

URBAN SUSTAINABILITY MEDIA ARCHIVE: 2005-16



The environmental footprint of a city is enormous - many times bigger than its physical size. Cities are a drain on resources, they create pollution which extends over vast areas, and without careful management they degrade and often destroy biodiversity.

City residents are entitled to a healthy environment in which to live. TEC is campaigning for sustainable cities with clean air, improved public transport, protected parklands and bushland, sustainable water use, and binding environmental principles on developers

Latest News

Light Rail Tree Impacts - which trees?



Created on Tuesday, 09 February 2016 16:59

Click on the section below to see which trees are being removed, have been removed or will be subject to 'pruning' [as at January 2016]:

South Dowling to Sydney Boys High, Anzac Pde

Sydney Girls High to Lang Rd

Lang Rd to Sports Centre, Moore Pk

Robertson Rd to Alison/Anzac intersection

Alison Rd to Doncaster Ave

Doncaster Ave to Darley Rd

Darley Rd to 90 Alison Rd

90 Alison to Church/Wansey Rds

Wansey Rd

High St

Anzac Rd to Abbottford St

Abbottford St to Ascot St

Latest News

Historic Trees Planted for the ANZACS - Next for Light Rail Chainsaw



Created on Tuesday, 26 January 2016 17:39

Light rail builders, ALTRAC and NSW Transport are targeting historic fig trees planted in memory of the Anzacs, as they begin a new round of tree removals on Wednesday, 27 January, 2016

“Documents released this month show a significant number of trees along Anzac Parade to be removed or are under threat. Initial tree destruction is taking place at the Albert ‘Tibby’ Cotter Bridge and Wansey Road tomorrow with Anzac Parade next in line,” said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Total Environment Centre.

Local resident, Ingrid Maganov said: “All Australians can recall the history of our brave ANZAC diggers and the ultimate sacrifice they gave at Gallipoli.”

“However, there probably are less who can recall the moment in history when those brave men and women marched down the boulevard from the old Kensington Racecourse parade grounds along the avenue, known then as Randwick Road, to Circular Quay.”

“This sacrifice was commemorated after the Great War, with the widening of Randwick Road and the renaming of it to Anzac Parade. In 1917 there was a commemorative planting of additional fig trees along both sides, for much of its length. These trees will be 100 years old next year.”

“The history of Centennial Parklands recognises them as representative “of one of the most iconic and significant avenue plantings in the Sydney metropolitan region”.

Jeanette Brokman of Better Planning Network called on the Baird Government, “to think again. There are a number of key issues that should be changed to make sure this light rail route is environmentally sensitive. We can do better.”

Latest News

BAIRD GOES CHRISTMAS CHOPPING



Created on Wednesday, 23 December 2015 12:16

Published on Wednesday, 23 December 2015 12:16

TEC and local residents will remain on alert and keep campaigning throughout the Christmas period following the NSW Government and Transport NSW's decision to begin the needless destruction of over 400 trees in Randwick between Christmas and New Year, Total Environment Centre said today.

VIDEO

The destruction of up to 20 trees of 'exceptional significance' around Addison and Wansey Road in less than 5 days is to make way for the Randwick section of the Sydney Light Rail project, despite practical alternatives and taking advantage of concerned residents, many of whom will be on holiday with their families.

"This cynical exercise exposes manipulative and hypocritical management. Randwick residents are about to return from their Christmas holidays to a scene of destruction, finding themselves having been blindsided by the NSW Government. The Baird government should pull back and modify its plans," said TEC's Jeff Angel.

"We are completely shocked," said Rickie-Lee McLaurin-Smith of Keeping Randwick's Trees, a local group which has been active for over two years. "Transport Minister Constance and the project operators have responded to the sudden swell of community concern by advancing tree removals forward and when many people will be away."

Ms McLaurin-Smith said light rail "should provide an improvement to the city's environmental and social amenity. But this is a degradation of one of the city's few urban sanctuaries – a group of huge trees that sustains precious bird and animal life and provides cool, clean air to thousands of cyclists and pedestrians."

"Transport NSW and its contractors will be spending the holiday season with chainsaws in their hands killing perfectly healthy and significant trees for a transport system that should pride itself on going around trees, not through them."

Many of the trees along the route could be spared with simple modifications that were in the proposal originally approved by Randwick Council.

Latest News

Randwick's Heritage Trees should not be turfed



Created on Wednesday, 16 December 2015 13:33

Just as scientists predict 2016 will be the hottest year on record, valuable trees over one hundred years old are due to be unnecessarily sacrificed to the new light rail from the City to Randwick, unless government and the Randwick Racecourse listen to community concerns, said TEC today.

"A cheaper alternate route offering better access to the racecourse for punters, would also save a stand of heritage trees that provide vital shade, habitat and clean air," said TEC executive director Jeff Angel, "but unfortunately the Australian Turf Club has its own agenda." Mr Angel said, "the Turf Club should take a more responsible corporate attitude towards the environment surrounding the racecourse, and support the alternative route which was originally presented to Randwick Council."

Randwick Council has responded to community concern with a series of bold signs in Randwick on Alison Road that call for the route to be amended to spare native birds and other animals, as well as ancient fig trees, from the chopping block.

"These trees provide irreplaceable natural assets – you cannot simply plant a new one and hope it will not only survive but shelter a bio-diverse range of species. The sensible cost effective course of action is to work around mature trees. If you want to talk financial value – these trees are worth many millions of dollars to present and future generations."

TEC's Urban Sanctuary campaign is supporting residents and Randwick Council:

Latest News

MANLY VALE BUSHLAND DESTRUCTION SELLS OUT COMMUNITY SAYS TEC



Created on Thursday, 08 October 2015 14:04

A massive expansion of Manly Vale Public School must not come at the expense of threatened species and the destruction of public bushland around Manly Dam the Total Environment Centre said today.

After a recent site visit TEC's Urban Sanctuary team could not believe that NSW Public Works and the Education Department would consider the destruction of threatened species habitat on 'very high conservation land' to exponentially expand a school with a reputation for environmental excellence.

"This is not just a precious piece of public land in the Manly area but it is special to all of Sydney", said Urban Sanctuary campaigner David Burgess.

"You just don't find this much intact bushland this close to the CBD. We have asked Premier (and local member) Baird and the relevant Ministers to intervene."

"The Premier has touted the school's reputation for environmental excellence but if this development goes ahead that will go out the window, along with the habitat of the eastern pygmy possum, powerful owl and eastern bentwing bat."

In the campaign to protect Sydney's remaining bushland and green space TEC has become concerned about a number of threats to the precious Manly Dam Catchment including the sale of land owned by Sydney Water, leasing of bushland for commercial activity at the top of the catchment and major road projects. All these projects jeopardise the dam catchment and the Manly-Warringah War Memorial Park.

"The Government may well be establishing a 'green grid' but where's the plan to protect its foundation – the existing parks - from getting commercialised, crown lands from being sold off, our urban bushland and waterways wrecked? There is no effective plan for a growing city", said Mr Burgess.

Latest News

Central Coast councils cook the books on open space



Created on Tuesday, 11 August 2015 16:33

Three Central Coast councils are inflating the area of land within their boundaries zoned public urban open space by including non-urban land and land not under their management Total Environment Centre said today.

A New South Wales Office of Local Government dataset comparing the performance of local governments shows that Newcastle, Gosford and Wyong councils all claim large areas of land that are not under their jurisdiction as public urban open space. Two of the councils – Newcastle and Wyong – actually claim dramatic increases of land zoned public open space in one year - with Newcastle claiming a 1000% increase in open space of over 9,000 hectares and Wyong boasting a 23,000 hectare or 541% increase.

"The figures are not believable. The councils have not followed the OLG's definition of urban open space. The question needs to be asked why they suddenly inflated their numbers", said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"They are wrongly including land administered by other government bodies such as national parks and state forests and in some cases have possibly included private land zoned for environmental protection."

One council has admitted the data is wrong with Gosford Council acknowledging 4,130 hectares of public open space instead of the reported 30,000 hectares.

"The 2015 Comparative Report claims an open space decline of only 2.5% over 10 years but if you adjust the Wyong and Newcastle data it's an alarming 23.5% decline", said Mr Angel.

"This is supposed to be a comparative analysis whereby the public can compare the performance of all local councils but that's just not possible if you don't have a common starting point. These figures don't stack up at a time when the amount of public land is decreasing across urban areas.

"The Department of Planning's guidelines for Public Open Space require that a standard approach across local government areas to measure the demand for and supply of public open space but the three councils in question appear to be fudging the figures."

Latest News

Hands off our Urban Sanctuaries



Created on Monday, 03 August 2015 09:41

Total Environment Centre has launched a new campaign and DIY defender tool kit to help communities preserve Sydney's parks and green spaces – the situation is urgent, says TEC executive director Jeff Angel.

"With Sydney and other metro regions losing vital natural and green areas that not only contribute to the beauty of the metropolis but also the health and well being of its citizens, we call on the state government to give greater statutory protection to parks and remnant bushland."

"Councils are rezoning public space for commercial use, surplus crown lands are proposed for sale and poorly planned infrastructure projects are threatening parks and urban trees. We have documented dozens of threatened areas. The government talks about a 'green grid' in its plans but it has to be built on the existing foundation of open space, otherwise we will go backwards."

"The metro region's population is growing in size and density of settlement – we need more, quality open space, not less. The time to get this right is now."

TEC's Urban Sanctuary Campaigner, Dave Burgess said, "we have created the Urban Sanctuary Defenders toolkit so that any community group can fight back when a much loved tree, grassy area or park is under siege from developers or rezoning."

"This toolkit is the culmination of experience from TEC campaigns and the communities we have worked with over the last 40 years. You need to be creative, organized, aware of the tricks played by developers and their government allies and committed to stay the course."

"We have also released 'The Urban Sanctuary Charter', which groups and individuals can sign as part of the campaign."

Latest News

State Government must save Wyong's environment from Council's rampage



Created on Tuesday, 28 July 2015 13:28

TEC Executive Director Mr Jeff Angel said "Wyong Council has shown a blatant disregard for protection of local bushland by exposing sensitive sites to risk of clearing and insensitive development. We call on the NSW Government to investigate Council's environmental management and take whatever steps are necessary to stop this carnage".

TEC has released a map showing the extent of threat posed to Wyong's environment. The map reveals 23 locations with environmentally sensitive bushland and endangered ecological communities that are threatened by rezonings, community land reclassifications and other bushland clearing proposals. There are also four shire wide issues which threaten the environment over the entire shire.

"The scale of the threat posed to Wyong's environment is simply breathtaking. Local bushland faces devastation in a frenzy of overdevelopment" Mr Angel said.

TEC has also called on NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes to develop a strategy for conserving native vegetation and bushland habitat in Wyong Shire.

"It's clear that Wyong Council cannot be trusted when it comes to protecting their local environment. The NSW Government must step in and fill the breach", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Court rejection of developer take-over of public reserve, 'a boost to urban sanctuary campaign



Created on Tuesday, 12 May 2015 16:32

In a watershed moment for the protection of public land in NSW, the Land and Environment Court has ruled that Newcastle's iconic King Edward Park will be preserved for public recreation.

"This historic decision has set a precedent for public reserves across the state," said Jeff Angel, director TEC, "and gives support to our Urban Sanctuary campaign to protect parks which are currently suffering from multiple alienation threats".

"It sends a message to government at all levels that selling off public reserves at the expense of our quality of life is not the way to address the increasing density of our cities. The pressure to find more land to develop must be addressed within sustainable boundaries."

The Court took account of a number of past cases that have upheld the sanctity of public recreation lands, saying: "These cases clearly establish the principle that land can be said to be used for "public recreation", only if it is open to the public as of right, and is not a source of private profit."

Friends of King Edward Park was formed in 2011 in response to a development application to Newcastle City Council for a function centre, carpark and kiosk. The group quickly moved to engage a legal team to challenge the proposal, arguing that it did not properly address the effect the development would have on the nearby King Edward Park.

With its spectacular views of the coast, its proximity to the famous Bogey Hole baths, and historical significance to the Worimi people as an initiation site, King Edward Park has been a treasured recreational space for the people of Newcastle since 1863.

"Friends of King Edward Park strongly believed it should be protected for future generations to enjoy," said Angel.

"We commend the community's attempts to protect this important park, and congratulate them on the success of their efforts."

Urban Sustainability

Register of Threats to Open Space (with date of entry and links to campaign groups)



Created on Wednesday, 16 July 2014 14:09

[Complete this short questionnaire and contact Dave Burgess at TEC to tell us about a threat]

Click on the map to see the location of the threats and more info:

South Head

Threat: privatisation of heritage buildings and alienation for large functions & restaurant (1,000 people a day), accomodation, traffic.

Ingleside

Threat: environmental degradation, fragmentation

Plans to develop bushland through rezoning placing Katandra Bushland Sanctuary under threat. Wildlife corridor to be cut in two.

Manly Dam to Manly Lagoon Wildlife Corridor

Threat: environmental degradation, future development

Proposed as a reserve by local environment groups. Council unwilling to take on administering crown land. Manly Vale Public School proposed extension into significant threatened species habitat around Manly Dam.

Moorebank Marina Development

Threat: environmental degradation, pollution

250 berth marina development approved in 2014. Concerns over flooding, vehicle access and boat overcrowding on the Georges River.

King Edward Park, Newcastle

Threat: commercialisation, privatisation of public land

Proposed function centre and car park on headland

Georges River corridor (Oatley to Campbelltown)

Threat: future development, environmental degradation

Unprotected foreshore land under various tenures (crown leases, road reserves, council land) is vulnerable to pressure from developers. 10/14

Georges River (mid-estuary)

Threat: environmental degradation

Quarrying, stockpiling of waste, relocation of army facilities and development due to the Intermodal threaten both private and public lands containing Cumberland Plain & Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest. Both are endangered ecological communities. 10/14

Georges River National Park

Threat: environmental degradation

The construction of illegal 4WD and trailbike tracks is resulting in severe erosion. 10/14

Light Rail, Randwick

Threat: Up to 400 trees proposed for removal for the new light rail system, including century old heritage trees. LINK

Huntington Heights, Doonside

Threat: environmental degradation

Representative Cumberland Plain woodland on surplus Department of Education land. The department wishes to rezone and sell the land. Blacktown Council unwilling to purchase into public ownership. 10/14

Various areas of Crown Land in the Manly and Warringah Shires

Threat: commercialisation, environmental degradation, privatisation of public land

Some very fragile areas of bushland have already been sold to developers. 09/14

French's Forest new hospital development

Threat: Environmental degradation, fragmentation

Clearing completed of 6ha of critically endangered Duffy's Forest Ecological Community. Site sits within wildlife corridor connecting Manly Dam, Queenscliff Lagoon, Narrabeen Lagoon and Middle Harbour. 09/14

French's Forest road widening

Threat: Environmental degradation, fragmentation, pollution

Road upgrades associated with the new Northern Beaches Hospital would potentially destroy a critical crossroads in the wildlife corridor between Manly Dam and Narrabeen Lagoon. Biobanking credits to be used to buy bushland in Hills District. 09/14

Garigal National Park mountain bike tracks

Threat: Environmental degradation

The jury is still out on whether it is more effective to construct official mountain bike trails to counter the building of illegal ones leading to erosion and environmental degradation. While the debate goes on, the park Plan of Management was changed in 2013 to allow for the construction of bike trails in Bantry Bay. 09/14

Old Man's Valley, Hornsby

Threat: privatisation of public land

12ha of Open Space Public Recreation land in danger of being sold by Hornsby Council. Money from sale to be used to pay for rehabilitation of adjoining 28ha quarry site, responsibility for which was secretly on sold to Hornsby Council in 2002. 09/14

Casula Parklands

Threat: pollution, environmental degradation

Two access roads to the proposed Sydney Intermodal Terminal will have devastating impacts upon the parklands surrounding the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. 09/14

Coopers Paddock, Warwick Farm

Threat: commercialisation, environmental degradation

Liverpool Council approved the rezoning of 14ha of the treasured 31ha area for industrial development in 2012. About 1km from the Liverpool CBD, Coopers Paddock contains 170 species of native fauna, 9 of which are threatened. A critical oasis for nature and again the destruction is partly driven by the Intermodal Terminal. Includes River-Flat Eucalypt Forest and Cumberland Plain Woodland. 09/14

Cumberland Conservation Corridor

Threat: Environmental degradation

A regional proposal to connect NSW Government determined Priority Conservation Lands on the Cumberland Plain. 70% of the proposal area is already in public ownership making it highly feasible. Money for the remainder is supposed to be the first target of the Sydney Growth Centres Conservation Fund. However NSW Government is allowing Councils to zone lands for development. 09/14

Royal Botanic Gardens & The Domain

Threat: commercialisation

New Masterplan includes a hotel, ferry wharf, concert stage, shops and restaurant facilities deep in the gardens. While some of these may enhance the gardens the construction of a 5-star hotel and other commercial facilities is particularly concerning. 07/14

Marinas – Berrys Bay & elsewhere

Threat: commercialisation

Heritage buildings and public land are under threat from a massive marina development on at Berry's Bay in Waverton. Boats of up to 45m are proposed to berth there. The encroachment of large scale marinas is also a threat on the Georges River and other Sydney waterways. Link. 07/14

Middle Head, Sydney Harbour

Threat: commercialisation

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust proposes to build an aged care facility involving the sale of public land on the former military land at Middle Head. Public access to parts of the foreshore would be affected. The site is of heritage significance and, as the determining authority on the proposal, the Trust appears to have a conflict of interest as it is also stands to benefit financially. The proposal is exempt from normal state planning legislation. Link. 07/14

Barangaroo

Threat: commercialisation & privatisation of public land

The original design for the Barangaroo redevelopment and open space has been altered to fit around the proposed casino and includes an increase in floor space and building footprint for a variety of residential, commercial and other uses. Link. 07/14

Tempe Wetlands

Threat: motorway construction

Despite alternative options, the WestConnex Delivery Authority and NSW Government Ministers have (until recently) refused to guarantee protection for the wetlands, a rare open space in the inner south. The current reserve constitutes 16% of the open space in the Marrickville LGA which already has one of the lowest ratios of open space in greater Sydney. The recent rehabilitation of the wetlands has seen a return to the area by some native species not seen in decades. Link. 07/14

Mountain bike tracks – Hornsby & elsewhere

Threat: commercialisation, environmental degradation

Amendments to the National Parks and Wildlife Act in 2010 allow for the construction of "thrills and spills" mountain bike tracks in national parks and reserves. This was based on the assumption that illegal track use and construction would decline with the provision of legal high impact bike tracks. Link. 07/14

Latest News

NSW govt WIC Act amendments



Created on Friday, 04 April 2014 08:49

To ensure that WICA encourages the development of these alternative sources of water, section 10(4)(d) of the Act requires new entrants to the water industry to 'obtain sufficient quantities of water other than from a public water utility'. This means that they cannot simply purchase drinking water from public utilities and on-sell it to retail customers.

1. The NSW Government proposes to repeal this section of WICA and allow new entrants to compete with public utilities for the right to service industrial and larger commercial customers without developing alternative water sources. This will significantly reduce the chances of converting these customers to alternative supplies (and so ease demand on potable water supplies).

The government argues that the BASIX and Green Star schemes along with the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 will support investment in recycling however none of these instruments specifically target the development of new water sources – they are targeted at consumption or rainwater tanks. Recycling has always been considered an essential component of Sydney and the Hunter's water strategy.

It is also proposed to allow new entrants to provide retail services (billing and metering) to residential and small commercial customers in new greenfield and infill developments if these services are provided in connection with a WICA licensed scheme.

The result of these changes will be to move away from regulation designed to promote alternative sources of water toward a system of retail competition. Infrastructure developed by private sector operators will be able to simply deliver water derived from public utilities rather than from recycling or stormwater harvesting. This has serious implications for water conservation, and drought security.

2. The proposed changes to WICA may also be a stalking horse for eventual privatisation of public water utilities. Extending competition for billing and metering services to residential and small commercial customers in already developed areas (served by Sydney Water) will open the way to privatisation of existing retailers. The government's position paper does not preclude eventually allowing new entrants to compete for retail services in these areas; stating only that this will not occur "at this stage" and that "the government considers that more analysis and consultation would be required". Adoption of such a 'vertically disaggregated' model in the energy industry has encouraged retailers to promote increased sales at the expense of demand management.

