systems and degrading water supplies - should be warning enough that the tide has to turn," said Ms Kelly.

"From Tweed Shire in the far north to Bega Shire in the far south each council area is overseeing the destruction of natural areas and their replacement by monolithic concrete housing estates and mansions with little sense of place. The extent of destruction depends on how much the council is captured by the major developers operating in their areas. The more a council considers the environment and community the more likely there is that some sort of sensible strategic planning is in place - but by and large almost all have placed developer demands first."

"To the north Tweed, Ballina, Richmond, Maclean, Kempsey, Hastings, Taree, Great Lakes and Gosford are the ones that stand out. In the south Wollongong, Shellharbour and the Shoalhaven are the worst. But Eurobodalla and Bega are also under enormous pressures. In areas like Byron Bay huge pressure is on the council from developers resorting to obtaining approvals via the Land and Environment Court when council refuses to bow to their demands."

"We desperately need a major overhaul. Local government reform by removing real estate interests; improved planning regulations with unambiguous mandatory rules about what can and cannot be done based on the land's environmental capability and suitability, and strategic planning on a catchment level that protects coastal waters, native vegetation and the last of coastal habitats so vital for our wildlife."

Further information Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel on 9299 5599 or 9299 5680.  
Copies of the report can be obtained from: [www.tec.org.au](http://www.tec.org.au), click on 'Save the Coast'

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## Latest News

# COSTA'S RAIL PLANS FAIL TO ADDRESS SYDNEY'S TRANSPORT CRISIS



*Created on Friday, 22 August 2003 10:00*

Plans announced yesterday by the Minister for Transport Services Michael Costa to separate rail lines in the Sydney suburban network and shelve the Parramatta-Chatswood rail link fail to address the desperate need for new transport infrastructure throughout large parts of Sydney according to the Total Environment Centre (TEC).

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "Residents throughout Sydney's north-west, west and south have little or no access to rail services, because, in many areas, the lines simply don't exist. New lines must be built to provide desperately needed services and give the public a viable alternative to the private car".

TEC expressed dismay at the Minister's failure to commit to new infrastructure while shelving the Parramatta-Chatswood link

"At a time when the need for a massive boost to rail infrastructure is obvious the Minister has chosen to abandon a crucial rail project. The decision to place the Parramatta-Chatswood link on the never-never is a cruel blow to everyone seeking a better public transport system", Mr Angel said.

While welcoming the announcement of moves to separate existing lines to improve efficiency of services TEC warned that they fall well short of what is required.

"Increasing in the efficiency of existing services is long overdue but simply dodges the fact that a massive boost to infrastructure funding is needed to overcome Sydney's chronic transport woes", Mr Angel said.

TEC has warned the Government that failure to commit to new rail infrastructure is causing growing anger in the community.

"The public are tired of inadequate public transport, chronic air pollution, and worsening traffic congestion. Unless the Government commits to long overdue infrastructure it can expect a strong campaign by an increasingly angry community", Mr Angel said.

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## Latest News

### BECTON'S BYRON BEACH FRONT SUBURB REPRESENTS OVERDEVELOPMENT OF FRAGILE SITE



*Created on Monday, 25 August 2003 10:00*

A peak NSW environment group has described the proposed Becton development in Byron Bay as being an inappropriate overdevelopment of a fragile site that should be reconsidered.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the proposal for the site which lies along a kilometre of beachfront, next to protected SEPP 14 wetlands and at the mouth of Bilongil Creek would have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment and the town if approved in its current form.

"The proposed development of 379 houses, hotel, commercial shopping centre, on site sewage system, restaurant and surf club is no different to some of the most inappropriate overdevelopments currently underway in the Tweed Shire to the North and Ballina Shire to the south. It simply represents a gross overdevelopment of a very fragile site," said Fran Kelly.

"The site has numerous recorded threatened species, limited ability to cope with the extent of sewage and pollution that would be generated and as a beachfront estuarine area is easily damaged by low level usage let alone the extent of impact this proposal would generate," said Ms Kelly.

"The proposal also represents a 20% population rise to a town already experiencing problems coping with existing visitor and resident levels,"

"While some sort of development may be likely to occur there, this proposal is out of step. The tourist zoning should not enable what is effectively a large residential subdivision with its own shopping centre and sewage treatment plant to occur, albeit described as a holiday home development," said Ms Kelly.

No matter how pretty a Masterplan of a development can look, it does not show what happens once the excavations, buildings, and use of the land enters the equation," said Ms Kelly.

"We hope the Minister is able to influence the outcome of this proposal by asking the developer to rethink the extent and type of the proposal in this place. A much more appropriate smaller scale development, fitting with current approvals and zoning, would still be very profitable for the developer as well as ensuring a far lower impact. It would be a win win situation for all," said Ms Kelly.

For more information contact Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel on 9299 5599 or 9299 5680

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# Latest News

## Local And State Governments Urged to Adopt North Coast Initiative to Stop Excessive and Illegal Land



*Created on Monday, 01 September 2003 10:00*

Coastal councils and the State Government have been urged by a NSW peak environment organisation to immediately follow the example of a north coast council in attempting to stop widespread, illegal and pre-emptive clearing of native vegetation along the NSW coastline. New financial penalties are also needed said the Total Environment Centre (TEC).

TEC has praised the initiative by Coffs Harbour Council to turn the tide on excessive land clearing. The council has put residents on notice to stop clearing land, warning that they won't be rewarded with development approval and the land will be considered as environmentally valuable as before it was cleared in deciding development applications.

"This is a far sighted and encouraging step that has been taken by one council. It deserves recognition and support on a State level. All councils should be made to follow this path in containing, controlling and dealing with the excessive and extensive land clearing occurring on the coast right now," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The coast is increasingly coming under pressure as a result of spiralling coastal land prices and speculative rezoning and development activities. Pre-emptive clearing is occurring at an unprecedented rate as developers attempt to get rid of conservation values to ease their proposals through councils," said Ms Kelly, "The consequences include increased erosion, loss of wildlife and biodiversity in general, water degradation and increased flooding incidents."

"In most cases councils are turning a blind eye to illegal and preemptive clearing and the State Government departments that should be taking action appear weak and ineffective as they fail to step in time after time," she said. "Without clear notice given to landowners that such activity is not on, as Coffs Harbour Council has done, the unsustainable loss of the natural coastline will continue".

"We urge all councils to follow the lead of Coffs Harbour. We also urge the State Government to take the opportunity to follow this initiative and send out the message to all land owners - that preemptive and illegal clearing to gain development or rezoning advantage is not acceptable, will not result in gains and will not be tolerated. If it still goes ahead heavy fines, additional rate levies on the land for restoration programs and the loss of ability to develop the land should be imposed," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF TWEED'S KINGS FOREST SITE URGENTLY REQUESTED



*Created on Wednesday, 22 October 2003 10:00*

A peak NSW environment organisation has urged the State Government to reapply protection over the Kings Forest site in Tweed Shire to prevent clearing, while calling for the speeding up of approval of a Draft LEP giving its fragile areas more permanent protection

A peak NSW environment organisation has urged the State Government to reapply protection over the Kings Forest site in Tweed Shire to prevent clearing, while calling for the speeding up of approval of a Draft LEP giving its fragile areas more permanent protection.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner, Fran Kelly, said the Interim Protection Order (IPO) was needed over the entire site in view of the history of Kings Forest, and the delay by Tweed Council in approving the LEP.