3. It is not anticipated that the private sector water licences will have the same environmental (eg, environmental reporting, energy use and waste management) and water conservation requirements as currently imposed on Sydney Water. Consequently this could give rise to demands by Sydney Water to have its requirements removed.

Latest News

URBAN SPRAWL SPOILS OUR AIR



Created on Tuesday, 12 March 2013 13:10

NSW's rampant urban sprawl has produced dirty air that is exposing millions of people to adverse health impacts and it could get worse if the state's new planning system panders to developers, TEC said today releasing a briefing paper.

"With the O'Farrell government about to release its White Paper on the new planning system, community and health groups should be on the alert," said executive director TEC, Jeff Angel.

"The population of Sydney is expected to grow by 1.7 million people before 2036 and could reach 6 million. This will result in major stress on air quality and increased breaches of air quality standards unless the dynamics of our urban areas are planned to avoid worsening air pollution."

"NSW also needs to improve public transport infrastructure and build higher population densities around it, as opposed to allowing any further growth in urban sprawl," Mr Angel said.

"Unfortunately the current review of the NSW planning system has focused heavily on providing increased 'certainty' to developers, reducing processing times, and increasing approval rates.

"This focus may not be compatible with addressing chronic air pollution problems.

"Fast approvals that deliver poor quality, high risk or unsustainable development are not in the public interest," said Mr Angel.

Latest News

WYONG LEP: A DEVELOPER'S BANQUET



Created on Monday, 25 February 2013 23:58

"Land containing threatened species and vital wildlife corridors will be opened to development," said TEC Executive Director Jeff Angel. "The draft LEP is a developers' banquet and we'll be calling on the Minister for Planning to scrap it."

The draft plan also ignores the recommendations of a major conservation strategy developed by Council in 2003 to guide sustainable development and protect Wyong's natural heritage.

"Council has junked a rigorous and detailed conservation strategy to give developers open slather. It is clear there is little effective content to protect the environment in the draft LEP," Mr Angel said.

Amongst numerous flaws are proposals to allow development west of the F3 Freeway, creating urban sprawl and compromising the integrity of drinking water catchments. The plan also fails to consider the impacts of climate change on current and future Wyong Shire residents.

"It is astonishing that Council would contemplate placing at risk Wyong's crucial drinking water catchments," Mr Angel said.

TEC has also condemned the short exhibition period (including school holidays) for the plan. "This is a typical developer's trick to limit public consultation."

"The lack of openness and transparency in the development of this plan is deeply disturbing. Council should immediately withdraw the draft LEP and commit to developing a plan that protects Wyong's environment in consultation with the community," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Wyong - bushland clearing rort



Created on Thursday, 31 January 2013 17:45

The developer controlled Wyong Council is intent on removing protection for high conservation bushland - help stop this environmental vandalism.

They have directed staff to ignore the Council's own Conservation Strategy [9.58MB] - revealing their philosophy. No wonder their new draft Local Environment Plan is a developers' banquet. The new LEP involves:

- \$10 millions of community land will be reclassified and sold off, goodbye to your local bush.
- Development west of the Freeway will be allowed in the drinking water catchments, goodbye to clean drinking water.
- Clearing trees in residential areas no longer has any controls, hello Indian Mynahs, goodbye to native birds, fresh air;
- The lakes are rezoned as recreational areas, goodbye tranquil sunsets and peaceful picnics;
- Catchments can be cleared, trees removed and waterfronts sold off, goodbye fish;
- Sea Level rise and Climate Change are prohibited so no action to protect homes, goodbye house, sorry kids,
- Up go rates to pay for flooded homes, inundated waterfronts and developers mistakes, goodbye supperanuation.
- Developers can rezone after the public exhibition period closes, goodbye neighbourhood and healthy environment.

The plan is a sell out to developers and does not include any improvements to the environment. Get a submission in by 20th February. Exhibition details

Latest News

Green buildings are gold



Created on Friday, 22 June 2012 10:32

While prestigious new office buildings are achieving 6 star energy ratings, city landlords of existing lower grade buildings can also green their office buildings to boost the value of their assets, said Total Environment Centre today.

TEC's business sustainability arm, Green Capital, has released a report analysing Sydney-based case studies as part of the *Lessons and Tools from Existing Office Building Leaders Project* funded by the NSW Environmental Trust. A selection of B, C and D-grade office buildings were reviewed after owners had embarked on capital works and improvements to increase the NABERS (energy) ratings of their assets.

The report found the building owners were able to get substantial results within realistic economic constraints and be more attractive to tenants. But it did take careful planning, help from experienced consultants and contractors, and a commitment to investigate options, the TEC report said.

The cost of getting a consultant to audit your building – generally in the order of a few thousand dollars – can quickly and in some cases immediately pay for itself: “by direct energy savings or avoidance of expensive emergency maintenance” the TEC report said.

“In many cases, simple actions such as recalibrating a building management system (BMS) provided significant energy savings. Based on the performance of their newly upgraded buildings, some of the landlords who took part in the study expect to see a return on their investment within three years of undertaking works” said Jeff Angel.

Also the report found that a building can only be allowed to run down so much before it significantly begins to lose tenants and diminish in value, with the chance it will become harder to sell or be left “stranded”.

Many of the case studies identified in the report received grants from the Green Building Fund, which is now closed. There are other sources of funding and subsidies available including the Energy Savings Schemes and the Energy Saver program

Environmental Upgrade Agreements also provide more easily accessible funding for refurbishment works based on a better rate and longer loan terms.

[Download a copy of the final report here](#)

Latest News

Green tape attack will corrupt decision making



Created on Friday, 20 April 2012 12:58

The attack by business on green tape and the acquiescence by governments will lead to roting, loss of environmental standards and the community voice in development decision making, environmentalists said today.

“New South Wales recently experienced just such a system with the discredited changes to the planning and environment act under the former Labor government. They were made under pressure from developers to speed up approvals and cut out community objectors from the city and country. The loss of community support was massive and the O’Farrell government surfed into power on the back of it,” said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

“The so-called one-stop shop is a guise that hides a raft of damaging changes.”

“The recent announcements by the Prime Minister, the states and the Abbot opposition are clearly part of a highly organized campaign by the business lobby to stampede the changes before the community can fully appreciate what is happening. But they should be warned – don’t think the community won’t react when they realize they have far less say than the business proponents of developments that will cause unacceptable environmental and community harm.”

“Commonwealth legislation has often been the only safeguard against sloppy state processes and the lure of funds from for example mining royalties. The current push is not about economic productivity – it’s all about faster approvals under state and federal processes so that the environment and community lose any effective voice. In addition to cutting out proper assessment such a system allows developers to game the system by providing inadequate information and less opportunity for agencies and the community to assess it.”

“Productivity is not about giving developers what they want – you have to achieve the triple bottom line on social, economic and environmental grounds,” Mr Angel said.

“When combined with the calls from business and conservative governments to drop climate change policy in the face of a weak carbon price (that may disappear with the election of the Opposition) – we are seeing a return to the bad old days of decision making with developer’s with all the power and the environment and community with little or none. It will simply lead to a lot more community conflict with governments and business.”

Latest News

Send Orica back to pollution control school



Created on Saturday, 17 December 2011 09:17

The latest leak from Orica is a symptom of a company stuck in nineteenth century factory culture where pollution and leaks were normal practice, TEC said today.

"It really is time for the pollution authority to send Orica back to school on how to manage a modern chemical factory. For too long Orica's size and economic power has intimidated governments and sloppy practises simply given the tick in pollution licences," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"This not a new situation leaks but now that the glare of publicity is on Orica and reporting of incidents is to become much stricter we are seeing the real face of pollution on and off site in hazardous industry. With the NSW Environment Protection Authority auditing 42 other chemical factory sites – we fear there's a big shock awaiting the NSW public."

"The O'Farrell government will have to make doubly sure that the pollution control reform process is properly resourced and has effective community input. It remains a problem that the new EPA Board will not have a community representative."

Latest News

POLLIES MOVE ON LAX POLLUTION LAWS



Created on Wednesday, 05 October 2011 17:04

The community has a right to know when instances of industrial pollution present a threat to public health, said Total Environment Centre (TEC) today, in response to an independent report on the Orica pollution incident that was presented to the NSW cabinet yesterday.

TEC has called for urgent and comprehensive reform of the state's pollution control system, after it was revealed last week that incidents of environmental harm are going unreported across industry sectors.

"We welcome the reform package as a substantial step forward," said TEC director Jeff Angel. "It's clear that we urgently need an independent authority, with the capacity and commitment to put the environment and public health first.

"It's essential this leads to a cultural change in the bureaucracy and business. Attitudes to pollution have been too lax - the regulators tolerate too much pollution and business has not been proactive enough - in seeking to protect the environment and local communities from dangerous pollution."

"Information on the cumulative pollution load allowed by a license, and reported and unreported breaches, must also be part of the process."

"We must put "best practice" first, and environmental groups will be looking very carefully at the legislation brief to make sure this happens," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

NSW Pollution Crisis Hidden



Created on Monday, 03 October 2011 08:07

With the NSW Cabinet due to consider the independent report on the Orica pollution incident this week, Total Environment Centre is calling for urgent and comprehensive reform of the state's pollution control system, after reviewing a range of compliance audits which revealed that incidents of environmental harm are going unreported across industry sectors. Cumulative pollution loads on local people and the environment are also unknown.

"Environmental audits by the Office of Environment and Heritage of several sectors over the last 5 years have found a significant number of non-compliances with pollution licences; and in two industries repeated failure to fix the problems. Obviously they would have also led to some environmental harm incidents but were never reported because the non-compliance was not known until the audit. The pollution licensing and enforcement regime is dysfunctional," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of TEC.

Mr Angel said a brief TEC review of the Department's audits reveals they have not resulted in improved compliance over 5 years for instances of dust mis-management in coal mines and substandard management practices for chlorinated solvents. "The remedial measures instituted by the Department were ineffective".

"It appears that far from protecting the community's interests, the Department and its licences are seen as token pieces of paper, and bad practice often continues unchecked," said Mr Angel.

"Given the large range of non-compliances that were found in the various reviews and clearly not reported to the department over a number of years – the estimate of incidents of environmental harm that would have occurred and were also not reported must be significant," said Mr Angel.

"There is also the problem of cumulative impacts. The department should know and tell the public about the cumulative local air and water catchment level pollution from these unreported incidents in addition to the reported breaches and the significant pollution legally allowed by the licences. This should be basic information with each audit and grant or renewal of licence - but it's not."

Latest News

Latest Orica leak shows a pollution control system in crisis



Created on Wednesday, 28 September 2011 07:39

The release of toxic mercury vapour from the Orica Botany plant is another example of the state's pollution control system being in crisis, Total Environment Centre said today.

"We call on the Environment Protection Authority to reveal how many licence breaches there have been from all licensed premises in the state in the last 5 years. Now the focus is on licence breaches, we should understand it's not just Orica but such problems most likely happen all over the place. It's likely that pollution in excess of licence limits is standard practice and accepted by the authorities," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"As a consequence the environment for people living near chemical plants precincts and natural areas that are receiving waters not only accumulate toxic chemicals from the breaches but also from the pollution allowed by the licence. It's not acceptable. Standard practice should be to not breach the licence and be committed to even less pollution."

"The pollution control system is fossilised into allowing pollution rather than significantly reducing pollution. And licences are granted without any clear knowledge of the cumulative pollution impacts. The system needs major reform."

Latest News

How to stop more Oricas



Created on Sunday, 21 August 2011 10:20

In the wake of the Orica pollution incidents, special legislation will be needed to reform pollution control licences so that industry is required to expeditiously inform government and the community about pollution incidents, Total Environment Centre said today.

"Our initial investigations show that the 'as soon as practical' test is in virtually every licence (and there are thousands) and an umbrella act will be needed to reform all of them quickly. The legislation should include:

1. Specific classes of pollution or environmental harm that have degrees of urgency attached to them.
2. Specific facility plans that fit the classes of incidents and hazardous chemicals into monitoring and response actions.
3. Tough penalties for breaching notification and plan requirements,"

said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of the Centre.

"Recent statements by the Premier acknowledging the problems with the legislation, pointed out by TEC last week are welcome, but we should move very quickly on this. It's quite possible that other industrial facilities are behaving in the same sloppy way that Orica did with the Chromium VI release; or worse not reporting potential environmental harm at all. The Office of Environment and Heritage should also conduct a random audit of other chemical plants to find the true situation."

Latest News

Big Questions to answer on Orica toxic chemical release



Created on Friday, 12 August 2011 15:46

Release of a toxic chemical plume by Orica at its Kooragang plant raises questions about the adequacy of the pollution licensing system, Total Environment Centre said today.

“The response by the environment and health departments indicates the release and delay in notifying the authorities is a serious matter but the pollution licence actually protects the company. The licence allows ‘notification of environmental harm’ to occur ‘as soon as practical’ – obviously a very loose term,” said Jeff Angel Executive Director of the Centre.

“This clause is found in the pollution legislation and many other licences – so we have a systemic problem – meaning the same (or worse) delay in notification could be repeated at other sites. What does ‘as soon as practical’ mean? Certainly it offers a defence to a company with all sorts of excuses in mind.”

Orica waited 16 hours to notify the environment department; and the problem was further exacerbated by the information provided, influencing a lack of urgent response from the agency.

“A better system must be found, so that a more rapid and accurate notification process occurs and protection of the community and the environment ensured,” Mr Angel said.

Latest News

WATER LICENCE CHANGES ERODE HUNTER WATER ACCOUNTABILITY



Created on Tuesday, 07 June 2011 14:06

Proposed changes to Hunter Water's Operating Licence seriously undermine public accountability and transparency of water management in the Hunter, leading to threats to the region's sustainability, according to the Total Environment Centre (TEC).

Hunter Water's Operating Licence is the key regulatory instrument governing and auditing the environmental, social and financial performance of Hunter Water. The licence is currently under review and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has proposed a number of amendments to transfer key performance standards to subsidiary plans.

TEC Water Campaigner Leigh Martin said "Hunter Water's use of flawed and misleading evidence and inadequate environmental impact assessments throughout the Tillegra Dam fiasco showed that it cannot be trusted to conduct itself in an open and accountable way. Dumbing down the Operating Licence in the name of 'cutting red tape' will do nothing to improve water management in the Hunter."

Proposed changes include transferring current standards for water quality, environmental water and public reporting to 'licence plans' or 'reporting manuals'. It is unclear whether these plans will be developed with public consultation and how performance against them will be assessed.

"Any 'licence plans' or 'manuals' should be treated as part of the licence itself and subject to the same level of audit as the rest of the licence. It is vital that plans be developed with full public consultation and independent environmental review," Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Call for New Planning Act for NSW



Created on Monday, 10 January 2011 15:20

A new report commissioned by TEC and the Nature Conservation Council and produced by the Environmental Defenders Office calls for a new NSW Planning Act.

SMH article - "Planning minister is too powerful say green groups" [28/12/10]

Latest News

COSTA'S DAM PLAN IS LEAKY-AS



Created on Tuesday, 21 September 2010 10:03

Claims by NSW Water Minister Phil Costa that Tillegra Dam is crucial to drought security for the Hunter have been exposed as false and misleading, the Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

“Phil Costa is either displaying his embarrassing ignorance of water management in the Hunter, or deliberately using misleading arguments to justify Tillegra Dam,” said Leigh Martin, TEC Water Campaigner.

TEC has called for the Government to abandon Tillegra Dam and invest in sustainable water management options for the Hunter such as improved water conservation and recycling.

Yet Minister Costa recently told the NSW Parliament that the rapid decline in water storage levels that occurred in the 1979-1981 drought would recur without Tillegra Dam.

“It’s just wrong to compare Hunter Water’s supply situation in 1979-81 with the present day,” said Mr. Martin. “The water shortage occurred prior to the introduction of user pays water pricing in 1982, which reduced household water consumption by more than 30%. The upgrade of Grahamstown Reservoir in 2005 also increased storage capacity by 50%.

“As Water Minister, it behooves Phil Costa to show us he knows what he is talking about,” said Mr. Martin.

“Tillegra Dam has been totally discredited as an expensive and environmentally damaging white elephant. If the Government wishes to salvage any credibility on water management it should scrap the dam and focus on sustainable water management,” said Mr. Martin.

Latest News

KILLER AIR CRISIS



Created on Thursday, 19 August 2010 11:56

Sydney is at risk of losing the air pollution battle, warned the Total Environment Centre (TEC) today, at the NSW government's Clean Air Forum. "The big warning signs are flashing," said Jeff Angel, director of TEC. "Even though vehicle emission standards have been tightened, any gains are being outrun by population growth, increased car use, and the growing popularity of heavier cars."

"We are at grave risk of losing the air pollution battle." TEC has been campaigning for clean air since 1972, and has carefully monitored the state government's Action For Air plan over the past ten years.

"The next four years will be crucial," said Mr. Angel. "Air quality is not being taken seriously enough in development decisions at the macro and regional planning levels. We urgently need a coordinated strategy for urban land use, transport planning, and public transport infrastructure."

"Action for Air states the target is to stop total vehicle kilometers traveled (VKT) growth by 2021, but this is unlikely to be achieved."

Mr. Angel pointed out that another key concern, the timetable for the application of vapour recovery at existing petrol stations, has also slipped badly. "Australia has about 12 million cars. It would be great if they could all be turned over to cleaner fuels quickly," said Mr. Angel. "Realistically this is not going to happen, so we need to focus on new mass transit systems, rather than put many eggs in the clean car basket."

Latest News

TEC FOI FORCES RELEASE OF DRINKING WATER REVIEW



Created on Monday, 07 June 2010 13:25

A freedom of information request by TEC has forced the release of an independent review of the progress on protecting Sydney's drinking water. The review can be found here. [2010, pdf, 1.29MB]

The Review found most of the original recommendations had been implemented including the establishment of the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) divorcing control from Sydney Water. They also drew attention to the fact that a regional environmental plan setting out key responsibilities and assessment processes was not gazetted until 2007. The Panel was concerned that changes to the planning system could reduce the powers of the SCA and warned that 'commercial principles' should not have a higher priority in SCA decision making than 'the health of the community'.

A major problem now is the exposure to contamination of the open Upper Canal which delivers water the Prospect treatment plant. Several investigations have looked at alternatives but no action. The Review Panel called for a firm decision by the end of 2010 – and the government has agreed.

Latest News

SYDNEY'S AIR QUALITY SUCKS



Created on Tuesday, 09 March 2010 15:20

Total Environment Centre has warned state political parties to get ready for a public health emergency, based on the findings of a report by the Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Water which projects Sydney's air quality to 2026.

"The next state election will be held during the hottest months in January, February, and March in 2011 which means poor air quality will be an obvious and very real political embarrassment," said TEC director, Mr. Jeff Angel.

The report indicates that ozone levels in Sydney haven't improved and will worsen over the next 15 years unless the government acts now.

Ozone is the third most important greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide and methane, and the prime component of smog, which is caused by the reaction of auto and industrial emissions with sunlight.

"It will take ten years to get better public transport and a mainstream switch to hybrids and electric cars," said Mr. Angel. "Car emissions are the single largest contributor to ozone levels, so the NSW state government had better use the next decade to fix up the mess."

Mr. Jeff Angel noted that population growth will boost petrochemical smog in Sydney to dangerous levels.

"Hundreds and thousands of people will be potentially harmed by respiratory problems, affecting ears, eyes, nose, throat and lungs," warned Mr. Angel. "The opening up of major new housing developments in Western Sydney will only make matters worse."

Latest News

SUPERCARS TRASH OLYMPIC LEGACY



Created on Wednesday, 16 September 2009 13:26

The legacy of Sydney's 'Green Olympics' is being trashed on the anniversary of the Opening Ceremony, with work under way for a V8 Supercar Championship race in December, said Total Environment Centre (TEC) and Nature Conservation Council (NCC) today.

"What a contrast! A gas guzzling V8 Supercar race and construction works that wreck the green landscaping and threaten endangered species versus the dreams of an environmentally sustainable precinct leading the way for future development in Sydney," said TEC's Executive Director Jeff Angel.

"Set-up activities, noise pollution and an influx of spectators at the venue will impact birds, flying foxes and other threatened species at risk."

Right on the eve of the anniversary of the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympics, it appears that the State and Federal governments have abandoned their commitment to sustainability values and environmental restoration at Homebush, in favour of short-sighted commercial interests.

"If the NSW Government is serious about Sydney going for gold as a green city, it could better dedicate the resources, time and money spent on gas guzzling motor sports to improving, expanding and promoting our public transport system.

"The Total Environment Centre and Nature Conservation Council call on race organisers and the State Government to abandon plans for building a street circuit at Homebush, even at this late stage, and re-locate the Supercar race to a more suitable purpose-built location, such as the Eastern Creek raceway," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

RUBBERY FIGURES BLOW TILLEGRA DAM SCAM



Created on Friday, 22 May 2009 20:40

“Opponents of Tillegra Dam have argued all along that Hunter Water is cooking the water books to justify Tillegra Dam,” TEC Water Campaigner, Mr Leigh Martin, said. “The IPART report has confirmed our suspicions.”

IPART commissioned consultants to review the forecast demand for water used by Hunter Water to justify Tillegra Dam.

The findings published in IPART’s draft report on Hunter Water prices reveal that Hunter Water’s forecasts are not based on statistical analysis. Nor do they fully consider the effect of water conservation programs and planned price increases in reducing demand. Most seriously, Hunter Water has failed to include previously announced water conservation initiatives in their calculations, raising fears that they intend to abandon these measures.

“Not only have Hunter Water been caught trying to exaggerate demand but it is clear that they are planning to abandon water conservation if Tillegra Dam goes ahead. This is a scandalous attempt to hoodwink the public into accepting a massively expensive and environmentally damaging dam they simply don’t need,” Mr Martin said.

Submissions on proposed price increases that would raise the cost of an average customers water bill by \$220 per year close today. TEC has told IPART that it should scrap any allowance for recovering the costs of Tillegra Dam.

“Hunter Water customers are facing a massive blow-out in the cost of their water bills. Coupled with recently announced increases to electricity bills this will have a major impact on families and vulnerable customers.

“With Tillegra Dam exposed as an unnecessary waste of money there is no justification in forcing customers to pay,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

TILLEGRA DAM DAMNED



Created on Friday, 06 February 2009 00:13

A decision by the NSW Government to declare the proposed Tillegra Dam “critical infrastructure” under the controversial Part 3A law, will muzzle public debate and allow crucial environmental protection legislation to be ignored in the so-called “environmental assessment process”, the Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

“Declaring Tillegra Dam critical infrastructure will ensure a sham assessment process,” warned TEC Director, Mr Jeff Angel. “It will allow the Government to override crucial environmental and planning considerations such as threatened species and land clearing.”

The declaration was made quietly by the Minister for Planning, Kristina Keneally MP, on the 9th of January when most of NSW was still in holiday mode. It enables the Government to approve the dam regardless of the outcome of any environmental assessment.

“There is no clear justification for Tillegra Dam and there is growing public anger over the proposal,” Mr Angel said.

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

“Rather than attempting to ram through an unnecessary dam with a biased assessment process the NSW Government and Hunter Water should be working to place water management in the Hunter on a sustainable footing. This should include an open public process to develop cheaper and environmentally sustainable options such as increased water conservation and recycling,” Mr Angel said.

Latest News

HUNTER WATER BILLS ROCKET



Created on Friday, 06 February 2009 00:11

Residential customers in the Hunter will suffer a massive 57% increase in water bills while the biggest industrial users will be heavily discounted, warned Total Environment Centre (TEC) today.

“Hunter Water’s current ‘location based’ prices provide unfair discounts for large industrial water users. It’s become a major barrier to the development of water recycling in the region,” said TEC’s Water Campaigner, Mr Leigh Martin.

In a submission to the current Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's review of prices, Hunter Water recently admitted that these discounts have been designed to protect Hunter Water from competition from recycled water.

“There is little incentive for industry to switch to recycled water while precious potable water is available at throw away prices,” said Mr Martin.

Instead of encouraging sustainable water management in the region, Hunter Water the Corporation has proposed an expensive and environmentally damaging supply augmentation in the form of Tillegra Dam, “which is utterly scandalous,” said Mr Martin.

“A water recycling system is a much less expensive drought security alternative than a \$400 billion dam on the Williams River.

“The NSW Government claims to be committed to developing water recycling and promoting competition on the water industry. We expect the government to prove that commitment,” Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on NSW Water Minister Phil Costa MP to direct the Tribunal to abolish industry discounts in order to allow the recycled water industry to provide a sustainable alternative to Tillegra Dam.

“The NSW Government must act now to end Hunter Water’s obstruction of water recycling by ending price discounts for large industrial water,” said Mr Martin.

Latest News

Killer Summer Smog Alert



Created on Thursday, 08 January 2009 01:54

“As Sydney-siders sweat it out on the city’s streets and beaches the heatwave is creating a substantial health risk, particularly for children, asthma sufferers, and those with respiratory problems and/or heart conditions. This situation will only deteriorate in the future as climate change takes hold and we see the impacts of cancelled public transport projects,” said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

“It’s affecting literally millions of people.”

“With temperatures hitting 39 degrees in Penrith, it’s clear that despite NSW government posturing, nothing much has changed since 2006 when Sydney’s air pollution levels were listed as almost 10 times higher than other Australian cities, by the National Environment Protection Council (NEPC).

“Without transformative forward planning” Mr Angel warned, “Sydney-siders can only expect more traffic jams, less efficient public transport, and more frequent air pollution alerts as the city heats up”.

“Factor in the effects of climate change, and adverse meteorological conditions, such as Sydney’s typically bright sunshine and high humidity, and we’ll see increased photochemical smog formation and particulate loads resulting in the dangerous, “brown haze” now hanging over the city,” he said.

Latest News

Snail Pace on Petrol Vapour Puts Air Quality and Public Health at Risk



Created on Friday, 19 December 2008 02:44

Technology for capturing these emissions at the pump has been available for decades with it first adopted in parts of the United States in 1972 and since by many European and Asian countries. Phase in periods overseas have ranged from between 18 months and 5 years. NSW is proposing 9 years

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Petrol vapour emissions during refuelling are a major and growing source of dangerous air pollutants. Motorists are also exposed to chemicals such as benzene during refuelling. The NSW plan is twice to eight times slower than anywhere else – an unacceptable snail’s pace”

“The technology which is well proven should also be installed at all petrol stations without delay. There is no logical reason why NSW petrol stations should need nine years to introduce technology that has been installed overseas in a fraction of the time,” Mr Martin said.

A further problem with the draft regulation is a complete exemption for petrol stations with sales below 3.5 million litres per year.

“The government seems to be trying to protect smaller independent stations from the cost of introducing vapour recovery, but without this technology they will lose customers to their competitors who aren’t poisoning car owners. The government has also failed to explain why customers and staff of smaller stations should be given less protection from harmful petrol fumes,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

V8 Race Bill a blank cheque for environmental and economic destruction



Created on Monday, 01 December 2008 22:59

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “If passed by Parliament, the Homebush Motor Racing Bill will allow V8 Supercars Australia to damage the environment and break environmental laws without fear of prosecution and devastate the income of local businesses without paying compensation”.

The Bill exempts race organisers from prosecution under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act, overrides noise pollution laws and Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act and prevents local business from claiming compensation for any financial losses.

“The NSW Government and V8 Supercars Australia have claimed that the race will provide an economic boon for local businesses and will not damage the environment of Sydney Olympic Park or the Green and Golden Bell Frogs. If so, why does the Bill need to protect race organisers from the consequences of causing environmental and economic damage,” Mr Martin said.

The Bill also fails to designate when the race would occur each year, the precise areas of Olympic Park that would need to be cordoned off or even the actual route of the circuit. Nor has any detailed assessment been made public on the environmental or economic impacts of the proposed race.

“Members of the NSW Parliament are being asked to support V8 Racing at Olympic Park without any proper assessment of the impact of the race or even any guarantee of the date and route of the proposed event. The Bill should be rejected as an outrageous and open ended licence to disrupt communities and wreak environmental havoc,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Rainfall Data and Independent Study Pour Cold Water on Tillegra Dam



Created on Friday, 07 November 2008 22:00

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Despite Hunter Water’s claims that climate change will reduce rainfall runoff, modelling by the Department of Environment and Climate Change shows that runoff is likely to increase. Meanwhile an independent assessment has shown that alternative options can provide drought security for less than half the costs of Tillegra Dam”.

The recent “Summary of Climate Change Impacts – Hunter Region” report released by the Department of Environment and Climate Change as part of the NSW Climate Change Action Plan reveals that climate modelling predicts increased annual runoff in the Hunter due to increased rainfall in all seasons except winter.

A separate report by BIS Shrapnel included in a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) concludes that current supplies are sufficient to meet population growth of 160,000 by 2031 and that alternative measures (including staged upgrades to Grahamstown Reservoir) can provide drought security for \$150M compared to approximately \$406M for Tillegra Dam. (Read TEC's submission to IPART by clicking here).

The reports contradicting Hunter Water’s justification for Tillegra Dam follow earlier revelations that Hunter Water had seriously underestimated the size of price rises needed to pay for the dam. TEC has called for an independent assessment of the need for Tillegra Dam in the current IPART review of Hunter Water’s prices.

“It is clear that Hunter Water cannot be trusted to provide accurate, reliable data on the cost and need for Tillegra Dam. After being forced to redo its sums on the impact on customers bills Hunter Water’s has been caught out once again using rubbery figures to justify Tillegra Dam,” Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the Government to shelve Tillegra Dam in next week’s mini-budget and commit to an independent assessment of all available options to manage the supply and demand for water in the Hunter”.

“With Hunter Water storages close to full despite the worst drought on record there is simply no need to rush headlong into an expensive and environmentally damaging mistake. Hunter Water customers and NSW taxpayers need a full, objective analysis of all the available options. We are confident that any such assessment would reject Tillegra Dam,” Mr Martin said.

Read TEC's submission to the EPBC referral relating to the proposed Tillegra Dam

Latest News

Tillegra Cost Blowout - A taste of things to come



Created on Thursday, 23 October 2008 22:45

TEC is calling on the NSW Government to shelve Tillegra Dam as an expensive and unnecessary white elephant in the November mini-budget.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “This is only the beginning for Hunter Water customers. Without so much as a single pipe or piece of concrete laid, Hunter Water’s costs have already been shown to be woefully inadequate. The experience of Sydney’s desalination plant shows that more and more price rises will be needed as construction and operating costs inevitably blow out further.”

Hunter Water has lodged a revised submission with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) review of Hunter Water prices revealing that the average impact on customers will be \$389 year. Hunter Water’s original submission to the Tribunal claimed that an average increase of \$322 would be needed. Serious doubts remain about the adequacy of Hunter Water’s geotechnical investigations.

“Hunter Water’s credibility on Tillegra Dam now lies in tatters. With major concerns having been raised about the geological stability of the proposed dam site and the adequacy of Hunter Water’s geotechnical data site the warnings of dam opponents about a massive blow out in costs should be ringing loud and clear in the State Government’s ears,” Mr Martin said.

“With Hunter Water storages close to full despite the worst drought on record and Gosford-Wyong water securing its supply through the Mardi-Mangrove pipeline there is simply no need for Tillegra Dam. The State Government should save the NSW Taxpayers a massive debt burden and prevent an unfair and unaffordable cost burden for Hunter families,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Labor MP's Urged to Reject V8 Race Legislation



Created on Monday, 20 October 2008 23:32

TEC Director Jeff Angel said "The willingness of many Labor MPs to cross the floor of Parliament was the deciding factor in stopping electricity privatisation in NSW. Labor MPs now have the chance prevent the destruction of Sydney Olympic Park's crucial environmental and open space values and the waste of up to \$90 million in taxpayers' funds."

With the proposed race currently prohibited by strong environmental protection measures in the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) Act, special legislation will be needed to by-pass the SOPA Act and allow the race to proceed.

"It is clear the opposition to the V8 race was an important factor in the Ryde by-election result. Labor MP's have the chance to save their government from itself and stop this deeply unpopular, unsustainable financially irresponsible proposal proceeding. If the legislation passes the Olympic Park V8 race will become a festering sore on the environmental and economic management records of the Rees Government," Mr Angel said.

TEC has called Newington based MLC Helen Westwood and Blacktown MP Paul Gibson to lead the charge against the legislation.

"Ms Westwood and Mr Gibson have both publicly stated opposition to V8 racing at Olympic Park and supported the retention of the event at Eastern Creek. The time has come for them to act on these convictions and persuade their colleagues to oppose the V8 race legislation," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

No V8's at Olympic Park Live On YouTube



Created on Monday, 13 October 2008 21:11

“Just because the Premier has announced his support for the project, does not mean we are going to give in to this environmentally damaging, waste of tax-payers’ money. Our campaign is only starting,” stated Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

The half minute video, already viewed over 100 times, tells who opposes the race, including three local councils and the Olympic Park Authority Board, as well as pointing out the huge costs to tax payers, the state government and the Olympic Park environment.

“We are hoping that by taking this campaign to the net, and the widely popular YouTube site, we will be able to reach out to a new and wider demographic of people who can support the campaign and make their objections known to the Premier,” said Mr. Angel.

“Our new Premier is painting himself as being ‘green’ but this the race location is a direct contradiction to that image. Not only is it an environmental disaster, he is also directly ignoring the appeals of the local community in the kind of issues that really matter to them.”

The video is titled ‘nohomebushraceway’ and can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RB212bYrN4>

Latest News

Full Inquiry Needed Into Costly, White Elephant Tillegra Dam



Created on Friday, 26 September 2008 22:55

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Hunter Water is proposing a massive price shock for water users in the Hunter without being required to show that the dam is even needed. It is clear that a full and independent review of the need for Tillegra Dam should be conducted as part of the current price review.”

Hunter Water’s submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) review of Hunter and Central Coast water prices for the next four years proposes massive price rises to cover Tillegra Dam costs.

However the terms of reference set by the NSW Government for the review prevent the Tribunal from investigating whether the dam is actually required.

“With Hunter Water storages close to full despite the worst drought on record and Gosford-Wyong water securing its supply through the Mardi-Mangrove pipeline any proper investigation would conclude that Tillegra Dam is an expensive and environmentally damaging white elephant,” Mr Martin said.

TEC has warned that Hunter Water’s proposed price increases will be the first of many needed to cover the costs of building and operating Tillegra Dam.

“This is only the beginning for Hunter Water customers. The experience with Sydney’s desalination plant shows that more and more price rises will be needed as construction and operating costs inevitably blow out. It is clear that Hunter Water Customers will be feeling the financial pain for years to come if Tillegra Dam is approved,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Central Coast Councils Expose Tillegra Folly



Created on Tuesday, 23 September 2008 22:52

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Hunter Water is proposing that construction of Tillegra Dam begin in mid 2010, however, in setting out their revenue requirements for the next four years Gosford and Wyong Councils have made no provision for meeting any of the construction or operating costs for Tillegra Dam. This is a clear sign that Tillegra Dam is neither needed nor wanted for the Central Coast.”

The Councils' submissions to IPART's price review seeks an increase in the average residential water bill of 8% per annum over four years to cover the cost of the proposed Mardi-Mangrove pipeline, however, no provision has been made for operational and capital expenditure to cover Tillegra Dam.

Hunter Water has argued that the \$400M Tillegra Dam is needed to provide water for the Hunter and Central Coast. However its own documentation shows that the dam was rated second last of all possible supply options and wouldn't be needed for at least 30 years, while Gosford and Wyong Councils' preferred Mardi-Mangrove pipeline will secure the Central Coast's water supply until at least 2047 for only \$70M.

“If Tillegra Dam is approved, Central Coast water users will be forced to pay a massive increase in bills over and above the 8% per annum currently being proposed by Gosford and Wyong Councils to support their own water supply strategy. This is despite the Councils' submissions making it clear the Mardi-Mangrove pipeline provide a secure supply for at least 40 years at a fraction of the cost of Tillegra Dam,” Mr Martin said.

With the NSW Government desperate to preserve the State's AAA credit rating and fears that the final cost of Tillegra Dam may be closer to \$1 billion, TEC has called on the State Government to abandon Tillegra Dam and avoid plunging the State further into unnecessary debt.

“With Hunter Water storages close to full despite the worst drought on record and Gosford and Wyong Councils making it clear they do not need Tillegra Dam there is simply no justification for proceeding with this expensive and environmentally damaging white elephant. Scrapping the dam would save between \$400 million and \$1 billion in additional borrowings that simply isn't needed,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

TEC Calls on new Planning Minister to fix up Sartor's Mess



Created on Wednesday, 10 September 2008 20:23

“The new Minister has some immediate challenges – fixing the planning reforms mess; stop the exclusion of expert environmental agency advice currently underway under removal of concurrences; and finalise an environmentally responsible mid north coast strategy” said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

“The Planning reforms were put forward under the guise of making it easier for mum and dad investors. In reality they paved the way for fast tracking approvals for the big property developers and reduced the opportunity for residents to have input into decisions which affect them; and the role of environmental advice from expert agencies.”

“The plans aimed to reduce the number of developments which required the neighbour's to be notified, reduce the amount of time for agencies such as the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Mine Subsidence Board to make comments on controversial developments which might impact on the environment.”

“The Draft Mid North Coast Regional Strategy is currently on the Ministers desk. The current draft recommends approving 7778ha of land for residential development. This is 50% more land for residential development than the Governments own Department estimates required. Some of this land is in sensitive Coastal locations and some is subject to climate change induced sea level rise,” stated Mr. Angel.

“If the new Rees Labor Government is going to convince the people of NSW that it has changed its spots then the new Planning Minister needs to give a commitment they will review the draft Mid North Coast Strategy and reduce the amount of land proposed for development.”

“The new Minister needs to start the planning review process again with an emphasis on listening to the community and environmental sustainability,” said Mr. Angel.

Latest News

Olympic Park V8 Test – Rees’ New Broom or Business as Usual



Created on Wednesday, 10 September 2008 02:11

TEC Director Jeff Angel said “The Rees Government will soon be making a decision on whether to allow noisy, polluting V8 Supercar races at Sydney Olympic Park. This will reveal whether the new government is really offering a new broom for NSW or a return to donation driven business as usual”.

It was revealed yesterday that V8 Supercars Australia has donated \$15,000 to the NSW ALP. In June the Lemma Government gave ‘in-principle’ support to the event, which would cost taxpayers around \$90 million over five years, despite unanimous opposition from the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) Board.

“A similar event in the Canberra made a net loss for the ACT. I’m sure the new Premier could use the \$90 million better elsewhere,” Mr Angel said.

“The proposed event also requires the loss of 700 native trees, create massive noise and air pollution impacts and cause weeks of disruption through traffic and construction impacts. By any objective analysis this proposal should be rejected out of hand. Premier Rees has a chance to show that his government will place public interest ahead of the private profits of political donors,” Mr Angel said.

TEC has told the Government that its environmental credibility is on the line.

“Olympic Park is simply the wrong place for this type of event. Allowing this appalling waste of taxpayer’s money and environmental destruction to proceed would represent a very poor start for the Rees Government,” Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Community Opposition Grows to Olympic Park V8 Madness



Created on Wednesday, 03 September 2008 20:53

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “the NSW Government faces a groundswell of opposition to this insane plan with local government, community groups and environmental organisations all strongly voicing their opposition. The Government should heed the views of the community and immediately rule out any prospect of V8 racing at Olympic Park”.

Auburn, Parramatta and Ryde Councils have all unanimously passed resolutions opposing the proposed race and public meeting is due to be held on Sunday 5 September at the Newington Community Centre.

TEC has warned the Government that this is simply the start of a long and sustained campaign against the proposed event.

“TEC is committed to a grass roots, activist campaign against for as long as is necessary to defeat this proposal. We are working closely with local councils and residents to stop this senseless environmental vandalism,” Mr Martin said.

The race would require the removal of up to 700 native trees and result in massive quantities of greenhouse gasses and hazardous air pollutants being released into the atmosphere. There would also be massive disruption to the local community through noise impacts and up to 470 semi-trailer movements needed to install and remove race track facilities, including 7 kilometres of concrete barriers.

“Olympic Park is simply the wrong place for this type of event. With a motor racing circuit just down the road at Eastern Creek there is no justification for destroying years of progress on sustainability at Olympic Park and subjecting surrounding suburbs to unacceptable levels of noise and traffic,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Hunter and Central Coast Water Price Investigation Nobbled by State Government Interference



Created on Saturday, 19 July 2008 00:49

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “With Hunter Water proposing a new dam that will require massive price increases for Hunter and Central Coast customers any investigation should consider whether the dam is needed and the price rises justified. The government, however, has nobbled the IPART review by preventing the Tribunal from considering this key question”.