"The IPO was originally applied because of widespread preemptive clearing of the site. This action stemmed the clearing and nothing has changed except the owners. There is no reason to have lifted the order while the LEP remains in limbo," said Ms Kelly

"Tweed's Council appears to be dragging its heels over approval of the Kings Forest LEP. Perhaps it is because it recommends environment protection zoning over fragile areas of the site and a majority of councillors come out in a rash when faced with the idea of looking after something other than developers' profits," said Ms Kelly.

"Kings Forest has a controversial and colourful history, much like the rest of Tweed really. Millions of dollars have exchanged hands over many years and there is no end of incentive to gain approval for subdivision development of the 900 ha site," said Ms Kelly. The false development consent documents produced when the site was owned by Narui Gold Coast were an example of the lengths to which some people will go," said Ms Kelly.

TEC has written to Environment Minister Bob Debus requesting he immediately reapply the IPO to the entire site under the original conditions, until the Draft LEP is approved.

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# Latest News

## INTERVENTION NEEDED TO STOP DEVELOPER GREED UNDERMINING WYONG'S LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY



*Created on Thursday, 23 October 2003 10:00*

A peak NSW environment organisation has slammed the delay of the Wyong Conservation Strategy and asked the Planning Minister to ensure no rezoning for development is slipped through while the plan is delayed.

Describing it as an "all too common story of vested interests winning the day over the long term future and sustainability of Wyong shire," Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said "developers' interests should for once be ignored and common sense given the priority,"

"The Wyong Conservation Strategy offers a sensible balance between the ongoing orgy of development in the Shire and protection of vital natural areas so important for the long term future of all," said Ms Kelly

"Wyong's strategy would be a leading light on the coast with so many other coastal councils having pathetic strategic plans that are simply developer-driven, covering the coastline with concrete,"

"Here in Wyong it appears, that despite this balanced Strategy earmarking substantial development areas in sensible locations while simultaneously protecting fragile areas such as wetlands, high value native vegetation, creeks and rivers, threatened species habitat and corridors, developers and their supporters on council still believe they deserve to get more," said Ms Kelly.

"The Strategy should be adopted now in its current form so it can be the backbone for all future planning instruments in the Shire. It offers certainty and consistency for all as opposed to the current ad hoc regime, while recognising the need for clean drinking water, open space, protection of other species and leaving something for future generations," said Ms Kelly.

TEC have asked the Planning Minister to intervene to ensure no rezoning for development is approved prior to the Strategy's adoption.

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# Latest News

## Action Needed Now to Stop Coastal Land Clearing Epidemic



*Created on Monday, 03 November 2003 11:00*

A peak environment group has called on local and state governments to take urgent, serious and meaningful action now to stem an epidemic of pre-emptive clearing on the coast.

Pointing to one north coast council - Coffs Harbour - who are acting to stop pre-emptive clearing, Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said "it is possible to stall the epidemic of tree and bushland clearing along the coast, all that is needed is the will to act at local and state levels. Coffs Harbour have shown they're serious, there is nothing to stop every other council and state government getting serious too."

"Without the will to act, all the studies, words, lamenting and promises are meaningless. The clearing will continue, and eventually there won't be much left to save outside protected areas," said Ms Kelly.

"Sadly there are quite a few landowners and developers out there, with dollar signs in their eyes, or with the belief that they have the right to do what they want on their land or even on public foreshore land, regardless of the impact on others, and the environment," said Ms Kelly.

"However, there are an awful lot more people who are sick and tired of watching people get away with chopping down trees for their views, or razing woodlands, forests, wetlands and heath to destroy conservation values, in the hope of getting development approvals.

"Most residents don't want to see the natural coastline become more degraded and isolated. Most residents want to retain natural areas that provide habitat for other species, and allow for a sustainable future. Their voice is the strongest, and it is the voice that all local and state governments should listen to and act upon," said Ms Kelly.

"The clearing is done on dunes and foreshores to gain views and "privatise" beaches. It is done in bushland and forests to pre-empt rezoning or development. It is often done under the excuses of bushfire protection or weed control or under 2 ha clearing exemptions in the Native Vegetation Conservation Act," said Ms Kelly.

"However and for whatever reasons it is done it has to stop because when the sum of all the separate clearing incidents are added up, from Tweed in the far north of NSW to Bega in the far South the clearing of fragile ecosystems such as threatened species habitat, creek and river or catchment vegetation, wetlands and foreshores is unsustainable."

Ms Kelly said every council area suffered from the problem, which was compounded by the lack of action by State Government bodies. She said it was important for the State Government to speed up the Comprehensive Coastal Assessment and to deal with legislation that enabled some of the clearing to occur.

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## Latest News

# TAREE COUNCIL'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH CONCRETE GIVES KISS OF DEATH TO NORTH REDHEAD



*Created on Friday, 21 November 2003 11:00*

Taree Council's latest plans for North Redhead have been condemned as typically maximising concrete while minimising nature.

Referring to Taree Council's recently released Development Control Plan (DCP) for Figtree Hill Estate, the NSW environment organisation Total Environment Centre said the plan reflected the Council's usual "love affair with concrete"

"This DCP appears after a development application (DA) for the site was lodged with Council on the eve of the NSW Government's gazettal of its coastal protection policy SEPP 71. As a result PlanningNSW will not be scrutinizing the DA but there is nothing to stop the Minister from calling it in and that is what we have asked him to do," said coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"This North Redhead DCP includes putting asset protection zones (for bushfire clearing) in land zoned environment protection, eating away at wildlife corridors, rather than on the private development sites as they are meant to be. It also places a couple of rural residential development lots within the forested wildlife corridors. On top of that they are also amending the LEP to allow development in 7(a) environment protection sites overall.

"In our opinion it was bad enough that the site was approved for residential development at all, but now, even that isn't enough, with the remnant corridors that were meant to be retained being undermined," said Ms Kelly.

"No matter what Taree Council does in the way of planning and development it always ends up being the same - they cover the scenic beauty of the area with concrete and then declare they are carrying out sensible environmentally sustainable planning!" said TEC coastal campaigner Ms Fran Kelly

"We hope the Planning Department will step in this case before the North Redhead site is pushed any further by Taree Council," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## NATIVE VEGETATION DEAL FRACTURE



*Created on Friday, 21 November 2003 11:00*

"Recent statements by the Senior Vice President of the NSW Farmers Association and Sinclair Group negotiator, Rob Anderson make it clear their claims for rotational agricultural were a con and in fact were intended to allow broadscale clearing to continue on a massive scale.\* This is totally contrary to the policy to end broadscale land clearing. That part of the deal is now off," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The government has one chance to get this right. If they allow this loophole, then their environmental reputation will be torn to shreds in coming years. We urge them to amend the Native Vegetation Bill to eliminate any reference to rotational farming."

Brooke Flanagan, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council said: "There has already been over a million hectares cleared, illegally or through loopholes, in NSW. There is no way this giant new loophole can be allowed to become law. NSW should get on with the job of saving the bush and planting more - not letting the bulldozers run amok."

\* Mr Anderson recently told a farmer's meeting that they got agreement for remnant vegetation to be reclassified as regrowth for clearing - "Greens thought they could smell a rat but couldn't work out why - anyone with some imagination can work out rotational farming is a pretty generic term," he said (NSW Country Hour 13/11/03).

## Latest News

# CONSERVATIONISTS SLAM STATE GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN LAKE MACQUARIE COUNCIL LEP



*Created on Wednesday, 10 December 2003 11:00*

Conservationists have condemned interference by the NSW Government aimed at eroding environmental protection measures in the draft Lake Macquarie Local Environment Plan (LMLEP) 2003.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director Mr Jeff Angel said "This heavy handed approach by the State Government will serious compromise environmental protection measures included in the draft Lake Macquarie LEP".