IPART commenced its inquiry to set Hunter and Central Coast water prices for the next three to five years. Normal practice is for water agencies to be required to demonstrate whether proposed capital expenditure is justified. A directive by the Minister for Water Utilities Nathan Rees, however, has restricted the Tribunal to considering only the most cost effective way to build and operate the dam and prevents any consideration of whether it is even needed in the first place.

“With Hunter Water storages close to full despite the worst drought on record and Gosford-Wyong water securing its supply through the Mardi-Mangrove pipeline any proper investigation would conclude that Tillegra Dam is an expensive and environmentally damaging white elephant,” Mr Martin said.

TEC has labelled the Ministerial directive a serious assault on the independence of the pricing tribunal and a travesty of the IPART process.

“It makes a mockery of IPART’s independence and the price setting process if the government can effectively ensure it gets the outcome it wants. Hunter and Central Coast residents can have little confidence in the result of this review and can expect to pay a heavy price through their water bills in coming years unless the Government abandons this interference,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

V8 Lunacy - Green Olympics Legacy At Risk



Created on Thursday, 03 July 2008 21:03

“The Sydney 2000 Olympics were a major landmark in sustainability. Management of Sydney Olympic Park since the games has built on this legacy and has been a showcase in sustainability development. The V8 plan is environmentally and politically insane – we don’t need to go the expense of so-called feasibility studies to tell us the obvious,” said Jeff Angel, Director of TEC.

The race would require the removal of up to 700 native trees and result in massive quantities of greenhouse gasses and hazardous air pollutants being released into the atmosphere.

TEC has also warned that the race would jeopardise millions of dollars in investment at Olympic Park and result in long term economic damage.

“Development of the commercial and residential precincts at Olympic Park depends on maintaining the clean, green marketing edge. For the sake of a weekend of noise and pollution the government is placing at risk the economic viability of Olympic Park,” Mr Angel said.

TEC has called on the government to abandon the plan or destroy its environmental credibility.

“With a motor racing circuit just down the road at Eastern Creek there is simply no justification for this vandalism at Olympic Park. The environmental record of the lemma Government is on the line,” Mr Angel said.

“We expect to be able to quickly build a major campaign against the scheme. We call on the Premier to announce a permanent ban on the V8 race.”

**Photo courtesy of Johnsyweb on Flickr.com*

Latest News

Ministers Intervention in Mid North Coast Planning 'Unwise'



Created on Thursday, 22 May 2008 20:46

“A draft briefing memo from senior Government staff shows that two controversial parcels of land in particular were included in proposed development maps specifically after the developers had discussions with the Minister and both of these developers are large donors to the Labor Party. The lemma government should come clean on the developer lobbying that has led to the inclusion of these lands,” said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

One of the areas identified for inclusion after the developers Hardie Holdings and Walker Corp lobbied the Minister, is 792ha at North Arm Cove on Port Stephens - a controversial and environmentally sensitive location which has never been developed because much of it is low lying, forested land and services are unavailable. The other land included after discussion with the Minister by the Roche Group is 340ha designated for industrial development adjacent to the proposed new city of Brimbin north of Taree.

“We are concerned that these areas have been included in proposed development area without any planning merit and without being part of any strategic analysis by Great Lakes Council or the Department of Planning. It seems to be just another case where the Planning Minister has made a decision to suit large property developers.”

“TEC has worked with local community groups on the Draft Strategy and found an oversupply of 276% of greenfields residential land, if the areas nominated by the Government for residential development in the Great Lakes area are approved. There's a gross oversupply simply to pander to developer demands. It's not good planning; its developer planning.”

“The land at North Arm Cove is of high environmental significance. It is also remote and not serviced by public transport and will result in greater greenhouse gas emissions than more suitable sites,” Mr. Angel said.

Latest News

Hunter Water H250 Plan a Costly Mistake for Hunter Residents and the Environment



Created on Thursday, 15 May 2008 19:26

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Hunter Water is using guesswork to justify construction of a massive dam on the Williams River that is not needed now and is unlikely to be needed in the future. In doing so they have ignored major opportunities for water conservation, rainwater tank rollouts and recycling schemes. The result will be sharp increases in customers’ bills to pay for the dam and massive environmental damage to the Williams River”.

As part of its justification for building Tillegra Dam Hunter Water has reduced its estimate of the yield from current supplies from 90,000 megalitres per year to 67,500 megalitres per year. This calculation is based on highly questionable assumptions about future rainfall and conveniently ignores the fact many estimates predict an increase in rainfall in the Hunter under climate change.

“Despite the worst drought on record Hunter Water’s storages remain virtually full. With years of supply remaining there is ample time to get better picture of the effects of climate change on the region. Rather than present the facts objectively Hunter Water is simply trying to hoodwink the community into accepting a decision that is not justified,” Mr Martin said.

TEC has also condemned Hunter Water’s refusal to accept restrictions as a response to drought and adopt permanent water saving rules to prevent water wastage.

“Permanent water savings rules such as banning the hosing of driveways and paths and requiring the use of trigger nozzles on hoses have been successful and widely accepted in cities such as Melbourne and Adelaide and have recently been introduced in Sydney. These rules should be introduced in the Hunter to reduce demand for water with additional restrictions to be kept in reserve if a severe drought should occur”, Mr Martin said

TEC has called on Hunter Water to abandon its plans to build Tillegra Dam and focus on water conservation, rainwater tanks and recycling as a sustainable alternative.

“At present only 8% of households in the Lower Hunter have a rainwater tank and 14% of households have a water efficient front loading washing machine. Rather than opting for expensive and environmentally damaging engineering solutions Hunter Water should look to build an ‘invisible dam’ by increasing the uptake of rainwater tanks, water efficiency measures and recycling schemes,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Planning Act Inquiry Essential



Created on Monday, 05 May 2008 23:23

The legislation was introduced at the request of the development industry with a discussion paper released over Christmas and the current exposure bill had only three weeks for comment.

“It’s been a complete sham. Public and community organisations were unable to examine and discuss the complicated proposal and its supporting documentation in any detail”, said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

“More seriously is that many crucial details are to be included in regulations rather than the Bill itself, and these regulations have not been made public and so have escaped any level of debate or consultation.”

The groups are also opposing giving the Minister the power to rule that no consultation is required at the gateway stage of so called “minor” local plans. This is a recipe for underhand zoning changes.

“Furthermore, the proposed changes are a huge blow to the environment. The draft Bill will allow complying development in environmentally sensitive areas which are currently protected. This should not be allowed to happen. Sensitive areas should be subject to proper environmental assessment and development consent,” stated Mr. Angel.

“The Bill contains no provisions that advance environmental sustainability or improve the quality of environmental assessment. In fact, many environmental protection provisions currently present will be weakened by these proposed changes. The government is acting without regard for the public interest and should instead be improving the environmental sustainability results of the NSW planning system,” said Mr. Angel.

To download the environment groups letter to politicians click here [PDF 47Kb].

Latest News

Planning Reform Groundswell: 104 Groups Reject Sartor's Changes



Created on Thursday, 03 April 2008 21:13

The letter also tells The Premier that changes to the NSW Planning System, proposed by Planning Minister Sartor, will only serve to further alienate the community from the process.

"There is a growing sentiment among the general community that the NSW Government is going too far and the Premier would do well to listen to these concerns," said TEC Director Jeff Angel.

"Since the introduction of Part 3A into the EP&A Act, the balance has shifted from an Act that guarantees public participation and environmental assessment to one that hands developers more exemptions and less accountability.

"The planned reforms will only see an increase in the number of loopholes developers can jump through to avoid scrutiny. They also open the door for unhealthy relationships to form between developers and private certifiers".

"What is required is an EP&A Act with strong principles of ecologically sustainable development, contains genuine environmental assessment provisions and reinstates genuine public participation."

To read the letter click here [PDF 153Kb].

Groups Involved:

ADI Residents Action Group, Angels Beach Dunecare & Reafforestation Group Inc., Angourie Residents and Ratepayers Association, Australian Conservation Foundation (Central Coast Branch), Australian Conservation Foundation (Shoalhaven Branch), Ballina Environment Society Inc., Bega Environment Network, Bellingen Environment Centre, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Bonny Hills Progress Association, Broadwater Community Dunecare, Bypass Action Network (Coffs Harbour), Byron Environmental and Conservation Organisation, Camden Haven Protection Society Inc., Castlecrag Conservation Society Inc., CEN Lake Macquarie Planning Committee, Central West Environment Council, Clarence Environment Centre, Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc. (Port Macquarie Branch), Community Environment Network Inc., Conservation Ecologists Association, Conservation of North Ocean Shores Coastwatchers Association Inc., East Ballina Landcare Inc., EcoNetwork-Port Stephens Inc., Eurobodalla Greens, Evans Head & District Water Committee Inc., Evans Head Aerodrome Committee Inc., Evans Head Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc., F.A.W.N.A. (NSW) Inc. - Mid North Coast Region, Forrester's Bushrangers, Friends of Currawong, Friends of Tumblebee, Gerroa Environment Protection Society, Great Lakes Environment Association, Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Foundation, Hawks Nest-Tea Gardens Progress Association, Healthy Cities Illawarra Inc., Humane Society International, Hunter Community Environment Centre, Hunter Environment Lobby, Illawarra Community and Environment Connection, Illawarra Escarpment Coalition, Illawarra Greens, Illawarra Residents Against Toxic Environments, Jervis Bay Regional Alliance, Jetty Action Group, Lake Macquarie Coastal & Wetlands Alliance, Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc., Lakes Community Precinct Committee (Wyong Shire), LennnoxCare, Maitland Greens, Mittagong Environment Alliance, Morisset Peninsula Precinct Committee, Mudgee District Environment Group, Myall Koala and Environmental Support Group Inc., Nambucca Valley Conservation Association National Parks Association (Far North Coast), National Parks Association of NSW, National Toxic Network Inc., Native Animal Trust Fund Wildlife Rescue (Hunter Region), Nature Conservation Council of NSW, No Tillegra Dam Group Inc., North Coast Environment Council, North Coast Voices, North East Forest Alliance (Hunter Region), Northern Illawarra Residents Action Group, NSW Wildlife Council Inc., Parks & Playgrounds Movement Inc., Peninsula Dunecare, Pindimar-Bundabah Community Association, Port Macquarie Conservation Society, Residents Action Network, Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA, Residents of Kincumber Association Inc., Rising Tide (Australia), River Canoe Club of NSW, Ryde Hunters Hill Flora & Fauna Preservation Society Inc., Sandy Hearn's Action Group, Save Water Alliance Inc., Scotts Head Protection Group, Smiths Lake Village Association, South East Region Conservation Alliance, Stanwell Tops Residents Awareness Association, STEP Inc., Surfrider Foundation Australia, Sustainable Communities Research, Swan Lake Environment

Protection Association, Terania Native Forests Action Group, Terrigal Area Residents Association Inc., Terrigal Lagoon Bushcare Group, The Manning Group, Total Environment Centre, Tweed Landcare Inc., Ulitarra Conservation Society, United Residents Group for the Environment of Lake Macquarie, Valley Watch, Vincentia Ratepayers & Residents Association, Wadalba Association, Western Sydney Conservation Alliance Inc., Whale Call Inc., Willoughby Environmental Protection Association Inc., Wyong Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association, Wyong Terrestrial Orchid Research.

Latest News

Productivity Commission wrong on water restrictions



Created on Saturday, 29 March 2008 00:24

TEC Water Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Water conservation rules have been a major success in reducing water use and educating public on the need to conserve this precious resource. Abandoning these rules would risk a return to wasteful water practices of the past such as using the hose to wash paths and driveways".

The Productivity Commission has claimed that water restrictions are costing Sydney households \$150 per year, however, this ignores the immediate benefits of using less water in reducing infrastructure costs and environmental impacts.

"The Productivity Commission's view is short sighted and ignores the fact that conserving water reduces the need for expensive and environmentally damaging infrastructure such as new dams and additional desalination. The costs of additional infrastructure would simply be passed onto customers through higher water bills. Water conservation also ensures that water can be put back into our stressed river systems for desperately needed environmental flows," Mr Martin said

TEC has urged governments to ensure that water conservation rules are maintained and used to complement ongoing price reform.

"Price reform and water conservation rules go hand in hand in encouraging the wise and careful use of water. While pricing needs to provide a strong signal to save water wherever possible the responsibility of saving water must be shared equally in the community. No-one should be able to pay their way out of the obligation to conserve our water resources. This will simply put a greater burden on the less well off and long-term environmental interests," Mr Martin said.

Latest News

North West Metro Rail a major boost for air quality and public transport



Created on Wednesday, 19 March 2008 04:48

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “North Western Sydney is choking under worsening traffic congestion and air pollution from vehicle emissions. Completing the North West Metro link by 2107 will provide commuters with an attractive alternative to the private car and help reduce the number of polluting vehicles on our roads “.

TEC has also welcomed the proposed West Metro to Parramatta and South East Metro to Malabar and urged the Government to immediately commit funds to their construction.

“Sydney needs extensive new public transport infrastructure to relieve the gridlock and harmful air pollution that is plaguing the city. Providing metro rail to Parramatta and Malabar would be a vital component of an effective transport network,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Western Sydney biodiversity certification deeply flawed



Created on Saturday, 15 December 2007 01:29

TEC urban campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The process approved by the NSW government will result in the loss of 1,867ha of high and medium conservation value native vegetation. This is a major impact on an already severely depleted resource in Western Sydney".

Biodiversity certification will also remove a crucial layer of environmental protection, the assessment of threatened species impacts. Instead assumptions will be made on the basis of general vegetation types and old, incomplete information. No ground truthing will be done to check the validity of these assumptions.

"Basing assessment of threatened species impacts on incomplete information and assumptions poses the serious risk of populations of threatened species being overlooked and lost forever to development," Mr Martin said.

Another critical flaw is the treatment of remnant native vegetation parcels of less than 4ha. Under the biodiversity certification process many of these parcels will be lost to development despite the fact that they can act as important refuges for threatened species and also play an important role for migratory species.

"Development of the growth centres should include careful assessment of parcels of remnant bushland to identify those acting as crucial wildlife refuges. This level of assessment appears lacking in the biodiversity process," Mr Martin said.

There is also serious concern that proposed vegetation "offsets" will not be sufficient to compensate for the loss of habitat or be available at the same time that bushland is lost to development

"Purchasing land for offsets on the open market raises the serious concern that purchase cost will override conservation value in the selection of offset lands. There is also likely to be serious time lag between the loss of vegetation to development and the purchase of offset areas," Mr Martin said

Clean Air

Action for Air



Created on Friday, 14 December 2007 03:22



The NSW Government released Action for Air in March 1998, described as an "air quality blueprint". The Premier, Bob Carr said, "My Government has declared war on air pollution - this is the plan to make NSW the world leader in air quality management."

TEC welcomed the plan, but warned that effective implementation was the key. We promised to regularly review progress.

[Speech to 2010 Clean Air Summit \[18kB\]](#)

[Click to download the Third Review of Action for Air 2007 \[4.5MB\]](#)

[The 2007 Speech to the Air Quality Forum can be viewed by clicking here \[video\]](#)

Previous years reports and speeches can be viewed by clicking on the links below.

[2001 Report \[PDF 312Kb\]](#) [2001 speech to Air Quality Forum \[PDF 20Kb\]](#)

[2004 Report \[744Kb\]](#) [2004 speech to Air Quality Forum \[PDF 57Kb\]](#)

So far the results have been less than impressive.

Latest News

Climate change undermines air quality plan



Created on Saturday, 24 November 2007 01:21

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel "There is clear evidence that the effects of climate change will increase the numbers of days each year when photochemical smog exceeds health guidelines. The NSW Government must act immediately to protect public health and the environment by cutting emissions of harmful smog forming chemicals".

The NSW Government's Clean Air Forum today heard expert advice from the CSIRO that global warming would worsen the effects of photochemical smog in Sydney. Photochemical smog is formed by the atmospheric reaction of oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds on warm sunny days. With temperatures set to rise due to climate change the problem will worsen unless emissions of air pollutants are drastically reduced.

Motor vehicles are the biggest and growing source of smog forming chemicals. TEC has called on the government to take urgent steps to curb growing vehicle use and improve public transport.

"The government must act to reduce demand for vehicle use through introduction of congestion charges and legislation requiring large companies and government agencies to allow employees to 'cash out' parking entitlements. If linked to a major expansion of public transport, particularly new rail infrastructure - significant air quality benefits would be achieved," Mr Angel said.

TEC has welcomed announcements by the government to work with industry to reduce petrol volatility and to require large service stations to capture petrol bowser emissions but warned that these measures are not enough on their own to ensure air quality goals are met.

"Reducing petrol volatility and stopping petrol vapour emissions at the pump are important steps forward. These gains will, however, be negated by rising vehicle use unless the government provides a viable public transport alternative," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Wanted: New policies for healthy air



Created on Friday, 23 November 2007 19:32

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "With national standards for photochemical smog and fine particles being exceeded on a regular basis it is clear that current policies are not working. We need major reform to tackle rising vehicle use and harmful exhaust emissions".

TEC will present an independent report to the NSW Clean Air Forum today detailing measures needed to curb growing vehicle use and meet air quality goals. The report draws on international and Australia experience and expert studies.

Key recommendations include:

- introducing a London style congestion charge to discourage vehicle use during peak periods and fund new public transport infrastructure;
- requiring large companies and government agencies to allow employees to 'cash out' parking entitlements and switch to public transport;
- financial and regulatory support for low emission vehicles;
- bringing forward the north-west, south west and harbour rail links;
- completing the proposed Parramatta-Chatswood rail link, Strathfield-Hurstville rail link, Liverpool Y-link, Newcastle high speed rail, and Wollongong high speed rail no later than 2015;
- a major emphasis on light rail including CBD extension of the current system.

The London congestion charge has directly reduced emissions of dangerous fine particles and oxides of nitrogen by 7 and 8 percent, while CO2 emissions have been reduced by 16 percent.

Use of parking cash out policies in California has resulted in significant reductions in journeys to work by car. Coupling these policies to new public transport infrastructure would produce major air quality and greenhouse benefits for Sydney," Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Air Strategy without traction



Created on Thursday, 22 November 2007 00:32

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "After nine years of 'Action for Air' we have seen no improvement trend. National standards for photochemical smog and fine particles are consistently breached, exposing Sydney residents to dangerous chemicals. The reason for this is clear – failure to deliver promised public transport infrastructure and reduce vehicle use".

An independent report detailing the progress of Action for Air strategies and policies has been produced by TEC and will be presented at the NSW Government's Clean Air Forum on Friday. It reveals that unchecked growth in vehicle use is negating the benefits of cleaner fuels and engines as well as measures to reduce emissions from industry.

"When 'Action for Air' was released in 1998 the government committed to a major expansion of Sydney's transport infrastructure. Tellingly, while all road projects in the strategy have been completed on or close to time, rail projects have been cancelled, delayed or only partially implemented," Mr Angel said.

Rail projects that have been cancelled or delayed include the Parramatta to Epping line, Hurstville to Strathfield link, North West Rail link and upgrading of the Sydney-Newcastle line to a high speed link.

TEC has called on the Government to address the problem by bringing forward major transport infrastructure such as the proposed North West, South West and Harbour rail links, honouring original public transport promises and committing to extension of the current light rail network. Further proposals addressing traffic will be released on Friday.

It is clear that Sydney will face ever worsening traffic chaos and air pollution unless urgent steps are taken to improve public transport. We cannot afford another decade of inaction and lost opportunities," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Danger Signs in Sydney Air Pollution Report



Created on Thursday, 15 November 2007 00:20

"They have smeared the figures together, and when you unpack them there are clear danger signs," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"Car use (measured as vehicle kilometres travelled) has grown rapidly, outstripping population growth, and despite some decreases in nitrogen oxide and VOC emissions (the major contributors to smog) - since 1994 the overall trend for smog shows no clear improvement trend, with national standards being exceeded each year."

"This is the real test and the public deserve to be told the real situation."

"There is also the worrying growth in fine particles (called PM2.5) that are breathed deep into the lungs. These can cause cardiovascular and respiratory problems, and have been associated with increased mortality. The rapid growth in use of diesel, which has more than doubled in the last decade, is the main cause."

"Total Environment Centre will be releasing a full review of the Government's Action for Air strategy, next week. It will recommend a broad range of new actions – while there have been some advances in past years, there's lots more to do," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Sydney Water price investigation nobbled by political interference



Created on Tuesday, 16 October 2007 02:45

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “With Sydney Water seeking massive price increases to pay for a desalination plant any investigation should consider whether the plant is needed and the price rises justified. The government, however, has nobbled the IPART review by preventing the Tribunal from considering this key question”.

IPART is currently considering a proposal by Sydney Water to sharply increase prices to cover the cost of a 250 megalitre per day desalination plant at Kurnell. A directive by the Minister for Water Utilities Nathan Rees has restricted the Tribunal to considering only the most cost effective way to build and operate the plant and prevents any consideration of whether the plant is even needed in the first place.

“It is clear that any proper investigation would consider that Sydney does not need a desalination plant, particularly given the government’s decision to go against its own metropolitan water plan and expert advice that a plant need only be built if supply levels fell below 30%. It is little wonder that the Minister has stacked the deck in order to prevent this scrutiny,” Mr Martin said.

Sydney’s water supplies stand at 58%, almost double the trigger point for building a desalination plant.

The Tribunal has just begun reviewing public submissions and is due to hold public hearings in early December; however, TEC has labelled the Ministerial directive a serious assault on the independence of the pricing tribunal and a travesty of the IPART process.

“It makes a mockery of IPART’s independence and the price setting process if the government can effectively ensure it gets the outcome it wants. The public can have little confidence in the result of this review and can expect to pay a heavy price through their water bills in coming years,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Public transport and liveable communities in danger if developer levies axed



Created on Friday, 28 September 2007 22:20

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Developer levies in new urban release areas such as the north-west and south-west growth sectors are a vital source of funding for public transport, community centres, environment protection and public parks. It is only fair that property developers who benefit from new land releases contribute to the creation of attractive and liveable communities”

TEC has also warned that taxpayers may have to foot the bill for any reduction in developer levies as infrastructure and community services will have to be funded from the public purse if the growth centres are not to become unattractive, car dependent urban planning disasters.

“The need for public facilities and infrastructure in new suburbs will remain, regardless of what happens with developer levies. If the levies are reduced they will have to be funded from the state budget and higher local council rates. The alternative is that new suburbs will simply miss out on facilities that other communities take for granted and that Sydney’s transport chaos worsens with more and more people are forced onto the road due to lack of public transport in the growth centres”.

TEC has disputed developers’ claims that levies are driving up house prices and reducing home affordability.

“The fact is that developers will always seek to maximise their return and get the highest possible price for each lot. Scrapping or reducing developer contributions won’t lead to an equivalent price drop”, Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Transport credibility on the line with North West rail link



Created on Wednesday, 26 September 2007 01:20

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “The State Government is forging ahead with massive population growth in the North West growth centre. Failure to provide a major heavy rail link will create a transport and air pollution nightmare “.

The proposed North West rail link is a key piece of supporting infrastructure of the North West growth centre and is essential to preventing massive gridlock in the new development area. It is also urgently required to ease pressure on the current CityRail network.

“Sydney’s transport crisis is a direct result of failing to expand the rail network to meet demand from a growing population in North West and South West Sydney. Repeating these mistakes will condemn Sydney residents to decades of traffic chaos and harmful air pollution,” Mr Martin said.

With the Government due to hold a major public forum on air quality in November, TEC has called on Premier Morris lemma to immediately reject any moves from Treasurer Michael Costa to scrap the rail link or risk turning the forum into an empty farce.

“Vehicle exhausts are a major and growing source of Sydney’s appalling air pollution. It is simply impossible to improve air quality without new rail links to reduce car dependency. Unless the Premier provides an immediate, rock solid commitment to complete the North West rail link on time the Clean Air Forum will be nothing more than an empty public relations exercise,” Mr Martin said.

Latest News

52 Community Groups tell lemma Govt to fix planning



Created on Tuesday, 28 August 2007 01:35

Planning Minister, Frank Sartor recently announced a new round of changes in response to pressure from developers.

In an open letter the groups said:

- Community involvement was now token or absent;
- Greater ministerial discretion led to a lack of legitimacy for decisions;
- Environmental assessment requirements had still not been released two years after the introduction of controversial fast track provisions;
- Measures to prevent pollution can be ignored;
- Management of catchments and native vegetation was being marginalised.

In commenting on the letter, Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre said: "There is a storm coming – the government continues to pander to the developer lobby, but there are a lot of people angry about the trampling on their rights to know and participate and quality environment protection."

"The government needs to listen to the community. Fix up the problems we have now and don't repeat the same mistakes in the next round of reforms."

Latest News

Toxic petrol vapour plan welcomed



Created on Monday, 13 August 2007 22:50

TEC has welcomed the release of discussion paper by the NSW Government on the introduction of petrol vapour recovery systems at petrol stations and urged the NSW Government to move towards rapid implementation.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Petrol vapour emissions during refuelling are a major and growing source of air pollutants. Motorists are also exposed to dangerous chemicals such as benzene during refuelling. Capturing these vapours will make a valuable contribution to improving our air quality and protecting public health".

"The technology which is well proven should also be installed at all petrol stations. Some smaller independent stations are complaining about the cost, but if they don't do it then they will lose customers to their competitors who aren't poisoning car owners."

In Sydney alone, refuelling emissions currently account for around 5,500 tonnes of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions per year. VOCs combine with oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) in the presence of sunlight to form ground level Ozone – the major constituent of harmful photochemical smog. Breathing ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, irritation to the eyes and nose and congestion. It can worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma.

Breathing petrol vapour can also have direct impacts. Vehicle refuelling makes the most significant contribution to the population's exposure to benzene Benzene a human carcinogen for which there is no absolutely safe level of exposure. Long-term exposure to benzene has been linked with increased incidence of leukaemia.

"Removing petrol vapours from the air we breathe is long overdue. The technology has been proven overseas and in recent Australian trials. There should be no barrier to its immediate introduction," Mr Martin said.

Technology for capturing these emissions at the pump has been available for decades with the technology first adopted in parts of the United States in 1972 and since adopted by many European and Asian countries. It has also been shown to work in NSW with successful trials at Blacktown and Gosford Council depots in 2004.

TEC also believes that action taken to introduce petrol vapour recovery systems in NSW will prompt action by the Commonwealth and other state governments. "There is no doubt that petrol vapour recovery systems should be adopted Australia wide. Successful introduction in NSW is sure to provide the spur for other governments to follow suit, Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Adelaide water management lagging behind rest of the country



Created on Thursday, 09 August 2007 21:55

This is revealed in a report by the Total Environment Centre (TEC) - the result of a two year investigation of regulatory and pricing arrangements for urban water services.

TEC Urban Water Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "It should not be a secret, urban water management affects everyone. Adelaide residents simply have no way of knowing how the management of their water and sewerage services compares with that of other Australian cities or of having any input into the decision making process. There is also no clear method of assessing United Water's performance or environmental impact".

"While major progress has been made improving water management in Australia over the last decade Adelaide has failed to keep pace with reform in other states. The result is a system of pricing and administration severely lacking in public accountability and transparency," Mr Martin said.

Price setting mechanisms have also been heavily criticised with lack of public consultation again being a major problem. And in other cities, the crucial operating licence is independently and publicly assessed, while United Water's contract with South Australian Water is obscured by commercial confidentiality.

Water prices in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth are set through an open, public process conducted by an independent regulatory agency. In South Australia prices are proposed by South Australian Water and approved by the Government. The Essential Services Commission of South Australia's role is effectively limited to inviting submissions on this decision and retrospectively reviewing the decision making process.

"Conducting a review and inviting submissions after pricing decisions have been made makes a mockery of principles of public consultation. Water customers are entitled to have a genuine say on pricing rather than a sham review process. Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the South Australian Government to undertake a major overhaul of water pricing and regulation to bring it up to date with national best practice.

"It is clear that significant reform of water management in Adelaide is needed in order to bring it into line with national standards. Adelaide residents deserve the same degree of public accountability that water customers in other cities enjoy," Mr Martin said.

Urban Water Regulation In Australia

Latest News

More Brisbane water reform needed



Created on Thursday, 09 August 2007 21:52

This is revealed in a report by the Total Environment Centre (TEC) - the result of a two year investigation of regulatory and pricing arrangements for urban water services.

TEC Urban Water Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "current regulatory arrangements for water in South-East Queensland lack even basic standards of public accountability taken for granted in cities such as Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. While the Government's water reforms will improve the efficiency of the system they will do nothing to address this serious lack of openness and transparency".

TEC has called on the Government to bring water regulation into line with national best practice.

Lack of a strong licensing regime and public audit of performance for Brisbane Water was identified as a major failing of water administration in South-East Queensland. In other cities, the crucial operating licence is independently and publicly assessed. There is currently no comparable operating licence system in place for Brisbane Water.

"A rigorous, transparent operating licence and audit system would give South-East Queensland residents a clear picture of how their water supply is managed and how it compares with the rest of the country," Mr Martin said.

Price setting mechanisms have also been heavily criticised with lack of public consultation again being a major problem.

Water prices in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth are set through an open, public process conducted by an independent regulatory agency. In Brisbane and South-East Queensland the Queensland Competition Authority's (QCA) role is limited to monitoring the pricing practices of the water utilities.

"Queensland water customers are entitled to have their say on pricing decisions. The Government should expand the powers of the QCA to allow it to conduct open public pricing inquiries and set prices for water utilities," Mr Martin said.

"The current restructure of the water industry presents an historic opportunity for South-East Queensland to set the pace on urban water management. This must include full public accountability and participation in all aspects of regulation and pricing," Mr Martin said.

Urban Water Regulation in Australia

Latest News

NSW Green Business Squandered



Created on Thursday, 02 August 2007 01:10

TEC Director, Mr Jeff Angel said “NSW has the opportunity to lead the nation in the promotion of sustainable business initiatives. By investing in old style projects such as environmentally damaging roadways, an unnecessary dam and a desalination plant nobody wants, the government is squandering this opportunity and seriously wounding the emerging green economy.”

The Premier’s announcements included proposals for extension of the M4 and F3 roadways despite the pressing need to fast track new rail infrastructure, as well as continued commitment to a desalination plant at Kurnell and a dam in the Hunter. Meanwhile, recycling opportunities languish for want of government support.

“The government is racing full steam ahead on new roadways and unsustainable water infrastructure while crucial new rail links are a minimum of 10 years away and a recycled water grid for Sydney is on a 25 year go-slow timetable. The Government is wasting a priceless opportunity to address key environmental problems and to ensure that NSW takes the lead in the growing field of green business,” Mr Angel said.

“The Premier has seen the light by acknowledging that gas is the preferred transition fuel over more coal, but he now needs to focus on the long-term solutions. This should include a ‘smart state’ energy efficiency plan.”

Latest News

Permanent water restrictions needed for long term management of Sydney water supplies



Created on Thursday, 12 July 2007 22:13

Total Environment Centre Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “While the welcome recovery of Sydney’s water supplies may allow some easing of current restrictions there is an overwhelming case for introducing permanent water savings rules to prevent a return to wasteful water use practices.”

Permanent water saving rules have been introduced in Melbourne and Adelaide and include measures such as the prohibition of hosing of paved areas and requirements for trigger nozzles to be used when washing cars and watering gardens.

“Permanent water saving rules have been introduced successfully in other Australian cities. There is no reason why they could not also be a valuable water management tool in Sydney,” Mr Martin said”

TEC has warned that failure to introduce such rules would risk destroying the major progress made in saving water in recent years.

“Sydney residents have responded well to water restrictions and embraced the water conservation message. It would be senseless to abandon these gains by allowing a return to wasteful water use practices such as hosing down paths and driveways. There is simply no justification for using the hose as a broom no matter what level our storages are at”.

TEC has also told the government that it should abandon plans for an unnecessary and unsustainable desalination plant at Kurnell before lifting water restrictions.

“It is hard to understand how the Government can continue pushing full steam ahead on a desalination plant that Sydney doesn’t want or need when conserving water offers a cheaper and environmentally sustainable solution”, Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Tillegra Dam unsustainable, unnecessary and unjustified



Created on Saturday, 07 July 2007 00:25

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "it is clear that Tillegra is not needed as investigations by Gosford and Wyong Councils have identified options that are cheaper and less environmentally damaging than a new dam on the Williams River. It is also clear that the Councils don't believe that water from Tillegra would be available anywhere near soon enough to solve their problems. The whole rationale for Tillegra Dam is thus rendered invalid".

The need to provide water to the Central Coast has been presented as the key reason for construction of the Tillegra Dam, however, WaterPlan 2050 provides clear options to secure water supplies for Gosford and Wyong without depending on supply from a regional dam in the Hunter.

"Recycling combined with improved demand management and a wider rollout of rainwater tanks offers a superior approach to future water management for both the Hunter and the Central Coast," said Mr Martin. "The principal barrier to the adoption of this sustainable approach appears to be political. Decisions on future water supplies should be based on sound water management principles not short term political considerations", Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the NSW Government to abandon Tillegra Dam and instruct Hunter Water to focus on sustainable water management.

"Tillegra Dam will be little more than an environmentally disastrous white elephant. The Government should tell Hunter Water to abandon this crazy idea and get on with the job of managing water resources in the Hunter sustainably".

Latest News

Politics, not water conservation, driving flawed Central Coast water strategy



Created on Friday, 29 June 2007 21:12

TEC has told the Councils that the strategy is seriously flawed and must be revised to give more priority to recycling and demand management. The public comment period for the Strategy closes today.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The Councils have abandoned recycling despite their own research showing that it would maintain supply for longer at lesser cost than their preferred strategy. It is clear that lack of vision and political caution are hampering the development of sustainable water management policies on the Central Coast"

An earlier draft WaterPlan 2050 report by the Councils revealed that recycling initiatives could secure supply until 2052, five years longer than the water transfer system now being presented as the preferred option. Recycling options also carry lesser capital cost and cost per kilolitre yield according to the Councils' own figures. Options available include substituting environmental flows in the Wyong River with recycled water and later upgrading to return purified recycled water to Mardi Dam.

TEC has also heavily criticised the dropping of plans for permanent water conservation measures which were proposed in the initial WaterPlan 2050 document. These measures were proposed for introduction once current supplies had recovered and would include low level restrictions such as banning the hosing of hard surfaces.

"Permanent water conservation measures are an essential and sensible component of sustainable water management. They have been introduced successfully in Melbourne and Adelaide to help conserve precious drinking water and should be part of long term water management on the Central Coast. There is simply no justification for wasting such a precious resource as drinking water on hosing paths and driveways", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Government abandons recycling for more unnecessary desalination



Created on Tuesday, 26 June 2007 04:00

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “By promoting ever more desalination the Government has made clear that election commitments to develop water recycling in Sydney are now worthless. Every dollar spent on desalination is a dollar that won’t be spent on sustainable water solutions such as recycling and rainwater tanks”.

TEC has strongly criticised the Government’s progress on developing recycling with construction of a recycled water grid for Sydney given a 25 year completion target.

“It is telling that the Government has a go slow policy on developing the recycled water grid while racing ahead with more and more desalination that Sydney doesn’t need” Mr Martin said.

TEC has also warned that doubling the desalination plant will undermine the cause of water conservation and place a severe financial impost on Sydney residents.

“Rather than encouraging residents to conserve water, Sydney Water will need to sell more and more water to cover the cost of desalination. The price of water will also have to rise sharply to fund the plant meaning that Sydney Water customers will be paying the price for the Government’s lack of vision for years to come”, Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Alliance urges long term transport plan



Created on Thursday, 15 March 2007 23:55

The alliance, comprising the Property Council of Australia, Sydney Chamber of Commerce, and the Total Environment Centre expressed disappointment that neither Labor or the Coalition had committed to develop a long term plan outlining solutions to address Sydney's future transport needs.

"The major parties are yet to announce that they would develop an all encompassing transport plan for Sydney," said Ken Morrison, NSW Executive Director of the Property Council.

"To date there have been piecemeal announcements of projects, which while welcome do not constitute a long term plan. "An efficient and effective transport system is vital to support the economic and social livelihood of Sydney."

The alliance believes a fundamental shake up of the way transport decisions are made and services are provided is needed to secure an efficient and effective system. "Whoever wins government on 24 March needs to restructure the way transport decisions and services operate," said Patricia Forsythe, Executive Director of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.

"There should be one minister and one agency responsible for Sydney's transport system – this should encompass public transport as well as roads. "We need to unravel the web of separate agencies with separate masters and separate agendas which currently stand in the way of achieving an integrated system."

According to the alliance, the focus must be on delivering high capacity, sustainable, integrated solutions. Projects which should be explored in a long term plan include a metro rail system to complement the city's road network.

"It's critical that we have holistic decisions being made about our transport system," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre. "Sydney needs new mass transit systems to cater for growth. These need to be planned and delivered to support and facilitate population growth."

The alliance said it will maintain pressure on the next government to deliver a long term integrated transport strategy for Sydney. "We will issue a list of targets we think the incoming government needs to tackle in its first 100 days in office to work towards delivering a long term transport plan for Sydney," said Mr Angel.

"Delivering a reliable and sustainable transport system is not something which can be done overnight, but we will be watching to make sure that real action is taken towards getting there. "We look forward to working with the incoming government to help create and build a transport system which Sydneysiders embrace."

Latest News

Commitments to open space protection needed in NSW election campaign



Created on Wednesday, 14 March 2007 02:38

TEC director Mr Jeff Angel said "With Sydney's population expected to grow by 1.1 million over the next 25 years and strong population growth in regional areas, increased population densities will make provision of parklands and recreational areas crucial to maintaining our quality of life. We are yet to see, however, any clear vision put forward for open space in the State Election".

TEC has identified shortcomings in current open space strategies including the failure of the recent Metropolitan Strategy open space audit to distinguish between areas that are accessible and useable and those that are not and a lack of clear targets for open space provision in new urban release areas.

"Determining open space needs for a growing population and providing adequate funding for purchasing and maintaining parkland will be key responsibilities in the next term of government. It is vital that all sides of politics give clear commitments to protect and maintain public open space".

TEC has also called all sides of politics to commit to a number of key open space initiatives including:

- A new audit of current open space to give a clear indication of publicly available and useable open space.
- Assessment of per capita open space needs for Sydney and establishment of clear open space targets in the Metro Strategy.
- Identification of native vegetation and remnant bushland requiring protection.
- Protection of public access to foreshore areas.
- Expansion of existing funds for open space acquisition.
- Converting surplus publicly owned land with open space potential to parks.
- Guaranteed application of portions of developer levies to open space.
- Restoration of urban streams to improve open space and environmental values.

Latest News

Green bus fleet a step forward for clean air



Created on Thursday, 22 February 2007 02:37

Total Environment Centre Director Mr Jeff Angel said “CNG and Euro5 diesel buses produce much lower emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants such as carbon monoxide and fine particles. With the transport sector a major contributor of greenhouse gasses and air pollution, improving the performance of the State Transit fleet is a vital part of tackling climate change improving air quality”.

TEC has also welcomed moves to improve the environmental performance of buses already in the State Transit fleet by retrofitting 1300 older buses with emission reduction technology.

“With existing buses likely to remain within the State Transit fleet for many years, or be sold to private bus companies, it is essential that everything possible be done to ensure the highest possible level of performance”, Mr Angel said.

TEC has also urged the Government to increase the availability of CNG refuelling facilities at State Transit depots to ensure that CNG buses can be used across the entire city.

“Lack of CNG refuelling facilities at some depots requires the continued purchase of diesel buses. As good as the performance of Euro5 diesels is against current models CNG buses offer even lower emissions. Lower fuel and health costs associated with CNG buses also make them the obvious choice wherever refuelling facilities permit their use”, Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Liberal breakthrough on water recycling



Created on Saturday, 17 February 2007 00:42

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director Mr Jeff Angel said "Using purified recycled water is a crucial part of creating a long term sustainable and cost effective water supply. Desalination by contrast is expensive, energy intensive and creates problems with disposal of highly saline brine".

TEC has also slammed revelations by the Minister for Water Utilities David Campbell that the Government will increase the size of its proposed desalination plant from 125 to 500 megalitres per day if supply levels continue to fall.