The draft LMLEP has been with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) since November last year awaiting gazettal. Following lobbying from prospective developers and other vested interests the Government last week gave Lake Macquarie Council a verbal warning that unless environmental conservation zonings were removed from twenty properties, and replaced with zonings permitting more intense development, that the plan would not be gazetted.

"Such inappropriate interference by the State Government will do nothing to encourage other Councils to review outdated LEPs and introduce more environmentally responsible planning instruments. It sends a clear message to developers, however, that the Government is prepared to override environmental protection instruments for vested interests", Mr Angel said.

Several of the properties concerned are owned by the State Government sparking concerns that the government is seeking to maximise the value of the land as a prelude to sale.

"The Government has sought to maximise the development potential of several parcels of its own land in Lake Macquarie. This can only be a sign that they are planning to sell this land to developers", Mr Angel said.

The Centre will also be investigating a complaint to the Ombudsman.

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# Latest News

## SHOALHAVEN TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN A RECIPE FOR CITY WIDE TREE SLAUGHTER



*Created on Thursday, 18 December 2003 11:00*

A draft tree management policy adopted by Shoalhaven City Council this week is a thinly veiled plan for open slather tree felling the Total Environment Centre has warned.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "amendments to the plan adopted by Council this week make it little more than a blanket land clearing policy. It will allow city wide tree slaughter and create treeless urban wastelands".

Under the plan no consent will be required to remove any tree within 6 metres of a dwelling or 3 metres of an outbuilding on residential land or within 12 metres of a dwelling or 6 metres of an outbuilding or fence on rural land. In an extraordinary step a rule has also been introduced that will allow any tree on private land to be automatically removed where any part of a tree within the same land is above a line 45° from the vertical extension of the wall of any building on the land.

"There is no logical basis for the 45° rule or the other exemptions adopted by Council. No risk assessment will be required to determine whether a tree is safe and healthy or whether any real danger exists as long it fits these arbitrary rules. The effect of these measures will be to ensure that there are very few trees that cannot be automatically removed", Mr Martin said.

The plan also contains a provision that would extend the 45° rule to trees on neighbouring properties and public land.

"There is a major potential for the policy to create neighbourhood disputes and place pressure on public authorities to remove trees from reserves and other public land", Mr Martin said  
Council will consider the policy again next week when a special meeting of Council debates a rescission motion.

"Council's environmental credibility and the quality of Shoalhaven City's environment depend on this crazy and irresponsible policy being overturned", Mr Martin said.

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# Latest News

## Brigalow blockade receives peak group support



*Created on Tuesday, 03 February 2004 11:00*

The groups, including Greenpeace, Total Environment Centre, Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society, National Parks Association of NSW and Nature Conservation Council of NSW said, 'the future protection of the region was critical and was now a high priority for the environment movement. The breaking of the moratorium, has galvanised the western woodlands campaign, and it looks like we will return to the bad old days of ongoing confrontation'.

"There has been a clear breach of the moratorium, resulting in grave threats to natural and aboriginal cultural values. Only a few weeks ago, The Wilderness Society and Total Environment Centre were informed by the office of Natural Resources Minister, Craig Knowles that the moratorium would be respected. Serious cracks are appearing in the government's forest protection reputation," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The Carr Government has worked hard to gain a credible environmental image - controversy like this and a land use decision that fails to protect the large number of rare and threatened species and cultural areas in comprehensive new national parks, will throw all their hard work into the trash can. The battle for the western woodlands, will now receive a high level of ongoing attention from forest activists," said Francesca Andreoni, NSW Campaign Manager of The Wilderness Society.

"While much of the environment movement's focus has been on the east coast in past years, the movement's resources are now firmly devoted to the beleaguered western woodlands. The Brigalow South region, in particular has only 2.6% of the remaining vegetation in national parks and is a nationally recognised biodiversity hot spot," said Andrew Cox, Executive Officer of the National Parks Association of NSW.

National and state peak groups and the Western Conservation Alliance will maintain a high degree of cooperation in the campaign.

## Latest News

# ENVIRONMENT GROUPS REJECT DEVELOPERS' ATTEMPT TO CONTROL DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT



*Created on Monday, 16 February 2004 11:00*

The Total Environment Centre (TEC) and The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) have said Local Development Taskforce recommendations will deregulate development assessment at the expense of quality planning, environmental assessment and community consultation.

NSW environment groups have warned that proposed changes to planning laws, in a report by the State Government appointed Taskforce would result in a majority of residential developments proceeding without council assessment, opening up fragile environmental areas to poorly planned and destructive development.

"The recommendations would radically cut government regulation of developers' activities. They include opening the gates to residential developments occurring without council assessment in environmentally fragile areas," said Total Environment Centre campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The Local Development Taskforce is dominated by developers and has based its recommendations around anecdotal evidence provided by the development industry. The recommendations have been completely rejected by Local Government, professional planning associations, environment groups and the community," said NCC Urban and Coastal Planning Officer Craig Morrison.

"The impacts of planning deregulation on the NSW coastline and Blue Mountains in particular would be enormous. The Taskforce has made no consideration of environment, sustainable development, or impacts on the broader community," said Ms Kelly.

"The report fails to recognise incomplete or poorly prepared applications are the biggest factor in slowing down approval times. If local government simply rejected all incomplete or poorly prepared applications the approval process would become much faster," said Mr Morrison

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# Latest News

## NSW Government's SEPP 71 and land clearing changes positive steps for coastal protection



*Created on Friday, 20 February 2004 11:00*

A peak NSW Environment group has congratulated the NSW Government for strengthening its coastal protection and native vegetation regulations.

The Total Environment Centre said it would now be illegal for landowners on rural and rural-residential zoned land in the coastal zone to clear up to two hectares per year of native vegetation without permission as was allowed under the Native Vegetation Conservation Act.

"This will have a positive impact on the coast where large areas of rural zoned land are cleared annually with the intent of easing development and rezoning applications. This is a long overdue change," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The other significant change is to the coastal protection State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) 71. It closes a loophole that had allowed developers of large subdivisions to avoid State assessment under the SEPP by lodging several smaller lot applications,"

"Both these changes initiated by Planning Minister Craig Knowles, will improve coastal protection from Tweed in the north to Bega in the far south." Said Ms Kelly

"Every council and shire on the coast has lost vast expanses of its natural coastline to inappropriate clearing and subdivision development. SEPP 71 was a first step to try and prevent some of the worst decisions made by some of the most developer-friendly councils," said Ms Kelly.

"These changes should make life harder now for those that councils run by a majority that would be happy to see a coastline covered in concrete. Fortunately the Government has recognised that such a view is only held by a minority of vested interests," said Ms Kelly.

"The vast majority of coastal residents and visitors have been crying out for protection of the coast's native forests, heath, wetlands, creeks, lakes and foreshores and retention of the character of existing towns and villages through sustainable urban design. They are sick of councils that vote against sustainability."

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# Latest News

## Kempsey Mayor called on to take action to combat over-development in her Shire



*Created on Friday, 20 February 2004 11:00*

A peak NSW environment group has called on the mayor of Kempsey to start to immediately take action on Council to combat coastal over-development in the Shire by voting against inappropriate development.

The call comes following the NSW Government's changes to its coastal protection policy - SEPP 71, which close a loophole that had previously enabled developers to avoid State assessment by lodging large developments in under 25 lot stages.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said that while Mayor Hayes was part of a group that lobbied the Government to close the loophole, her support on council for destructive developments in the Shire should not continue, otherwise her actions would not match her words.

"The onus is now on Mayor Hayes to ensure she doesn't just stand back and let the developer block on her council approve the destruction of threatened species, or inappropriate subdivisions, or the build up of roads that will encourage urban sprawl in fragile coastal areas," said Ms Kelly.

"Towns like South West Rocks and Crescent Head are reeling under a multitude of recently approved and proposed inappropriate developments, thanks to decisions made on Kempsey Council," said Ms Kelly.

The council that is voted in at the local council elections in March will make or break these areas. If the council continues to vote for destructive developments, coastal protection will go by the wayside," said Ms Kelly.

"Mayor Hayes can only really build a reputation of supporting coastal protection by ensuring that she follows decisions on Kempsey Council that protect the coast."

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# Latest News

## TWEED VOTERS URGED REJECT DEVELOPERS IN GREEN SHEEP'S CLOTHING AT COUNCIL ELECTIONS



*Created on Monday, 23 February 2004 11:00*

A peak NSW environment group has urged Tweed residents to avoid electing developers and their mates including those dressed in "green sheep's clothing" at the March local council elections.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said that unless voters chose genuine pro-community and environment candidates, the Tweed's environmental decline would worsen considerably.

"The next election will make or break the Tweed. There are only a few standing councillors that have a track record of voting for sustainability, the environment and residential amenity rather than developer greed. The rest have been blatantly rubber stamping every development proposal that crosses their path over the past four years, no matter how negative its impact," said Ms Kelly.

"The developer councillors obviously know that most people are far more concerned about the Tweed's environment and town character than they will ever be, so in the run up to the elections some are busy trying to sell themselves as so-called optimistic environmentalists to cover up their anti-environment agenda," said Ms Kelly

"Others developer councillors continue to trumpet a develop-at-any-cost way of being, but regardless of what truth or spin this majority block of councillors follow, their voting patterns over the past four years should be proof of where they stand," said Ms Kelly.

"If anyone is at all concerned about a sustainable future for the Tweed and avoiding another four years of environmental destruction and loss of residential amenity, they should reject ALL developer councillors and any new candidates that are their running mates or are endorsed or preferenced by them at the March council elections," said Ms Kelly.

"In our view the councillors to avoid would be Warren Polglase, Lyn Beck, Bob Brinsmead, Gavin Lawrie, Wendy Marshall, and Philip Youngblutt."

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# Latest News

## Government urged to replace Hastings Council's "Kindergarten-standard" development plans



*Created on Monday, 01 March 2004 11:00*

A peak environment group has asked the NSW Government to intervene in a planning and development process being promoted by Hastings Council for an area between Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills.

Describing Hastings Council's approach to planning and development in the Hastings Urban Growth Strategy's Area 14 as "kindergarten stuff", Total Environment Centre (TEC) coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said: "the proposed combination of urban sprawl and huge concrete estates dressed up as retiree havens makes you wonder whether the Council understands the term 'planning'."

"There seems to be a standard followed by the council along the lines of spotting a bit of undeveloped land, drawing a circle around it and then attracting the most appalling proposals to fill it in," said Ms Kelly. "No wonder some of the most money-hungry developers around are being attracted to the Shire like vultures to a carcass."

"The HUGS plan is an example of an appalling exercise in substandard planning. If adopted it would lead to the further degradation of an already pressured natural coastline - foreshores, rainforest, lakes and creeks included. Lake Cathie's health problems should be a reminder that more of the same is unacceptable," said Ms Kelly.

"To the north of the HUGS area around Port Macquarie developers are awaiting the nod for their huge theme parks, estates and marinas. To the south the situation isn't much better. It is essential the Government intervenes."

"Planning that places the environment, landscape and residential amenity first should replace Hastings Council's approach based on developers' demands. The only way that is achievable under the current council is by experts at the head office of the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources directing the process," said Ms Kelly

Ms Kelly said that if the Shire was to become sustainable it was also crucial that residents changed the elected Council by choosing candidates that stood for the environment and residential amenity ahead of those who placed developers first, at the forthcoming elections.

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# Latest News

## AREA 14 - HASTINGS OVERDEVELOPMENT A HOT ISSUE



*Created on Wednesday, 03 March 2004 11:00*

"It's an unusually hysterical reaction obviously driven by concerns with the upcoming Council elections. TEC has closely examined the draft Master Plan for Area 14 and we are appalled by it. Any council that thinks this is adequate planning for such a sensitive region, does not deserve re-election," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"I question the timing of the master plan adoption - it is obviously intended to favour development interests, rather than those who wish to protect environmental and residential amenity. The push to have it adopted by the State Government under SEPP 71 - Coastal Protection, is simply scandalous. It bears no relationship to the sophisticated and well considered environmental sustainability principles found in SEPP 71."

"'Proactive planning', as the Mayor calls it does not mean you should always develop and give in, to 'inevitable coastal growth'. This is 'negative planning' and is inimical to a strong stand for environment protection."

"In our recent visits to the area, there were obviously massive environmental problems that were not being dealt with (for example, decline of Lake Cathie). Any new development will seriously exacerbate the situation. We have provided a number of detailed comments to the State Government on the Master Plan, associated developments and the threats to Lake Cathie," Mr Angel said.

# Latest News

## TEC to meet Hastings Mayor on Area 14



*Created on Thursday, 04 March 2004 11:00*

"As well as meeting the Mayor and senior officers, we are inviting a consolidated submission from local community groups concerned about the development issues and will be examining matters such as:

- Justification for choosing to develop the coastline ahead of previously preferred development areas;
- Impacts of a Greater Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills Township with 10,000 people;
- Large urban extension along the south of Lake Cathie and impact on the Lake;
- Urban consolidation versus urban sprawl;
- Sustainability of vegetation corridors, wetlands and threatened species across the area and impacts of housing 10,000 people on them;
- Increased sewerage and pumping into dunal area;
- Stormwater controls;
- Management of acid-sulphate soils;
- Water resource impacts;
- Cumulative impacts;
- Measures to ensure efficient energy and water use (re subdivision, infrastructure design);
- Adequacy of community consultation; and
- Implications of closely associated developments, such as Carnegie Cove."

# Latest News

## Keep Local Councils Out Of Developers' Clutches



*Created on Monday, 22 March 2004 11:00*

A NSW environment group has urged residents to be careful not to allow their local councils to remain or fall into developers' clutches at this Saturday's elections.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the 27th March Council elections were a chance for residents to gain some control over the future direction of their area but only if they voted for genuine community and environment representatives.

"Most Councils on the coast are controlled by developers, or those who will always put the interests of developers first. This is one of the main reasons why over development on the coast is now a major concern and why the natural coastline is under such pressure. On Saturday voters should be aware of who those people representing the minority developer interests are and avoid voting for them," said Ms Kelly.

"We recommend people carefully choose groups or individuals who genuinely represent the environment and community and follow their preferences carefully. In some cases this might be the Greens in others it might be resident networks, or community groups that have created their own teams or individuals to run," said Ms Kelly.

"Residents should be careful as well not to fall for false talk of caring for the environment that parties and individuals who represent developers' interests are using now," said Ms Kelly.

"People should get in touch with their local environment or community groups if they are not sure what to do. Contact those who they know have lobbied for better environment and residential outcomes in their local government areas over the past few years, including some current councillors, and ask their opinion," said Ms Kelly.