"It is clear that claims by the Government that is committed to recycling as a major part of its water plan are a sham. The Minister has revealed that the Government's plan is simply more and more environmentally damaging desalination".

The plan announced by the Opposition today would direct highly treated water from western Sydney treatment plants into Prospect Reservoir when total supply levels reach 20%. Recycled water would constitute approximately 10% of Sydney's water supply.

"Recycled water would be treated twice and diluted twice before reaching the consumer providing a safe source of water of identical quality to that currently available from kitchen tap. The plan recognises that the community is ready to accept recycling and water sustainability", Mr Angel said.

Importantly the plan would deliver more recycling and at faster rate than the Government's plans to use recycled water only for industrial and outdoor uses and TEC has called on the Government to match the Opposition's policy and announce equivalent or better recycling plans.

"Using recycled water as part of our total supply yields much greater dividends than non-potable recycling alone. There is simply no way for the Government to match this level of recycling without making a similar commitment to the Opposition".

"The first political step toward using purified recycled water in our drinking water supply has been taken. The onus is now on the Government to show that it is serious about recycling and water sustainability", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Building on the Harbour



Created on Thursday, 15 February 2007 04:38

TEC is opposing NSW Government plans to allow more development by Harbour foreshore owners.
Briefing Note

Latest News

One year metro plan report



Created on Thursday, 07 December 2006 11:00

An alliance of environmental, social welfare, union and development groups today released its report card on the first year of the Sydney Metropolitan Plan.

- Economy and employment - good
- Centres and Corridors - good
- Housing - OK
- Human services - poor
- Transport - OK
- Environment and resources - OK
- Parks and public spaces - poor
- Implementation and governance - poor

Report Card

Latest News

More At Stake Than Developers Profits On Waterfront



Created on Wednesday, 07 February 2007 03:56

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said “Increased population density under the Metropolitan Strategy will make provision of adequate public space and access to foreshore areas even more critical. Failure to protect access to the harbour and its foreshore will seriously undermine public acceptance of the Metropolitan Strategy and its goal of containing urban sprawl through consolidation of existing suburbs”.

Under draft amendments to the landowners consent policy the NSW Maritime Authorities powers to control overdevelopment on the foreshore, protect the environment of the harbour and ensure public access will be severely weakened. Control of waterfront development would fall mainly to local Councils.

“The NSW Government has a duty, as custodian of the harbour and its foreshores, to ensure that they are managed for the benefit the entire community, not just the interests of a small group of developers and waterfront owners. It is difficult to see how local councils could fulfil this role in a coordinated way that takes into account wider regional and city wide considerations”, Mr Angel said.

TEC has also warned that relying on local councils to control waterfront development would seriously jeopardise sensitive aquatic environments and could lead to increased disturbance of contaminated sediment.

“Protecting the environment of Sydney Harbour and preventing the release of contaminants trapped in sediments after centuries of environmental abuse also requires detailed regional planning and expertise in environmental management. Ad hoc planning by local councils in the foreshore areas will have serious consequences for the environment of Sydney Harbour”, Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Desalination Announcement Points To Government's Failure On Water Management



Created on Wednesday, 07 February 2007 01:16

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "Sydney finds itself in a crisis situation because of the Government's failure to promote water conservation and embrace environmentally sustainable options such recycling, rainwater tanks and stormwater harvesting".

TEC has called on the government not to view desalination as a panacea for Sydney's water problems but as a strong signal more needs to be done on sustainable water solutions for Sydney including indirect potable reuse of treated effluent.

"Sydney urgently needs the government to announce plans for securing Sydney's water supply with less expensive and environmentally friendly alternatives to desalination. This should include a commitment to indirect potable reuse as a safe and reliable source of supply and permanent water restrictions to embed conservation", Mr Angel said.

"The Government is looking for a quick fix rather than a sustainable long term solution to Sydney's water shortage. Desalination must be viewed by government as last resort, emergency measure and kept as small as possible. It should never be used as a substitute for sustainable urban water management", Mr Angel said.

The announcement comes only a week after the Government's failure to approve Water Savings Action Plans for the largest water users in Sydney, including some of its own government agencies was exposed.

"It is clear that the Government has been dragging the chain on water conservation and recycling while charging headlong toward desalination. There is still much that can be done to save water and create a sustainable supply. The Government must put long term solutions ahead of a short term political fix", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Government inaction cripples key program to save Sydney's water



Created on Wednesday, 31 January 2007 22:40

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "The State Government has been claiming long and loud that it is doing everything to conserve Sydney's drinking water supply. Despite this it has failed to approve Water Savings Action Plans for the largest water users in Sydney, including some of its own government agencies".

The Water Savings Order 2005, announced as part of the State Government's Metropolitan Water Plan, requires that, within Sydney Water's area of operation, businesses with a site using more than 50 million litres of water a year, all local councils and all NSW Government agencies which use at least 50 million litres of water a year at a site prepare Water Savings Action Plans. These plans, once submitted, must be approved by the Minister for Water Utilities.

Plans for business, councils and 19 State Government Agencies were due 31 March 2006 while a further 21 State Government Agency plans were required by 30 June 2006. More than 320 plans were required in all. While a majority of the plans have been submitted, only 40 have been approved. Of these 27 are for business and 13 for councils. Shockingly, no Water Savings Action Plans have been approved for any state government agency.

"The government is charging headlong toward building a desalination plant while showing no real commitment to curbing its own water use or promoting water conservation amongst Sydney's biggest water users. The failure to ensure implementation of Water Savings Action Plans is a damning indictment of the NSW Government's management of Sydney's water supply", Mr Angel said.

TEC has called on the Government to expedite the water savings plans as an alternative to desalination, boost installation of rainwater tanks connected to toilets and washing machines, introduce permanent water conservation measures and do more on recycling.

"It is clear that there is still much that can be done to save water and find sustainable supply solutions", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Government Admits Failure On Water Management As It Moves Closer to Desalination



Created on Saturday, 20 January 2007 00:13

TEC has called on the government not view desalination as a panacea for Sydney's water problems but as a strong signal more needs to be done on sustainable water solutions for Sydney.

"The Government is looking for a quick fix rather than a sustainable long term solution to Sydney's water shortage. Desalination must be viewed by government as last resort, emergency measure and kept as small as possible. It should never be used as a substitute for sustainable urban water management", Mr Angel said.

Sydney urgently needs the government to announce plans for securing Sydney's water supply with less expensive and environmentally friendly alternatives to desalination. This should include a commitment to indirect potable reuse as a safe and reliable source of supply and permanent water restriction to embed conservation.

"The Government has been paying lip service to measures such as recycling and rainwater tanks while charging headlong towards desalination. It must immediately announce plans for a massive program to boost installation of rainwater tanks connected to toilets and washing machines, introduce permanent water conservation measures and show leadership on indirect potable recycling", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Recycling and permanent water savings the only solution to falling dam levels



Created on Friday, 03 November 2006 00:10

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "With climate change threatening to make rainfall even less reliable it is essential that the NSW Government embark on a major effort to increase water recycling, introduce permanent water restrictions and ensure that business and industry become more water efficient. Current programs are insufficient".

The NSW Government's Metropolitan Water Strategy relies heavily on tapping groundwater reserves in western Sydney, taking more water from the Shoalhaven River, and pumping water from the bottom of dams that is currently inaccessible. While there are some welcome initiatives on recycling, much more is needed to provide a permanent solution.

"Utilising groundwater reserves may buy some time but carries environmental risks such as reductions in stream flows and effects on wetlands and is, at best, a one-off measure. Once the groundwater is used up it will take years to replenish. Taking more water from the bottom of dams and from the Shoalhaven River is dependent on rainfall and will place the Shoalhaven under greater environmental stress", Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the Government to massively increase the recycling target in the Metropolitan Water Strategy and to embrace indirect potable reuse as part of the overall solution.

"Sydney's long term water security depends on a massive increase in water recycling, including potable reuse initiatives. Indirect potable reuse is already occurring in Richmond and Windsor which draw their water from the Hawkesbury River, downstream of a number of tertiary treatment sewage treatment plants. The technology already exists to provide safe, indirect potable reuse elsewhere in Sydney".

TEC has also called on the Government to introduce permanent low-level water restrictions, such as adopted by Melbourne and Adelaide and to do more to make businesses and industry more efficient.

"Water restrictions have made an important contribution to reducing water wastage among residential customers. Those savings need to be made permanent and implementation of water savings plans for business and industry made mandatory. This should be supported by penalties for failing to comply and pricing reform to reward more efficient water use", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Peak business and environment groups call for CBD transport plan to fix gridlock



Created on Tuesday, 24 October 2006 22:35

Speaking at today's inaugural CBD Transport Summit in Sydney, Ken Morrison, NSW Executive Director of the Property Council of Australia said as the key driver of Australia's economy, the Sydney CBD is growing and it is vital that the city has a 21st century transport system that effectively services the needs of commuters, residents and visitors, in and around the CBD.

"The Sydney CBD accommodates over a quarter of a million jobs, and contributes 8% to Australia's GDP. Currently, there is no plan to meet the Sydney CBD's future transport needs. Today's system is near capacity and not equipped to cope with anticipated future growth," Mr Morrison said.

TTF Australia (Tourism & Transport Forum) Managing Director Christopher Brown said without an integrated CBD transport plan, Sydney's future as an efficient and attractive global city is under threat. "Action needs to start today to secure Sydney's reputation and role as a global city. Sydney's CBD congestion has the potential to negatively impact the perception of visitors to our city. TTF Australia, TEC and the Property Council all believe that light rail is a critical plank in establishing a vibrant CBD public transport system that can meet future demands," Mr Brown said.

TEC Executive Director Jeff Angel said the Sydney CBD has a strong and vibrant future in store. However this will be jeopardised if the transport system does not keep pace with growing demand. Sydney needs to step up to the mark and follow the example of other global cities embracing pro active approaches to sustainable transport planning. "Addressing the CBD's transport needs has to start today so we don't gridlock the city's future. Urgent action needs to be taken now to accommodate future transport demands," Mr Angel said.

The Property Council of Australia, Total Environment Centre and TTF Australia (Tourism & Transport Forum) are calling on all political parties, and all levels of government to commit to develop and implement an integrated transport plan for the Sydney CBD. Better co-operation and co-ordination between the different levels of governments must be achieved if effective solutions to Sydney CBD's transport needs are to be successful. The Property Council of Australia, Total Environment Centre and TTF Australia (Tourism & Transport Forum) will be signing a communiqué to go to government.

Issues to be discussed at the Summit include:

- Targets to increase the provision of public transport together with walking and cycling pathways;
- Investment priority for public transport, cycling and pedestrian facilities;
- Accelerating the Northwest - Southwest and CBD rail line;
- Introducing light rail in the CBD and at least one additional inner city corridor;
- Redirecting CBD buses to provide more cross-suburb and feeder routes;
- Establishing a Central Sydney Transport Taskforce chaired by the Premier with key community, business, and local government representatives to develop and implement a 30 year CBD Integrated Transport Plan;
- Open decision-making, including a website for the Taskforce to provide information to and seek feedback from the public on the plan as it evolves; and
- Developing a wider 30 year Integrated Transport Plan for the Greater Sydney Region in close consultation with key stakeholders and the whole community.

Transport Challenges facing the CBD

Latest News

Air Pollution Deaths Reveal Failure of Air Quality Programs



Created on Tuesday, 12 September 2006 23:06

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "There has been a clear failure on air quality and public transport. Sydney residents are continuing to suffer from smog and fine particle pollution as vehicle emissions remain a major and growing source of air pollution".

A report quietly released by the NSW Government on progress of its Action for Air program reveals that Sydney continues to suffer from serious air pollution eight years after the program's inception and that public transport is failing to keep pace with demand.

The Department of Environment and Conservation's Action for Air 2006 update recently appeared on the department's website with little fanfare and reveals that there has been no improvement in ozone levels (the major indicator of photochemical smog) or fine particles since 1998 with national and World Health Organisation standards regularly exceeded. Vehicle use continues to grow with Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) outstripping population growth.

"Vehicle use continues to grow due to the failure of public transport to keep pace with demand. Sydney residents are being forced into ever increasing car dependency and are paying the price with chronic air pollution as more cars on the road negate progress on cleaner engines and fuels", Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the Government to address the problem by bringing forward major transport infrastructure such as the proposed North West, South West and Harbour rail links and to commit to extension of the current light rail network.

"It is simply not good enough to blame hot weather or bush fires for Sydney's appalling air pollution. The evidence is clear that Sydney will face ever worsening traffic chaos and air pollution unless urgent steps are taken to improve public transport. Rising petrol costs present a major opportunity to increase public transport patronage, however, this opportunity will be lost unless services are radically improved", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Government report reveals failure on transport and air pollution



Created on Thursday, 31 August 2006 22:26

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The report reveals a clear failure on air quality and public transport. Sydney residents are continuing to suffer from smog and particle pollution as vehicle emissions remain a major and growing source of air pollution".

The Department of Environment and Conservation's Action for Air 2006 update recently appeared on the department's website with little fanfare and reveals that there has been no improvement in ozone levels (the major indicator of photochemical smog) or fine particles since 1998 with national and World Health Organisation standards regularly exceeded. Vehicle use continues to grow with Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) outstripping population growth.

"Vehicle use continues to grow due to the failure of public transport to keep pace with a demand. Sydney residents are being forced into ever increasing car dependency and are paying the price with chronic air pollution as more cars on the road negate progress on cleaner engines and fuels", Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the Government to address the problem by bringing forward major transport infrastructure such as the proposed North West, South West and Harbour rail links and to commit to extension of the current light rail network

"It is clear that Sydney will face ever worsening traffic chaos and air pollution unless urgent steps are taken to improve public transport. Rising petrol costs present a major opportunity to increase public transport patronage, however, this opportunity will be lost unless services are radically improved", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Light rail promise a shot in the arm for public transport



Created on Thursday, 03 August 2006 21:30

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said “Light rail offers a quicker, cleaner and more efficient service than buses forced to fight their way through congested Sydney traffic. It will encourage commuters out of their cars and back onto the public transport network”.

The CBD is a major bottleneck for current bus services for the inner suburbs with poor travel times as a result of heavy traffic and crowded services due to limited capacity. Replacing buses with light rail will not only improve services in the CBD but eliminate a major bottleneck affecting the entire bus network.

TEC has also welcomed the Opposition’s promise to assess extension of light rail to other areas of Sydney and regional cities.

“The increased capacity and more efficient operation offered by light rail makes it an attractive proposition for busy transport corridors such as Parramatta Road, Anzac Parade and parts of Newcastle and Wollongong. Assessing the feasibility of light rail links in such areas is an essential part of proper transport planning”, Mr Angel said.

TEC has called on the Government to immediately match the Opposition’s promise and commit to light rail expansion, along with a partnership with Sydney City Council.

“Public transport is shaping up as a major issue in next year’s State election. It is clear the lemma Government is out of step with the community on light rail. They must reverse their ill informed opposition to this sustainable transport option”, Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Accountability the key for new Central Coast water corporation



Created on Thursday, 27 July 2006 02:06

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “Creating a new Central Coast Water Corporation provides a golden opportunity to enshrine environment and customer protection in the management of water resources on the Central Coast. Simply rebadging current arrangements will do nothing to improve services or long term sustainability”.

TEC had previously called on the NSW Government to establish a separate Central Coast Water Corporation along similar lines to Sydney and Hunter Water in response to the Council’s failure to plan for sustainable water supplies for the Central Coast. Sydney and Hunter Water are governed by Operating Licences established by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and are required by legislation to protect the environment and customer’s interests. Regular, independent audits are conducted to check compliance with these requirements.

“Water management on the Central Coast requires major reform with a corporation subject to the same triple bottom line obligations and accountability measures as Sydney and Hunter Water. This will require a detailed Operating Licence and audit procedures that ensure maximum public accountability and transparency”, Mr Martin said.

Gosford and Wyong Councils have failed to plan for sustainable water supplies and are now pursuing desalination despite very little effort being made to develop cheaper and more sustainable options such as recycling.

“Proper management of Central Coast water should ensure that all environmentally and economically responsible recycling options are exhausted before any consideration is given to desalination”, Mr Martin said

Latest News

Recycled water pricing report a step in the right direction but further reform needed



Created on Thursday, 13 July 2006 01:46

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has welcomed recommendations on recycled water pricing by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) as an important step toward promoting water recycling but cautioned that more reform is needed to increase use of recycled water by industry.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Releasing pricing principles for recycled water is a vital first step in getting large scale recycling off the ground. It is essential that these pricing structures provide strong incentives to set up new recycling schemes and the costs and benefits are shared fairly across the community".

The Tribunal has released pricing principles to be used in schemes where use of recycled water is mandatory, such as the Rouse Hill scheme and those to be established in Sydney's growth centres. An important part of these principles is the recognition that the cost of developing recycling must be spread across the entire Sydney Water customer base through potable water charges.

"It is important to recognise that all customers will benefit from the development of recycling schemes by avoiding the \$2 billion cost and environmental damage of a desalination plant, not just those who use recycled water directly. It is appropriate that the costs of developing recycling be shared across all customers to ensure the viability of new recycling schemes", Mr Martin said.

The Tribunal has not recommended pricing principles for voluntary schemes, such as industrial reuse, on the basis that large industrial customers have the power to negotiate directly with water agencies. This ignores, however the need for strong incentives to encourage industry to switch to recycled water.

"Just as all customers benefit from residential recycling schemes, everyone benefit by substituting precious drinking water with recycled water in industry. Companies will not switch to recycled water, however, unless recycled water carries a sufficient discount. The cost of developing industrial reuse should be spread across the customer base to ensure the viability of industrial reuse schemes", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Major reform of water management on central coast needed



Created on Wednesday, 28 June 2006 21:42

Total Environment Centre (TEC) and the Community Environment Network (CEN) have written to the NSW Government calling for the creation of such a corporation to take responsibility for water and wastewater services and adopt sustainable solutions to the central coast's water challenges.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "pursuing mobile desalination reflects an institutional failure to plan for environmentally and economically sustainable water management. Creating a separate water corporation would ensure that these challenges can be more adequately addressed by an organisation whose sole focus would be on sustainable urban water services".

Creation of a Central Coast Water Corporation would also improve transparency and accountability of water management on the Central Coast.

CEN Chair Mr John Asquith said "a new water corporation like Hunter and Sydney Water would have an operating licence that allows regular, independent audit of performance, while ensuring that revenue collected from customers remains on the Central Coast. The Central Coast is an important enough region to have an upgraded agency".

A major concern with present arrangements is the failure of the Council's to promote recycling as a long term answer to water shortages. As an example, in a 2004 submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) Wyong Council revealed that less than 0.1% of its effluent was recycled and that it was only planned to increase this to 0.8% by 2005.

"Desalination should only be considered after all environmentally and economically viable recycling and water conservation options have been exhausted. The high cost of desalination means that alternatives such higher subsidies to residents for water tanks and water efficiency measures should be fast tracked", Mr Asquith said.

Latest News

BASIX cave-in rings environment alarm



Created on Friday, 09 June 2006 02:04

“The end result will be thousands of energy guzzling units; a drain on energy supplies and worse pollution. While the government talks about a review in two years, it has really put it off into the never-never,” said Jeff Angel, TEC Director.

“The government should have regulated for Energy 40, with a strict transition, so that the lazy developers got the message. With today’s decision there is no incentive to improve on the current weak 20% target. With more and more high rise on the agenda under the Metro Plan, the decision is very worrying.”

“Environment groups and the community at large are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the lemma government. It is so developer friendly that it has become blinkered to broader social and environmental objectives. It is not a healthy attitude and will come back to bite them at the ballot box,” Mr Angel said.

In the next few months the government will also be making decisions on regional coastal strategies and native vegetation protection in the new Sydney growth areas.

Latest News

Councils urged to reject mobile desalination



Created on Tuesday, 06 June 2006 21:16

Total Environment Centre (TEC) and the Community Environment Network CEN have written to all Councillors urging them to oppose the move and support recycling as a sustainable solution to the central coast's water shortage.

TEC Urban Campaigner, Leigh Martin said "Desalination is an expensive and environmentally damaging option due to high energy consumption and greenhouse emissions. Mobile desalination mobile desalination plants will also add air pollutants and fuel costs resulting from transport. It is outrageous that the Councils continue to promote this unsustainable approach while failing to develop recycling".