"The only way for there to be a sustainable future for the coast is for Councils to become more representative of the broader community by putting the environment and residential amenity ahead of developers' demands," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## RICHMOND COUNCIL SHOULD BE PROSECUTED OVER DYING LAKE



*Created on Friday, 23 April 2004 10:00*

A dying lake in the Broadwater National Park has resulted in calls on the NSW Government to prosecute Richmond Council for causing the problem and then failing to take any steps to solve it.

"Salty Lagoon in Broadwater National Park has been so badly impacted by years of being treated as a sewage dump that it has now reached the point of not being able to cope anymore," said Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said.

"In the last two years in particular the lake has had almost permanent algal growth over much of its surface and extensive stretches of dead vegetation around its shores as a result of the huge amount of nutrients and pollutants that enter its system from the Evans Head sewage treatment plant (STP). The regulatory authorities must act to the full extent of the law, " said Ms Kelly.

"Richmond Council should be urgently taking steps to reverse the situation caused in part by its secondary treatment STP being unable to cope with the load it receives. Instead the Council is denying there is anything wrong while producing and promoting yet more plans for extensive growth," said Ms Kelly.

"To make matters worse, the council is again promoting the development of the Iron Gates site at Evans Head that suffered badly at the hands of a developer before being stopped by the courts a few years ago. It seems to have no concern at all for the natural environment or even the long term survival of its own villages" said Ms Kelly.

"It is time that councils like Richmond implemented good planning practices based on environmental sustainability rather than thinking in terms of what developers want, growth for growth sake and what can be monetarily gained in the here and now," said Ms Kelly.

TEC have asked the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources - the Hon Craig Knowles, and the Minister for Environment - the Hon Bob Debus, to take action to ensure the lake's health is given priority and that their Departments ensure Richmond Council's water and sewerage problems are solved before it gives any more thought to further urban expansion.

"We have also asked that the Iron Gates site be taken out of the Council's hands. We are hoping that ultimately an opportunity for the government to buy the site for addition to the national park will arise and be taken up," said Ms Kelly.

For further information contact Fran Kelly or Jeff Angel on 9299 5599/5680

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## Latest News

# FEDERAL LABOR PROMISE TO PROTECT COAST WELCOMED BY NSW ENVIRONMENT GROUP



*Created on Tuesday, 04 May 2004 10:00*

A NSW environment group has welcomed the Federal Opposition promise to take substantial steps to protect the Australian coast from inappropriate development.

The Total Environment Centre which has worked on coastal protection and problems with over development for many years said the proposal made by Federal Labor leader Mark Latham and Shadow Environment Minister Kelvin Thompson to work with State governments to advance coastal protection through better planning would be a huge improvement on the current situation.

"Although protection of the coast falls largely under State and Local power, the lack of action at these levels to stop the problem at its source through strong and unambiguous planning legislation has been frustrating to say the extreme," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Substantial Federal input that prevents some of the worst excesses of overdevelopment would be welcome indeed and planning is the key word."

"Over the past few years we have documented and been informed of hundreds of inappropriate proposals and approvals that are now being seen in the concrete sprawling from Tweed to Bega Shires in NSW. In other states the problems are no less with a spate of canal estate proposals recently coming to the fore in Victoria and Tasmania and the others states largely continuing with their anything goes on the coast attitude," said Ms Kelly.

"One of the main reasons for the excessive sprawl so familiar to anyone who lives beside or has visited the coast in recent years is a complete lack of ability by so many local councils to do anything other than rubber stamp inappropriate proposals by developers and base all their planning around the demands from those same developers. In fact in so many cases the councils are the developers or mates of the developers."

"In tandem with this problem has been a lack of strong action by most State Governments to ensure that proper planning procedures are followed and environmental protection legislation is implemented where necessary. The excessive clearing, and loss and degradation of coastal vegetation, dunes, wetlands, lakes, rivers and estuaries and the water and other infrastructure problems being experienced are some of the side effects of a climate where speculators and developers rule," said Ms Kelly.

"The vast majority of people living on the coast place proper coastal protection at the top of their wish list. At the last council elections in NSW most candidates promised to protect the natural environment from inappropriate development. Even the candidates standing for developers promised the same knowing it would get them votes. It goes without saying that any moves to protect the coast would be popular.

"The further protection of wetlands through Ramsar listing, a willingness to use the EP&BC act more to provide stronger protection against inappropriate proposals are two areas we welcome in addition to the forming of better planning legislation that places the land's capability and environmental constraints at the forefront. We look forward to seeing the details as they emerge," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## NSW Environment Group urges Coffs Harbour Council and State Government to protect Corindi Beach Wetl



*Created on Monday, 10 May 2004 10:00*

A NSW environment group has urged Coffs Harbour Council and the Minister for Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources to ensure that an old approval for a development in a wetland behind Corindi Beach is not allowed to proceed.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the proposed development in the highly flood prone SEPP 14 listed wetland should never have been approved in the first place because of the potential environmental impacts on such a fragile site.

"It lies behind the sand dunes only metres from the beach. The former Pristine Waters Council knew how sensitive the site was because they applied such stringent conditions to their approval that it would be almost impossible to not break them. They included no clearing, filling, constructing a levee or draining the land, which begs the question why they ever approved it at all," said Ms Kelly.

"However, this didn't stop the construction of a road on the site, which included the use of fill, and it didn't stop Pristine Waters Council approving a building application which shows that without enforcement those conditions are meaningless," said Ms Kelly.

"Our concerns have also been compounded by the fact that an approved and now cleared 52-lot subdivision site adjacent to, and upslope of, the wetland has already changed the flooding pattern for the area. If this wetland development goes ahead, the flooding is likely to increase further as the site's permeable surfaces are covered."

"Had Pristine Waters still been in charge of this site we would have lost hope that it would be protected. However, the change of council to Coffs Harbour gives us hope. If they and DIPNR combine to ensure the conditions are enforced, the site could be saved" said Ms Kelly.

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## Latest News

# TAREE COUNCIL'S NEW PLAN TURNS HALLIDAYS POINT INTO UGLY SUBURBIA



*Created on Thursday, 27 May 2004 10:00*

A review of strategic planning by Taree Council will turn what remains of the natural environment of Hallidays Point into suburban sprawl warns a NSW environment organisation.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the new Hallidays Point Strategic Planning Review 2004 exemplified all that was wrong with a planning system driven solely by the demands of developers and land speculators.

"At least a third of this Plan details requests by landowners in environmentally significant rural zones for rezoning to allow more intense development. Despite the plan's rhetoric, it's obvious what is driving it," said Ms Kelly.

"Like the original 1996 then 2000 planning strategy, the latest review has stated aims and objectives that include the need to protect the natural environment, to retain the physical separation of villages, consider that land is finite and to designate appropriate land uses in areas between villages to maintain Halliday's natural and scenic qualities. The contents and resulting actions clearly contradict these principles," said Ms Kelly.

"The Council has over the years gradually downgraded and overturned its environmentally protected areas and corridors in favour of a rezoning bonanza for certain landowners. Despite spending huge amounts of money on numerous environmental reports and maps to guide its planning, it has chosen to ignore them".

"Its attitude towards retention and protection of native vegetation, foreshore areas, forests and threatened species habitat, wetlands and wildlife corridors verges on contempt. Does the council really think the area can remain sustainable after the loss of so much of the natural environment?" said Ms Kelly.

"What makes matters worse is that whenever it is challenged on its environmental planning record, Taree Council responds goes on about how much it is doing for the environment. It says one thing, while plainly doing the opposite."

"We are urging the State Government to intervene to ensure the latest review is rejected and the original Hallidays Point Development Strategy is revisited to set mandatory wildlife corridors, environmentally protected areas and to bring any areas earmarked for development under the scrutiny of the head office of the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR). We have also requested a moratorium be placed on rezoning until an environmentally responsible plan is in place." said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## Government Department Questioned over Alleged North Coast Illegal Land Clearing



*Created on Thursday, 10 June 2004 10:00*

An alleged illegal land clearing incident on the NSW north coast has sparked calls for an inquiry into the incident and the performance of the region's Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR). The call by peak NSW environment group - Total Environment Centre - follows apparent endorsement, by the Grafton based DIPNR, of the bulldozing of coastal forest at Corindi, despite evidence that it should have been stopped.

"The land in question was mapped as mature forest, it was in the coastal zone where few land clearing exemptions exist. It contained Aboriginal scar trees and had recorded threatened species. Yet we understand DIPNR deemed it suitable to allow the clearing to continue by stating it was all regrowth," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

Between 10 and 30 ha of coastal forest were bulldozed over several weeks before the clearing was stopped. And then it took the local Coffs Harbour Council to bring it to a halt under a Tree Preservation Order. Clearly something has gone badly wrong with the regional department that is meant to be protecting native vegetation," said Mr Angel.

"We want to know how and why this has been allowed to happen. Why was it left to the local council to take the appropriate action. Is this the only incident where this has occurred, or are there more on the North Coast?"

"We need an urgent inquiry into the matter and we have initially sought a response from DIPNR's Director General. This case has state-wide significance and we hope the end result will be a stronger and more capable regulator that ensures native vegetation is protected," said Mr Angel.

For more information contact Jeff Angel or Fran Kelly on 9299 5599/5680

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# Latest News

## Government Department must take strong action to Stop Land Clearing in NSW Coastal Zone



*Created on Monday, 02 August 2004 10:00*

Unless the Government takes consistent and strong action against illegal and questionable land clearing in the NSW coastal zone, it will continue to surge despite recent legislative changes that should be preventing it, a peak NSW Environment organisation said today.

The NSW based Total Environment Centre said despite recent changes to the state's Native Vegetation Act that have ruled out clearing exemptions in the coastal zone, land clearers are continuing to remove native forest, heath and other bushland at a frightening and unsustainable pace.

"Reports of lack of action in stopping questionable and illegal land clearing in areas such as Richmond, Coffs Harbour, Nambucca, Kempsey, Taree, Wollongong Shires for example have shown that legislative changes to prevent clearing in the coastal zone will make little difference unless court action is taken to back those changes," said Ms Kelly.

"The wider community is losing confidence in the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) - the Government department that should be stemming the deliberate destruction of native vegetation. They can ill afford this with the new vegetation laws coming in," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly

"Now is the time for DIPNR to get out there and take strong and consistent action against the clearers who are more often than not developers and land owners lobbying for rezoning or development on their land and pre-emptively destroying its environmental values," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## CARAVAN RESORT PROPOSAL ALONG SCENIC RIVER FRONT IN SOUTH WEST ROCKS SLAMMED



*Created on Friday, 13 August 2004 10:00*

NSW environment group Total Environment Centre has slammed a proposal for a large caravan resort next to the Macleay River at South West Rocks.

TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said it was a highly inappropriate development for such a low lying flood prone area that is not even zoned to allow such intense development.

"The first stage of this proposal contains 73 caravans, cabins and associated facilities, the second stage increases it by more than half again and encroaches right into protected wetlands.," said Ms Kelly.

"It's completely out of place for this stretch of land lying along the Macleay River and flanked by SEPP 14 wetlands. It would be incredibly hard to deal adequately with sewage disposal and stormwater, especially when there is heavy rain and in high visitation periods."

"Kempsey Council should ensure they place an objection with the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) who are assessing the proposal under SEPP 71 right now, requesting it be refused,"

"We hope they will as it contravenes their own planning controls which zone the land 7(d) for scenic protection," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## NSW GOVERNMENT URGED TO DIRECT TAREE COUNCIL'S PLANNING



*Created on Friday, 20 August 2004 10:00*

Pre-emptive and alleged illegal clearing and rezoning of protected lands for development on Greater Taree Council's coast has led a peak NSW environment group to call for State Government intervention.

The Total Environment Centre has urged the NSW Government in a letter to make the Council's LGA a priority area for State-directed planning and coastal protection.

"The speed and extent with which land of high conservation value is being cleared in the lead up to or following rezoning approval by Taree Council is cause enough for the State Government to step in now," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"There is an urgent need for both the regional Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) to take strong action against clearing and for the Minister to take the lead on directing planning and development decisions in this Shire."

"In just the last few months there has been a spate of approved rezonings of protected lands, the scuttling of a recommended Tree Preservation Order, and alleged illegal and pre-emptive clearing in the lead up to or following rezoning recommendations of lands containing high conservation value vegetation and threatened species. There has also been the replacement of good environmental studies and strategies with those commissioned by and favouring developers and the incorrect placing of developers' asset protection zones within wildlife corridors," said Ms Kelly.

"This pattern has occurred in the Harrington, Wallabi Point, Old Bar and Hallidays Points areas of the coastal zone so it is hardly isolated incidents here and there," said Ms Kelly.

"Advice and recommendations by Taree Council's Director of Planning and Building coupled with approval by a majority of Taree Councillors have led to this sorry state."

"It has got to the point now that unless the Minister intervenes to counter this pattern and DIPNR takes strong action against clearing, there will be little left to deal with in the not too distant future," said Ms Kelly

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# Latest News

## LAKE MACQUARIE COUNCIL URGED TO REJECT BONNELLS BAY REZONING



*Created on Thursday, 26 August 2004 10:00*

TEC has warned the Council that an environmental study supporting the application is flawed in its conclusions and should not be used as a justification for approving the development.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has urged Lake Macquarie City Council to reject a proposal to rezone approximately half a 7.5a parcel of environmentally sensitive land at Bonnells Bay for residential development. TEC has warned the Council that an environmental study supporting the application is flawed in its conclusions and should not be used as a justification for approving the development.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "The proposed rezoning would eliminate key areas and severely diminish the conservation value of the remaining environmental protection lands. The environmental study supporting the proposal also fails to study adequately consider the impact of the development on the threatened Wallum Froglet and the threatened plant species *Angophora inopina* and *Tetratheca juncea*"

The site at 270 Fishery Point Road Bonnells Bay is presently zoned 7(1) and 7(2) Environmental Protection. It is now proposed to rezone approximately half the 7(2) land on the site for residential development. The impact on threatened species of edge effects from any residential development such as weed invasion, predation by domestic animals and urban runoff are not adequately considered by the environmental study.

TEC has also questioned the adequacy of a proposed 10-20 metre buffer around watercourse and a 40 metre buffer to wetlands on the site.

"We do not believe that the proposed buffer zones are sufficient to protect water quality in the watercourse and wetland areas", Mr Martin said.

TEC has also told Council that approval of the rezoning would represent a disturbing erosion of the environmental credentials of the recently gazetted Lake Macquarie LEP 2004.

"Environmental protection zones in the LEP are already a compromise. It is very worrying to see an attempt by developers to erode one of these zones only months after LEP's gazettal. Approval of this rezoning would be sure to invite similar attempts by developers to undermine environmental protection areas throughout the city", Mr Martin said.