Water recycling levels on the central coast are extremely low. As an example, in a 2004 submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) Wyong Council revealed that less than 0.1% of its effluent was recycled and that it was only planned to increase this to 0.8% by 2005.

The groups are concerned that the councils are pursuing mobile desalination to avoid the detailed environmental and economic scrutiny required for a permanent desalination plant.

CEN Chair John Asquith said "A permanent desalination plant would not stand up to proper environmental and economic assessment, particularly if compared to recycling. The Councils should not be allowed to avoid this scrutiny with mobile desalination".

There are also serious concerns that the Councils failed to seek approval for funding of mobile desalination in the recent review of central coast water prices by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) which was released in early May.

"It is not legitimate to propose mobile desalination plants only weeks after the most recent price determination. The Councils must immediately explain what effect this proposal will have on water prices or what services will need to be cut to fund the plants", Mr Asquith said. The groups have highlighted to the Councils that pressing ahead with mobile desalination will invite sustained community opposition.

"Objections to desalination on the central coast have been expressed by a range of organisations and individuals. A continued push for desalination on the central coast will result in similar controversy and community opposition to that which lead to the shelving of the proposed Kurnell plant in Sydney", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Recycling strategy a good start



Created on Tuesday, 09 May 2006 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has welcomed the State Government's plan to boost levels of water recycling in Sydney but cautioned that it should only be viewed as the first step and that permanent water restrictions are an essential component of long term water sustainability.

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "The proposed Western Sydney Recycling Initiative will be a major boost to recycling and water sustainability in Sydney however it is by no means the last word in water sustainability in Sydney. More large scale recycling projects and the introduction of permanent water restrictions are essential to secure our water supply and ensure desalination remains on the backburner for good".

If restrictions are combined with planned recycling, we would be saving 20% of our water – this is real progress.

"Cities like Melbourne and Adelaide have adopted permanent water conservation measures to ensure their long term sustainability. Sydney must also respond to the challenge posed by a growing population and warming climate by taking this essential step", Mr Angel said.

TEC has told the government that it must embrace potable reuse in order to ensure maximum use of recycled water.

"Using recycled water for industrial and outdoor applications is a great start however it can only go so far. Maximum use of recycled water will require that some of it be treated to drinking water standard and recycled into the drinking water system", Mr Angel said.

Residents in Richmond and Windsor are already drinking recycled water with their supplies drawn directly from the Hawkesbury River downstream from high level sewerage treatment plants. Potable reuse has also been embraced overseas with Singapore, in particular, drawing some of its drinking water from recycling.

"Scientific research as well as local and overseas experience shows that recycled water can be made safe for human consumption. The government has made a good start to promoting recycling in Sydney but it must be prepared to take the bold steps needed to provide Sydney with a genuinely sustainable water supply", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

BASIX upgrade essential



Created on Thursday, 18 May 2006 10:00

"Developers are pulling out all the stops to convince the government to halt this essential energy and greenhouse pollution saving measure. However, the environment and the community need it and we call on the government to cease being the developer's servant," the groups said.

"BASIX may impose some additional upfront costs but instead of bleating about this, why don't the developers find some economies in other parts of the construction and outfit equation, especially for units. This would be a more responsible contribution to affordable housing."

"Far from increasing the cost of housing, it will in fact reduce the cost of living over the life cycle of the housing, as residents reap the rewards of lower energy bills over 10-20 years. This is an economic, social and environmental win / win / win. We simply cannot afford to be short sighted about climate change."

"BASIX is a key part of a suite of measures to reduce energy wastage and make a contribution to the alarming problem of climate change. If the government is worried about affordability it should also increase support for low income families who own or rent, to improve energy efficiency. The developers are bleating about affordable housing, but the multi unit housing they are constructing verges on the luxury end of the scale. It's of little help to those in need."

Latest News

CNG Buses rethink a victory for common sense and clean air



Created on Tuesday, 04 April 2006 10:00

Total Environment Centre Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said “CNG buses produce much lower emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants such as carbon monoxide and fine particles. It is pleasing that the government has listened to calls to purchase more of these cleaner vehicles to renew the State Transit fleet”.

The State Government had previously decided that it would no longer purchase CNG buses in favour of diesel vehicles however concerns about emissions and rising diesel fuel costs have forced a rethink and the Government has just announced that it will purchase 255 CNG powered buses for the Sydney fleet and 250 buses for the Sydney and Newcastle fleets to replace older diesel buses. Newcastle depots and some Sydney depots lack refuelling facilities for CNG buses necessitating the purchase of some diesel vehicles. Importantly these diesel buses will include newer Euro 5 engine technology to improve performance over current models.

“Lower fuel and health costs associated with CNG buses make them the obvious choice wherever refuelling facilities permit their use”, Mr Martin said.

CNG buses have lower tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases – particularly CO₂ – and significantly lower emissions of air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM) than diesel than Euro 3 standard diesel buses currently being purchased by State Transit.

One Euro 3 diesel bus travelling 41,529 km/year would emit approximately 14.12 kg of particulate matter (PM) per year. In contrast, a CNG bus would be expected to emit 0.83 kg of PM per year. This has a direct effect on the health of Sydney residents and the costs of treating respiratory illnesses.

TEC has called on the government to extend CNG refuelling facilities to more depots in Sydney and Newcastle to allow CNG buses to be extended to all areas.

“The case for CNG buses is compelling. The government should build on this decision by extending CNG refuelling to depots that currently lack this capacity. This will ensure that all areas are able to benefit from having buses that use this cheaper, cleaner fuel in the future”, Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Public Transport only solution to rising air pollution



Created on Saturday, 25 February 2006 01:21

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "Poor air quality this summer and an alarming increase vehicle use show that the State Government has a long way to go to fix air quality problems in the Sydney air shed. We need a major injection of capital to improve public transport and encourage people to leave their cars at home."

Air quality standards for photochemical smog have been exceeded 14 times this summer double that of the same period last year. Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) also more than doubled the rate of population growth despite the government's own targets to achieve zero growth in per capita Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) by 2011 and zero growth in Total VKT by 2021.

"Vehicle use continues to grow due to the failure of public transport to keep pace with a demand. Sydney residents are being forced into ever increasing car dependency. TEC has called on the Government to immediately produce a detailed and fully funded infrastructure plan for public transport to support its metro strategy. Treasurer Michael Costa has previously resisted the release of an infrastructure plan, however, he must take responsibility for providing the funds to fix our public transport and air pollution crisis." Mr Angel said

Ozone, the major indicator of photochemical smog, is formed by the atmospheric reaction of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and oxides of nitrogen (NOX) in warm conditions and the government has blamed poor air quality this summer on hot weather. This has been dismissed by TEC as ignoring the major source of pollution rising car use.

"It is simply misleading to blame air pollution on warm weather. Hot summer temperatures are a fact of life in Sydney and smog can only be formed if the precursor pollutants have been discharged into the atmosphere. It is clear that vehicle use is the major and growing source of smog precursors."

"Unless this trend is reversed by promoting more effective and reliable public transport Sydney can expect more long hot summers of worsening air quality". Mr Angel said

Latest News

Newcastle Rail decision a victory for common sense and sound transport planning



Created on Tuesday, 21 February 2006 22:06

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "the Newcastle and Hunter regions are experiencing rapid population growth. Cutting rail access to the Newcastle CBD was an insane idea that would simply have promoted increased car use and Sydney style gridlock. We are pleased that the Government has listened to public opinion and pledged to maintain this vital service."

"With strong population growth in the region expected to continue, improvements to public transport will be an essential part of sound urban planning in the region. It is vital that the Government not repeat mistakes made in Sydney where failure to provide public transport infrastructure to service a growing population has resulted in rising car dependency, traffic chaos and worsening air pollution. Maintaining the Newcastle rail link and providing new interchanges at Broadmeadow and Glendale are key parts of developing an effective public transport network," Mr Martin said.

"Further improvements to public transport, including better bus services and possible light rail development will also be required to curb growing car use and protect air quality. The Government now has the opportunity to develop a truly reliable and effective public transport network in the Lower Hunter. This will be crucial in ensuring the sustainability and long term prosperity of the region", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Desal on backburner, recycling on front foot



Created on Thursday, 09 February 2006 01:23

"The desalination gambit was distorting sustainable urban water management for Sydney. The large investment that would have been required for desalination was always going to create a compelling economic reason to use more and more desal and invest less in recycling. The government is now moving to get the priorities right," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"Both desal and the Tallawa Dam raising were environmentally destructive projects that did nothing to help us conserve water, they just locked Sydney into a continuing cycle of waste. Recycling which is at a meagre 2% of water use, should be massively increased. A target of 20% by 2012 should be set - there is clearly a lot of public support and private sector interest to build up recycling"

"The Premier has responded to the facts and public views. While we would have preferred complete elimination of desal and look forward to this, the alternatives outlined by him and an aggressive recycling program should be its death knell, over time."

"Total Environment Centre will continue to work with government, stakeholders and the private sector to give Sydney an environmentally sustainable water cycle", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Diesel Bus Blunder



Created on Wednesday, 11 January 2006 01:02

The decision by the NSW Government to ditch purchase of cleaner Compressed Natural Gas buses in favour of dirty diesel is an air pollution and public health blunder. It also makes the need for light rail more urgent.
Diesel v CNG report

STOP PRESS! 2 April 2006 - The Government has now reversed its decision and will buy 255 CNG buses and another 250 Euro5 standard diesel buses* for the Sydney and Newcastle fleet. An air quality win.

* The lack of current CNG refuelling at some depots means some dielsel will continue to be used but Euro5 pollution controls are high standard.

Latest News

Horror smog hits Sydney



Created on Monday, 02 March 1998 11:00

The pollution graphically shows the challenge for the Carr Government's forthcoming air quality plan.

"There aren't any bushfires - the pollution is the result of negligent policies by governments over the last decade and their encouragement of more and more cars onto the roads," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"The Carr Government's Air Quality Management Plan is Sydney's last chance to prevent an awful air quality future. Their Plan must not only have tough targets but also be backed up by funding for new transport projects. The Minister for Transport must fix up the RTA and Department of Transport who at present are incapable of implementing a plan that will give Sydneysiders clean air."

"We need a fresh look at transport infrastructure, not the recycling of schemes like the Western Sydney Orbital, which is a sure recipe for urban sprawl and increased car dependency."

"Also the recent announcement by Transport Minister, Carl Scully of a 'top level transport committee' comprised of top bureaucrats will not work. It is a minimalist response that can't match the scale of the problem. There needs to be wholehearted community involvement and all this secret committee, comprised of those who have failed in the past, will do, is breed more scepticism," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Manly Dam Urban Bushland Watershed



Created on Wednesday, 16 June 1999 10:00

"This protest is a result of 4 years of stonewalling and inaction by the NSW Government after numerous failures of process to conserve this site and develop effective urban bushland protection policies. Their credibility on Urban Bushland conservation is in tatters," he said.

"Its ridiculous in this day and age, for politicians and citizens to have to resort to throwing themselves in front of bulldozers to stop obviously inappropriate developments in high conservation value bushland in the middle of the Olympic City," he said.

"Development must not be allowed to run amok over Sydney's precious natural heritage, the people know it and so should Bob Carr and Andrew Refshauge", he said.

The Ardel owned site is located at the headwaters of the Manly dam Catchment and together with the neighbouring Manly Dam reserve is listed on the Register of the National Estate as a National Heritage site. It is home to threatened species including the Red Crowned Toadlet, Climbing Galaxias (40 million year old land locked green and golden fish). and the Endangered Ecological Community Duffy's Forest Community.

Prior to the 1995 state election the Carr Government promised much improved protection for privately owned bushland and just after the recent election win the Premier repeated this intention.

Latest News

Environment impacts of oil spill unknown



Created on Monday, 05 July 1999 10:00

"The most severely affected sites such as Balls Head Bay, Gore Cove and Berry Island Headland will suffer repeat contamination with every high tide. Sandstone is particularly porous allowing it to soak more oil, making it harder to clean, and even after cleaning, oil will be released back into the environment with each high tide," he said.

"The effects of this contamination could be widespread and long term. There has been no large scale ecological inventory done of Sydney harbour so there isn't enough information on which to base an ongoing monitoring program. We simply might not ever know the full impacts of the spill. We need immediate and ongoing spot surveys of intertidal communities in the area, they are the litmus test for impacts of the spill," he said.

"This spill happened in good conditions; a rising tide, calm waters, and low winds. I dread to think of 80 000 litres of light crude spilled in high winds and choppy waters, we'd have a much larger crisis," he said.

"The Premier says the Sydney Harbour is a "working" harbour, but it is also a "living" harbour and its value in tourism dollars would surely outstrip the economic value of "dirty industries" like Shell being on the harbour. The only solution is to move the Shell storage facilities out of Sydney Harbour, it's a relic of a past industrial age. We can still have a working harbour without an oil terminal," he said.

"We are also gravely concerned about the spill's impacts on the Endangered Population of Little Penguins at Manly. The Penguins feed throughout Sydney Harbour and sightings have been made just next to the main boom. At least 3 penguins have reportedly been affected but we won't know the total numbers affected for days. This is NSW's only mainland population. There are only around 200 birds left in the harbour. Health affects of oil poisoning can kill some birds. They will also continue through generations of Little Penguins and may threaten the long term survival of the population if too many birds are affected," he said.

Latest News

Sydney needs Urban ESD Taskforce



Created on Thursday, 17 February 2000 11:00

"Sydney needs an Urban ESD Taskforce to ensure that the environmental standards used for the 'Green Olympics' are applied to the whole city, creating thousands of new jobs, and a more sustainable & attractive city", said Kim Brebach, Total Environment Centres Urban Campaigner.

"TEC applauds Bob Carr's interest in 'creating better, more liveable and sustainable suburbs'. Sydney needs a permanent and flexible solution, a brains trust which can evolve with the times, the Urban ESD Taskforce provides just that," he said.

"There are numerous major developments eg Parramatta Government Sector, St Marys (former ADI site), Rhodes Peninsula - which will have a significant impact on the surrounding areas and Sydney as a whole. We can choose to improve the way we make our city or let it slide," he said.

The Urban ESD Taskforce should consist of an Independent chairperson and representatives from key government agencies and authorities, conservation and welfare groups and the best brains in the sustainability business. It should actively engage and advise developers at the visioning stage, and provide them with meaningful ESD targets and guidelines applicable at all levels in the design and construction process.

It should also negotiate demand management with major water, energy and waste utilities, and initiate targetted education and retraining programs across design, planning, manufacturing, and construction sectors.

Latest News

Public transport derby highlights greenhouse issues as Senate Inquiry continues



Created on Wednesday, 22 March 2000 11:00

"Everybody can do something to reduce greenhouse gas pollution-using public transport instead of frequent private car trips is one way," said Kathy Fook of the Community Information Project on Sustainable Energy. "Road based transport accounts for 61 million tonnes, or 16%, of Australia's total greenhouse pollution. Around 1/3 of the greenhouse gases generated by the average Australian family comes from driving cars."

When Australia signed the Kyoto Protocol it committed itself to limiting its greenhouse emissions to 108% of 1990 levels by the year 2010. Yet without a firm reduction strategy, the Australian Government predicts emissions from the transport sector will rise by 38 per cent by 2010. Emissions from the transport sector are currently the fastest growing of any other sector.

International experts appearing at the Australian Senate Inquiry into global warming agree that commitments made so far will be insufficient to avert serious climatic change. Scientists from the International Panel on Climate Change and the UK Hadley Centre say climate change has already begun to occur and may be more severe than previously thought.

"Scientists warn that destructive weather events like hail and thunder storms, increased rainfall, floods and droughts will increase in the years ahead. It's imperative that governments, business and the community find ways to reduce greenhouse pollution. Today's initiative-the public transport derby-highlights the kinds of things each of us can do," said Kathy Fook.

The public transport derby starts at 8am at Centrepont Tower, and finishes at 11am at Homebush Bay.

Latest News

Latest figures reveal air quality crisis



Created on Thursday, 25 January 2001 11:00

Releasing an analysis of the figures TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "The shocking levels of ozone (the major measure of smog) recorded this summer show that Sydney is in the midst of an air quality crisis. Clearly the State Government has a long way to go to fix air quality problems in the Sydney air shed".

In the months of December and January (the 'holiday months') there were no fewer than 73 eight hour readings across Sydney that exceeded WHO guidelines of 0.08 Parts Per Million (ppm), and of those 26 also exceeded the NEPM standard of 0.10 ppm. The results for Western Sydney are particularly bad with a highest level of 0.17 ppm, more than double the WHO standard.

Recent scientific studies have revealed that exposure to ozone can trigger asthma in primates.

The sharp decline in air quality this summer has prompted TEC to conduct a major audit of the State Government's "Action for Air" program, a 25 year plan to improve air quality in the Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney, the Illawarra and the Lower Hunter.

"These are the worst ozone figures since the early 80's, clearly a major overhaul of air quality programs is needed. Our audit will examine the progress of the State Government's Action for Air program and identify solutions for improving the quality of Sydney's air", Mr Angel said

A major target of the strategy is to reduce car travel and increase public transport use, however current figures show that car usage is actually continuing to rise sharply.

Mr Leigh Martin, TEC Urban Environment Campaigner, said "Action for Air aims to achieve zero growth in per capita Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) by 2011 and zero growth in Total VKT by 2021. Most recent government figures, however, show that per capita VKT increased by 15.3% between 1991 and 1997 while total VKT increased by an astounding 23.5% in the same period. It appears that VKT is continuing to outstrip population growth and the Action for Air targets, clearly more effort is needed to improve our public transport system".

"Unless this trend is reversed by promoting more effective and reliable public transport Sydney can expect more long hot summers of worsening air quality". Mr Martin said

Latest News

Government urged to avoid Western Orbital/Public Transport conflict



Created on Thursday, 01 February 2001 11:00

Calling on the State and Federal Transport Ministers Carl Scully and John Anderson to rule out any contracts with toll companies that restrict public or freight rail transport TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "The EIS for the proposed orbital is ominously silent on the issue of contractual arrangements. We have asked the Ministers to assure the community that they will not allow public transport or rail freight in Western Sydney to suffer just to boost the coffers of private toll companies."

Contracts between governments and construction companies for the M2 and Victorian Tollways prevent the development of competing public passenger and rail freight transport. Similar arrangements for the proposed Western Sydney Orbital would sound a death knell for effective public transport, in public transport starved Western Sydney.

"Western Sydney is already choking under the strain of rising pollution with alarming levels recorded throughout this summer. Improving public transport is the only way to relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality. It is essential that potential tenderers for the proposed orbital be given a clear indication that no restrictions on public transport would be approved", Mr Angel said.

Despite arguments in the EIS that the proposed Orbital may provide increased opportunities for bus transport this is a poor option for meeting the transport needs of Sydney's west.

"The proposed orbital route is in the wrong place to improve the efficiency of bus based public transport and will do nothing to improve rail freight transport or promote the development of light rail. Western Sydney's transport needs would be better addressed by building an effective network of public transport", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Olympic green lessons - not forgotten



Created on Wednesday, 21 March 2001 11:00

"The public spent a lot of money on the Sydney Olympics and a practical dividend providing ongoing benefits to present and future generations will be the implementation of the Benchmarks by state and federal governments," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"Application of the green building and event practices will reduce the 'ecological footprint', leading to less environmental impacts and waste and increased efficiency in the use of natural resources".

"The Guide is an honest evaluation of Olympic environmental activities and contains important information for developers, architects, project managers, local and state government agencies and event organisers. It is the result of an unusual collaboration between environment groups and government agencies", Mr Angel said.

"Environment groups and government agencies found agreement on the achievements and lessons, but also identified areas where further work is needed. Achieving environmental sustainability is an ongoing process and while the report sets minimum goals, it also urges the private sector and government to raise the targets in the future by resolving problems."

Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Environmental Benchmarks, guidelines, achievements and lessons for environmentally sustainable building and events, was prepared by the Olympic Environment Forum, established to discuss implementation of the Summer Olympic Environmental Guidelines and resolve disagreements.

The Forum which met every two weeks for several years, was comprised of the Olympic Coordination Authority, Greenpeace, Total Environment Centre, Environment Protection Authority, SOCOG and Green Games Watch.

Latest News

ADI Site - ticking salinity time bomb



Created on Friday, 11 May 2001 10:00

Responding to the map Mr Leigh Martin, TEC Urban Environment Campaigner, said "The map confirms fears that clearing of vegetation for 8,000 houses on the ADI site will lead to rising water tables and salinity problems".