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# Latest News

## Eurobdoalla's Unsold And Empty Properties Shows Need To Stop New Urban Sprawl And Over-Developments



*Created on Tuesday, 07 September 2004 10:00*

Following a recent visit to the Eurobodalla Shire, TEC's coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said she was astounded at the level of empty properties, which were either uninhabited investment or holiday homes or which were failing to sell.

"It appears the demand for coastal properties that was occurring only a year ago has started to turn in on itself. The supply of buyers that can afford the prices now asked seems to be drying up. So why would the local Council and State Government allow thousands of new carbon copy estates to go ahead under such circumstances," said Ms Kelly.

"A surge in demand from those leaving the cities for the coast or investing with a view to moving there in the future resulted in a spiralling of property prices and numerous applications from speculators for rural property rezoning, and for existing residential zoned land to be developed over the past few years. It all happened at once and now it appears that there is an oversupply. There are only so many people that can afford to spend so much on coastal property this far away from the cities," said Ms Kelly .

"The Long Beach Estate is an example of the kind of development that has gone on in recent years that ignores the natural environment and is counter to good planning practices. The destruction of old growth forest, around wetlands, creeks and by the ocean and Reserves that occurred as the land was cleared for this estate is sadder still when you see how many huge mansions and cleared lots remain unsold or empty. It is a lesson in what not to allow for all those responsible for making planning and development decisions on the coast" said Ms Kelly.

"Now is the greatest opportunity to ensure good, strong, detailed environmental planning occurs on a regional to a local level that looks at what areas are okay to be developed in the future, what areas should be left well alone and that places the natural environment, limited water supplies, adequate infrastructure and residential amenity well ahead of developers' demands."

"This should rule out endless urban sprawl joining one village to the next, development right around fragile lakes, wetlands and creeks or rivers, foreshore development and the type of subdivisions that destroy every bit of natural vegetation. It should make planners consider what resources are available and the limits to those resources. There is a chance for what is so beautiful and attractive about the coast to be retained rather than allowing for the lot to be replaced by concrete. Now is a great opportunity for such planning to occur," said Ms Kelly.

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# Latest News

## ENVIRONMENT GROUP URGES PREMIER TO SAVE KEMPSEY'S HERITAGE-LISTED POINT PLOMER



*Created on Friday, 24 September 2004 10:00*

### ENVIRONMENT GROUP URGES PREMIER TO SAVE KEMPSEY'S HERITAGE-LISTED POINT PLOMER

A peak environment group has urged the Premier to save the heritage-listed Point Plomer rustic road at Crescent Head from sealing and sure fire development.

The Total Environment Centre has written to Premier Bob Carr urging him to visit the area to understand the importance of protecting Point Plomer Road, which was recently listed by the National Trust as one of Australia's most endangered places.

TEC's coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said the road's tarring would "guarantee that the urban sprawl and overdevelopment eating up so much of the coast would creep over the area, which leads to Limeburners Nature Reserve and runs through protected wetland and lagoon, reserve and littoral rainforest."

"We have asked the Premier to step in to protect Point Plomer road, as Kempsey Council have determined to tar parts of it by November despite their earlier moratorium over its sealing,"

"The Council once recognised the importance of retaining that rustic road as a means of protecting the heritage and fragile environment through which it meanders. We aren't sure what has changed but the arguments of safety and costs as reasons to tar leave more questions than answers," said Ms Kelly.

"To tar some sections so speeding up the traffic will increase the chance of accidents on both the sealed and unsealed sections. Tarred and straight roads don't automatically equate to safe roads , if they did you would barely ever see an accident on freeways or motorways. As for the costs, the half a million quoted for just a small section would be equivalent to years of maintenance costs on the existing gravel roads," said Ms Kelly.

TEC has backed other local and state environment and heritage groups in calling on the Premier to create a new category of adequately funded road - "Rustic Roads - never to be sealed", and for the Goolawah Reserve through which Point Plomer Road winds to be added to the national park estate.

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# Latest News

## TWEED COUNCILLOR FUNDING SHOWS SUSTAINABLE PLANNING ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL DEVELOPER DONATIONS ARE



*Created on Wednesday, 20 October 2004 10:00*

Cashed up developers using hundreds of thousands of dollars to ensure they get control of local councils should be something relegated to the past a peak environment group said today following revelations of Tweed Council's electoral funding returns.

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said unless developers were taken out of the political process it would be almost impossible to achieve sustainable planning.

"Most underfunded communities do not have the ability to use extraordinary sums of cash to try and persuade people into voting for them. The fact that in Tweed the pro-community and environment candidates missed out by 13 votes is an incredible feat in the face of the relentless propaganda coming from the side representing greed and self-interest," said Ms Kelly.

"Democratic elections become a sham when those with the money, seeking to make yet more money, can exercise excessive influence. This is particularly stark at local government level where developers trick people into voting for them by claiming they stand for the environment and community while they really only stand for themselves."

"The saddest thing is that by gaining council control, those whose only interest is to make a killing from the rezonings and developments approved by their mates, are effectively writing off the future for everyone else," said Ms Kelly.

"I doubt that so many in the community would vote for these people if they really could see behind the smoke and mirrors. If developer donations were banned there would be less chance of the kind of outcomes we have now occurring where developers almost always win a majority on councils and therefore get to dictate what happens to an area's planning and development outcomes,"

"The ban should occur at the State and even Federal level as well. It would be far more democratic if a level playing field existed," said Ms Kelly. .

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# Latest News

## TWEED COUNCILLOR ELECTION FUNDING QUESTIONS



*Created on Wednesday, 20 October 2004 10:00*

Total Environment Centre coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said unless developers were taken out of the political process it would be almost impossible to achieve sustainable planning.

"Most underfunded communities do not have the ability to use extraordinary sums of cash to try and persuade people into voting for them. The fact that in Tweed the pro-community and environment candidates missed out by 13 votes is an incredible feat in the face of the relentless propaganda coming from the side representing greed and self-interest," said Ms Kelly.

"Democratic elections become a sham when those with the money, seeking to make yet more money, can exercise excessive influence. This is particularly stark at local government level where developers trick people into voting for them by claiming they stand for the environment and community while they really only stand for themselves."

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"The ban should occur at the State and even Federal level as well. It would be far more democratic if a level playing field existed," said Ms Kelly.

# Latest News

## TAREE COUNCIL'S LOSS OF REZONING POWERS SHOULD END THEIR DEVELOPER-DICTATED PLANNING



*Created on Friday, 22 October 2004 10:00*

The removal of Taree Council's ability to rezone coastal land until a new plan done with professional State Agency staff is in place should end their tendency to zone according to developer dictates a peak environment group said today.

Total Environment Centre's coastal campaigner Fran Kelly, said instructions given to Taree Council by the NSW Government to cease rezoning until they have worked out a joint integrated plan with the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural resources "could not have come sooner."

"The majority of Taree councillors and the Director of Building and Planning at Taree Council seemed hell-bent on a course of rezoning and developing and undermining sound environmental planning. There have been a litany of complaints as a result," said Ms Kelly.

"The environmental status of the land didn't seem to matter if a landowner wanted to make a killing on it, usually that took precedence," said Ms Kelly

"The council made a mockery of what planning is meant to be about. In the last few years there has been a widespread loss of crucial wildlife corridors, impacts on wetlands and water resources and the spread of expensive housing estates in every direction."

"Planning should be about the future sustainability of an area, looking at the land's capability and suitability, environmental constraints, keeping urban centres and villages separated, infrastructure needs and the ability for natural resources such as water to cope. This was given a back seat in the drive to keep developing," said Ms Kelly.

"Without adequate resources or a healthy natural environment, there is no long term base for a growing population or for the economy. We hope that the outcome of the integrated plan is one that will give this and future generations part of the Mid North Coast to be proud of," said Ms Kelly.

"As one of the worst councils on the Mid North Coast it has deservedly been given these instructions ahead of any other council. It could not have come sooner, but it would be good to see the same occur in other mid north coast council areas with similar problems," said Ms Kelly

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## Latest News

# SOUTH COAST MAJOR DEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM BEST CHANCE TO END DEVELOPER-DICTATED PLANNING



*Created on Friday, 22 October 2004 10:00*

NSW peak environment group Total Environment Centre has described the south coast major development moratorium as the "best chance to end developer-dictated planning decisions and to implement a sustainable future "

TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly said "most planning to date on the south coast has been based on the rezoning and development demands of land owners and speculators rather than the capability and suitability of the land,"

"The moratorium from Nowra south will allow a step back to try and turn things around and implement good environmental planning based on ecological sustainability. Unless this is done, vital infrastructure, water resources, sustainable agriculture and fisheries and the environment will be undermined," said Ms Kelly.

"There has been a spate of carbon copy monolithic housing estates springing up along the coastline over the past few years in particular, from Bega to Sydney, with little thought given to impacts on water resources, waste and sewage demands, infrastructure and services such a transport and health care,"

"The environment has suffered enormously with loss of bushland, wildlife, habitat for threatened species, wetlands, lakes and rivers impacted by pollution and sediment filled run off, and foreshore areas increasingly "privatised" as private houses dominate dunes," .

"The very reasons people have moved to the south coast are being destroyed, and despite a huge vacancy rate, with much of the growth being in holiday and investment properties the growth seemed set to continue. This break is the best thing that could have happened," said Ms Kelly.

"We congratulate the NSW Government for taking this step and have hope that the future strategic planning that takes place at State and Local level is something that puts the environment and residential amenity first and will be something to hold up as an example to other coastal areas in Australia."

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# Latest News

## TAREE COUNCIL DELETES NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



*Created on Tuesday, 14 December 2004 11:00*

Total Environment Centre's coastal planning campaigner Fran Kelly said the decision -endorsed by Taree Council at a recent meeting meant "it couldn't even be bothered to pretend it cared about the environment, natural resources or even the environmental viability of its coastal villages any more,"

"They've decided that real conservation of the natural environment via zoning is too hard, leaving it to measures that have no legal weight or method of implementation. In others words they will delete the natural environment from their agenda," said Ms Kelly.

"Since they don't want to do professional planning under the Act, the Planning Minister should make it official and completely remove their planning powers."

"Planning is meant to be about balancing the needs of the environment, society and the economy, but Taree Council seems to care only about the economic wellbeing of a few land speculators or developers. That's it." said Ms Kelly.

"Although these council decisions are unlikely to be endorsed, especially as they ignore current directions they have been given by DIPNR, they again give out the sad message to any landholder keen to make a buck, that the natural environment has no place in the Taree Shire's landscape. It is these messages that encourage the speculative land clearing occurring across the Manning.

# Latest News

## Shoalhaven Election Donations - new law call



*Created on Friday, 17 December 2004 11:00*

The funding returns which show a total of \$91,000 to the Shoalhaven Independents Group headed by Mayor Greg Watson, most of which was from real estate development and associated industries were described by the Total Environment Centre as "further entrenching community scepticism about the integrity of local government".

"The funding enabled this group to spend \$96,000 on TV, radio, and newspaper advertisements, as well as letterboxing countless rounds of brochures, postcards and other material, saturating the electorate with their propaganda and making all other candidates fade into insignificance on the publicity front," said TEC coastal campaigner Fran Kelly.

"The amounts donated, some of which came to more than \$10,000 from individual development companies registered outside the Shoalhaven helped ensure the Shoalhaven Independents Group got a majority on Council. No one else stood a chance," said Ms Kelly.

"Some of the donors have proposals for subdivisions, rezonings and development in the Shoalhaven now. It brings into question the whole process of local government elections and makes it seem peculiar that councillors are legally forbidden from voting on matters to do with land they or a relative owns, yet can vote on the projects of an individual or company that has helped get them elected through major donations to their election campaign."

"No wonder the public so often perceives their local council as representing the interests of a few rather than the entire electorate, not necessarily voting on the full merits of a development or planning issue, and ignoring matters such as the environment and residential amenity. This election funding issue makes the idea that local government elections are truly democratic a bit of a farce really," said Ms Kelly

"We have written to the Local Government Minister, Tony Kelly, requesting that he reform the laws with what would be popular and morally difficult to challenge changes to the Local Government Act. Changes we have suggested include preventing councillors from voting on development or rezoning matters connected to organisations or individuals who have donated to their election campaign; capping the extent of donations and expenditure on publicity that can occur at local government elections, and making all candidates publically declare any donations made prior to each election".

For further information

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# Latest News

## New planning template will lower environmental standards



*Created on Tuesday, 01 November 2005 11:00*

A proposed standardisation of all Local Environment Plans (LEPs) across NSW will lower planning, development and environmental protection standards to the level of the worst councils in the State according to a peak environment group.

The Total Environment Centre has criticised the LEP Standard Template as being a "based on the lowest common denominator" rather than raising all councils' planning instruments to a level that truly reflects the need for sustainable planning and development outcomes in 2005.

"The LEP gives even more flexibility to councils to add inappropriate land uses to environment protection zones, rural zones and residential zones. At the same time there is no opportunity for councils to tailor environment protection zones to clearly protect particular fragile environments such as wetlands, escarpments, dunal systems and creeks" said Coastal Planning Campaigner Fran Kelly.

"Where councils have spent many years developing stronger LEPs that truly reflect the different types of environment in their locality, while offering certainty to developers and the community, this "one-size-fits-all" LEP will take them back to a broad brush approach that offers maximum flexibility to developers and minimum community and environment protection," said Ms Kelly

"The LEP not only endorses councils that allow major development in environment protection zones, but enables other councils to follow the same path of those that have no concern for the environment. With pressure from developers to do so, it will be harder for all councils to resist, especially with threatened court challenges."

"There is no environment protection zone that prohibits development, including in national parks. And most of the environment protection provisions are just set out as weak considerations rather than actual rules. It is not surprising that the property industry and developers have so enthusiastically endorsed this LEP Template," said Ms Kelly.

"While there is a need to try and standardise and simplify some aspects of planning it should not be at the expense of good sustainable outcomes. The LEP template fails to change the problem of flexibility and ambiguity in council LEPs that has caused so much grief."

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# Natural Areas

## Offsets for environmental damage



*Created on Thursday, 22 November 2007 00:56*

Biobanking was developed by the NSW Government during 2006 and legislation was passed by Parliament. It aims to apply an environmental assessment methodology to urban, mining and industrial land clearing proposals to assess what offsets may be required. The developer then needs to buy biodiversity credits based on native vegetation that meets the offset and needs to be better protected or managed.

That's the theory but will it work? Environment groups don't think so as the government's model is optional (developers can cherry-pick weaker processes and bypass biobanking). As a result, the whip hand is with the developers who are telling the government that if Biobanking is to be used by them, then it must be a weak instrument that does not stand in the way of more urban development in biodiverse areas.

Biobanking also creates a separate set of rules for land clearing to those that apply to farmers. It's not equitable.

Biobanking Methodology Review (12/12/07)

Biobanking - Red flag variation concerns (21/11/07)

Biobanking critique (2006)

In 2002, the peak environment groups issued a critique about offsets.