The "Draft Salinity Hazard Map for Western Sydney" shows that localised salt outbreaks have already been identified in the South West corner of the ADI site. The entire site has been identified as being subject to localised salinity hazard with large areas along creek lines assessed as posing extensive hazard.

"Increased runoff due to loss of vegetation and domestic water use such as watering gardens and washing cars will push salt deposits to the surface. This will kill remaining native vegetation and damage buildings and infrastructure", Mr Martin said.

Salination due to rising water tables is a major problem throughout the Murray-Darling Basin, causing massive environmental problems and extensive property damage. These problems are set to be repeated at the ADI site if current plans for residential development proceed.

"The risk of a salinity disaster is yet another reason residential development of the ADI sight should not be allowed to go ahead", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Government urged to return open space to King Edward Park



Created on Thursday, 14 June 2001 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The Bowling Club site has always been part of King Edward Park. It is public land that was leased to Newcastle Bowling Club in 1965 for bowling greens and bowling club buildings. If the club is no longer viable the land should be restored to the park for all to enjoy".

"The bowling club land has outstanding views of the harbour and surrounding areas. Returning it to the park would make a wonderful addition to public open space in Newcastle, however, we have already seen speculative attempts by vested interests to take over the site", Mr Martin said.

With rapid population growth and increasing medium density development in Newcastle, maintaining and enhancing open space is increasingly important.

"This is a unique opportunity to enhance open space in Newcastle. If the Bowling Club is wound up the State Government should revoke the lease and return the land to the people of Newcastle", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Wood heaters fouling Sydney's air



Created on Tuesday, 03 July 2001 10:00

Commenting on the figures TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The figures show alarming overnight levels of fine particle pollution throughout Sydney this winter. It is clear that the wood heaters are having a severe impact on air quality".

TEC has called on the State Government to introduce a scheme for metropolitan Sydney to complement the recently announced three year program to assist owners of old wood heaters to convert to non polluting alternatives. The program will begin in Albury, Armidale, Cooma, Lithgow and Orange.

Regional Pollution Index (RPI) figures show 7 nights in June in which particle concentrations in excess of the EPA's goal of 50 were recorded in one or more parts of Sydney. A further 13 nights produced readings in the medium to high range. The worst pollution occurred on the night of 23 June with a reading of 73 (almost 50% above the air quality goal) recorded in Sydney's north west. Significantly these readings fell sharply the following day, indicating that overnight fires were contributing most of the pollution.

This conclusion is supported by the findings of a paper presented at a recent firewood conference in Armidale, a city that has suffered from poor winter air quality from wood heaters for many years.

Ms Dorothy Robinson of the Armidale Air Quality Group told the conference that carbon dating by the EPA of air samples taken from 4pm to 8am near the Sydney CBD in July and August 1993 found that 67% of particulate air pollution at that time originated from burning wood. In the Blue Mountains the figure was 81%.

"High air pollution levels in winter are usually due to particles. Only a minority of Sydneysiders use wood heaters, but they are causing more than their fair share of particle pollution. EPA figures show that, on a winter weekend day, only 13% of Sydney's households use wood heaters, however those heaters emit 48.5 tonnes of particles, compared to 14.8 tonnes from vehicles", Ms Robinson said.

Fine particle pollution has been shown to increase mortality and hospital admissions from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, reduce lung function in children with asthma and increase respiratory symptoms in school children.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that there is no safe level of particle pollution and the American Lung Association recommends that individuals should not burn wood, if alternative heating is available. Despite its colder climate, Christchurch, NZ intends to follow this advice and protect the health of its citizens by phasing out all wood heaters.

Sydney's fine particle pollution levels follow a summer of shocking ozone pollution, revealing the failure of the State Government's Action for Air program, a 25 year plan to improve air quality in the Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney, the Illawarra and the Lower Hunter.

"It is obvious that the State Government's air quality programs have failed dismally and that Sydney is in the midst of an air quality crisis.

The white haze of photochemical smog that hung over the city in summer has been replaced a brown cloud of particle pollution this winter", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Warringah Council urged to abandon John Fisher Park Park plan



Created on Friday, 06 July 2001 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "John Fisher Park is a unique space in a heavily populated and developed area, it provides an area where the benefits of open space and lack of congestion can be enjoyed. This will be lost forever if Warringah Council's plans to develop the park as a sportsground proceed."

Public submissions on the draft plan of management that would categorise parts of the park as sportsground and develop ten sealed netball courts close on Monday night. Council will vote whether to adopt the plan in coming weeks. Once categorised as sportsground management of the land will be focused on sporting uses rather than public open space values.

Locals are fiercely opposed to the plan and TEC has joined the campaign, writing to the General Manager and Shire Councillors urging them to abandon the proposal
"The biggest concern is that categorising sections of the park as sportsground will allow even more development above and beyond the ten netball courts currently proposed.

We call on Council to abandon this crazy scheme to hand public parkland over to vested interests" Mr Martin said Warringah Council's plan is part of a wider trend by Council's throughout NSW to allow the alienation of public parklands by handing them over to vested interests so that they can reap a financial dividend from exclusive leases.

"Councils throughout the state are handing precious parklands over to vested interests for the sake of making a quick buck. John Fisher Park must not be allowed to become yet another example of this shonky privatisation of public open space", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Indepedent Review - NSW Government Air Quality Program Fails



Created on Monday, 10 September 2001 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Scientific research has concluded that breathing the air in Sydney poses a similar risk to smoking at least 10 cigarettes day. In addition, the young and elderly or those with respiratory ailments are at significant risk. The State Government promised to address the problem in 1998, however, our review shows that they have failed to deliver on key commitments in public transport and emission reductions".

Launched in 1998 "Action for Air" is the State Government's 25 year plan to tackle Sydney's air pollution. A major target of the strategy is to reduce car travel and increase public transport use.

Key findings of the review include:

• Levels of Ozone (the major indicator of photochemical smog) and fine particles exceed World Health Organisation and National Environment Protection Measure guidelines on a regular basis,

• Vehicle use continues to grow at alarming rates with key public transport initiatives such as the Parramatta-Chatswood Rail link seriously behind schedule,

• Programs to reduce emissions such as an inspection and maintenance program to fix polluting vehicles are lagging well behind schedule.

TEC will warn the Government at its Clean Air Forum this week that a major overhaul of "Action for Air" is needed if Sydney is ever to escape its air pollution crisis.

"The public have a right to demand clean air and effective public transport. Urgent action and increased funding are needed to bring forward major public transport initiatives and reduce emissions", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Government planning and transport plan flawed



Created on Tuesday, 11 September 2001 10:00

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "Requiring new developments to cater for public transport is an important step, however this plan contains so many loopholes that its application is likely to be extremely limited".

Draft State Environment Planning Policy 66 announced today requires developers and Councils to ensure that new developments cater for improved public transport, however it is aimed at developments of more than 1000 square metres such as parking stations with more than 200 spaces, residential subdivisions of more than 500 lots and residential flats developments of more than 300 units.

"The new SEPP contains some worthwhile ideas, but the threshold is simply set too high", Mr Angel said. "If Sydney's chronic air pollution and traffic problems are ever to be fixed then all new development must be designed with public transport in mind".

TEC also warned that the policy must be supported by a massive boost to public transport infrastructure funding.

"Its one thing for the government to require developers and Councils to plan for public transport, however, they must come to the party and provide a more effective public transport system. Major public transport initiatives such as the Parramatta-Chatswood rail link are well behind schedule. The Government must provide a substantial funding boost for public transport to give people a viable alternative to cars. Increased levys on developers will also help produce more funds", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Public transport solution to air pollution



Created on Wednesday, 12 September 2001 10:00

"We can't break the back of Sydney's massive air pollution problem without a quantum leap in public transport funding and new rail lines that serve the traffic growth areas," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Current government plans put essential rail improvements into the never-never: some are planned for 2020! We are seeking iron clad commitments that Strathfield to Hurstville, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill, Parramatta to Chatswood and the Bondi Loop are begun before 2005. This is also a clear warning that public transport and air pollution will be a State Election issue."

"Our independent review of the Carr Government's progress with its Action for Air program has found serious problems:

• Levels of Ozone (the major indicator of photochemical smog) and fine particles exceed World Health Organisation and National Environment Protection Measure guidelines on a regular basis,

• Vehicle use continues to grow at alarming rates with key public transport initiatives seriously behind schedule,

• Programs to reduce emissions such as an inspection and maintenance program to fix polluting vehicles are lagging well behind schedule. "

"Unless the Government commits to these measures immediately we can expect worsening air pollution and declining public health for years to come," said Mr Angel.

Latest News

Willoughby strategy - esd step in right direction



Created on Wednesday, 24 October 2001 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The draft plan is a worthwhile contribution to reducing the consumption of natural resources and ensuring that development is placed on a more environmentally sustainable footing, with a few improvements it could be even better".

Key features of the plan, which will guide residential, commercial and industrial development in Willoughby, include:

- Â· Requirements that building designs promote energy efficiency by maximising solar access, correct orientation of windows and shading, use of wall and ceiling insulation, and selection of energy efficient appliances and hot water.
- Â· Encouraging rainwater tanks and greywater recycling for non-drinking purposes such as watering gardens and flushing toilets.
- Â· Use of physical pest control methods, instead of harmful chemical treatments.
- Â· Recycling of 80% of construction waste and provisions of composting facilities for at least 75% of greenwaste.
- Â· Promoting the use of sustainable building materials and avoiding the use of Australian and imported rainforest timbers.

"These are excellent ideas, and, the plan should be improved by requiring plantation timber to be used in all development, using locally native plant species for all landscaping and maximising access to public transport. There should also be less discretion for developers to avoid the new environmental principles", Mr Martin said.

In addition to protecting the environment, the draft plan, and suggested improvements, would also provide significant financial and lifestyle benefits for Willoughby residents.

"Promoting ESD will provide major benefits for residents by reducing electricity and water bills and creating a cleaner, healthier local environment in which to live" Mr Martin said.

Latest News

New standards needed for Hunter Water



Created on Thursday, 15 November 2001 11:00

TEC will tell a hearing of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) on Tuesday that the Operating Licence for HWC (the Corporation's main regulatory instrument) should include similar standards to those set for Sydney Water following the 1998 Sydney water crisis and require the corporation to fix ongoing problems.

The licence has never been subject to an independent and public review since its grant in 1991.

Total Environment Centre(TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Hunter Water customers are entitled to expect the same level of service and environmental performance as customers of Sydney Water. They are also entitled to expect that they will not be subjected to problems such loss of supply or sewerage overflows on an ongoing basis".

The licence places no limits on 'repeat events' (where a customer is subjected to an event such as sewerage overflow or loss of supply more than once in any year) meaning that ongoing problems, such as continual sewer overflows in Swansea, are not reflected in performance statistics.

HWC's performance in promoting water conservation through non-price mechanisms and reducing leakage from the water supply system has also been found to be inadequate.

A further problem is that Hunter Water's Customer Contract, the main instrument for protecting the rights of customers, is hopelessly outdated and does not reflect current standards for public utilities.

"The Customer Contract places much more emphasis on Hunter Water's own rights and the obligations of its customers than it does on what customers are entitled to expect from the corporation", Mr Martin said.

The term of the new licence is likely to be 5 years, meaning that unless improvements are made now HWC will fall further behind standards set for other water agencies such as Sydney Water.

"The licence review presents a vital opportunity for the community to raise standards and improve performance of the water monopoly business. A major overhaul is needed now if Hunter Water is to become a truly modern customer focussed and environmentally responsible corporation", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SOLUTION TO AIR POLLUTION



Created on Friday, 23 November 2001 11:00

"We can't break the back of Sydney's massive air pollution problem without a quantum leap in public transport funding and new rail lines that serve the traffic growth areas," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Current government plans put essential rail improvements into the never-never: some are planned for 2020! We are seeking iron clad commitments that Strathfield to Hurstville, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill, Parramatta to Chatswood and the Bondi Loop are begun before 2005. This is also a clear warning that public transport and air pollution will be a State Election issue."

"Our independent review of the Carr Government's progress with its Action for Air program has found serious problems:

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• Vehicle use continues to grow at alarming rates with key public transport initiatives seriously behind schedule,

• Programs to reduce emissions such as an inspection and maintenance program to fix polluting vehicles are lagging well behind schedule. "

"Unless the Government commits to these measures immediately we can expect worsening air pollution and declining public health for years to come," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Urban release plan recipe for urban sprawl



Created on Wednesday, 05 December 2001 11:00

Responding to the announcement TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "The release areas announced today continue the pattern of sprawling urban development on the fringes of Sydney. Public transport to these is already inadequate and we can see nothing in the announcement that gives any confidence the situation will improve. This will result in increased car use, leading to worsening air pollution and traffic congestion".

The Government claims that public transport will be delivered at the same time as new housing, however, no timetable is provided and major public transport initiatives already announced are already lagging well behind schedule.

"Only today we have learnt that proposed bus-only transitways for western Sydney have been seriously delayed, while some may never be built. This follows delays to major rail projects such as the Parramatta to Chatswood line. It doesn't auger well for the Government's ability to deliver public transport to new release areas", Mr Angel said.

Of particular concern are statements in the Urban Release Program that access to development areas at Marsden Park and Hoxton Park will be provided by the Western Sydney Orbital.

"It is clear that the Government's obsession with building more roads like the Western Sydney Orbital, is also driving the push for more urban sprawl on the fringes of Sydney", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

Transport chaos points to summer of smog



Created on Friday, 21 December 2001 11:00

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said "As the temperature climbs over summer we can expect a repeat of the annual pattern of dangerously high smog levels. The failure of the State Government to deliver on major public transport initiatives has left Sydney facing yet another air pollution crisis."

Hot weather conditions over summer each year result in the atmospheric conversion of vehicle emissions to ozone, the major indicator of photochemical smog. The State Government promised to improve public transport and reduce car use as part of its 'Action for Air' program, however major projects such as the Parramatta to Chatswood and Castle Hill railway lines are lagging seriously behind schedule, while others, such as major bus only transitways, appear to have been shelved.

"The furore over the \$3 Harbour Bridge toll and Sydney's inadequate transport capacity point to a system in disarray. Public transport to the Sydney's north-west, in particular, is totally inadequate, with promised improvements being placed on the backburner". Mr Angel said.

TEC has called on the State Government to provide a major boost to public transport funding in next year's state budget.

"Public transport and air pollution will be a key issue in the 2003 State Election. Next year's state budget is the Government's last chance to show its credentials. As a minimum, funding must be provided to allow construction of the Strathfield to Hurstville, Castle Hill and Rouse Hill, Parramatta to Chatswood and Bondi Loop to begin by 2005", Mr Angel said

Background 1997-2000

BACKGROUND 1997-2000



Created on Thursday, 15 December 2005 05:16

During 1997-2000 we brought the community together to discuss sustainable city principles and greenprints. The 2000 Green Games produced much useful information on urban sustainability. Our 1999 Greenprint for Sydney set the stage for the Sustainable Sydney debate.

Sustainability includes community involvement:

- Social Capital

We need to look at the the full environmental footprint of buildings:

- Life Cycle Assessment and Buildings

TEC chaired the community watchdog, Green Games Watch 2000 for the Sydney Olympics, the largest urban sustainability project yet seen. Reports:

ESD Targets for Development
Environmental Benchmarks for Development and Events
Sydney Olympic Green Building Legacy
Event Waste
Indoor Air Quality
Merchandising
Liquid waste and cleaner production

During 1997-98 we assisted the community, Hornsby Council and Landcom, the state land development agency, to resolve a controversial bushland subdivision, through the application of ESD principles. Key report:

- The ESD of Subdivision

Public Transport

Public Transport Plans



Created on Thursday, 15 December 2005 06:00

Useful links:

Developing programs to help people link into public transport: [Travelsmart](#)

Key community groups:

[Ecotransit](#),

[Action for Public Transport](#)

Open Space

Parks



Created on Monday, 31 March 2014 06:05

URBAN SANCTUARY

Most Australians live in cities and towns where green space for meditation, fresh air and inspiration are limited. We are also privileged to have habitat for native wildlife. We need our urban sanctuaries.

What we do

TEC has successfully campaigned to protect green belts, nature corridors, and for more parks and recreational areas in our urban spaces so that local food production, air quality and ambience provide a healthy and delightful environment for our children and communities. We work with bush regeneration, permaculture, urban gardens, community groups and councils to ensure our suburbs and parks sustain the right balance of insects, birds and animals, plants and trees. We have championed the restoration of urban streams as recreation corridors and places for wildlife.

Reports

- Saving the Parks
- Community Lands Reclassification Policy

Latest News

King Edward Park saga



Created on Friday, 08 February 2002 11:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The battle for control of the Bowling Club has degenerated into a soap-opera that completely ignores the best interests of the people of Newcastle. The simplest solution is for the State Government to terminate the lease and restore the land to King Edward park for all to enjoy".

The land occupied by the bowling club is part of King Edward Park that was leased to Newcastle Bowling Club in 1965 for bowling greens and bowling club buildings.

"Irrespective of who controls the club, the fact remains that the land is no longer being used for bowling. The lease should be revoked and the land returned to the people of Newcastle, not handed over to speculators for development", Mr Martin said.

Mr Doug Lithgow, President of the Parks and Playgrounds Movement, said " The bowling club land has outstanding views of the ocean and surrounding areas. Returning it to the park would make a wonderful addition to public open space in Newcastle"

With rapid population growth and increasing medium density development in Newcastle, maintaining and enhancing open space is increasingly important.

"Newcastle is a city rapidly undergoing major change and increased development. Our parks and public open space will be crucial to maintaining our quality of life. This unique opportunity to improve the magnificent King Edward Park must not be squandered", Mr Lithgow said.

Latest News

Air Pollution Tarnishes 'Green Olympics' Reputation



Created on Wednesday, 13 March 2002 11:00

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "The international reputation Sydney established with the 'green Olympics' is now being tarnished by our appalling summer smog and winter fine particle pollution. It seems that Sydney's air is not only bad for your health, but the economy as well".

A list of environmental rankings just published by human resources consultants William M Mercer rated Sydney a lowly 55th, 40 places below US steel city Pittsburgh and 22 places below Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The research was conducted for companies seeking to relocate employees in overseas offices and concluded that air pollution and traffic congestion made Sydney less desirable, particularly for employees with asthmatic children.

"It is clear that our chronic air pollution and traffic congestion is making Sydney less attractive to international companies. If the State Government is serious about attracting investment then it must act immediately to improve public transport and tackle air pollution", Mr Martin said.

A major boost to public transport is required reduce car dependence and improve Sydney's air. Recent reports have revealed that simply to achieve the Government's current air quality targets, public transport use will have to roughly double and CityRail patronage increase by 45%.

"The health, social and economic impacts of our dirty air make it obvious that a major funding increase is needed in this year's state budget to bring forward key public transport projects".

Mr Martin also noted; "while waste and sewage systems were not ranked as badly as air quality, Sydney needs to improve its reuse and recycling credentials, otherwise it fall back further as sustainable city reputations take off."

Latest News

Feds urged to save bushland jewel



Created on Thursday, 28 March 2002 11:00

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "This parcel of former defence department land is an urban bushland jewel. Any sale of the land for development will destroy its unique environmental values and result in serious degradation of the adjoining Georges River National Park".

The land is a former military reserve between Alfords Point and Sandy Point on the Banks of the Georges River. It adjoins the Georges River National Park and has been acknowledged by the federal Government as being in excellent condition with high conservation value. The land has now been transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration for 'divestment' at full market value.

"The land in question is home to Quolls, Koalas and other threatened species, as well as significant Aboriginal Heritage. It is obscene that the Federal Government would even contemplate selling it to developers", Mr Martin said.

TEC has called on the Finance Minister Senator Nick Minchin and Environment Minister David Kemp to stop the sale and transfer the land to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service who have formally requested that the land be included in the Georges River National Park.

"This is publicly owned bushland. As it is no longer needed for defence purposes it should be retained in public ownership and its outstanding conservation values protected by inclusion in the National Park", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT URGED TO SAVE URBAN BUSHLAND JEWEL



Created on Wednesday, 03 April 2002 10:00

The Federal Government must act immediately to stop the sale of 3 kms of pristine publicly owned foreshore bushland on the banks of the Georges River for development the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has said.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "This parcel of former defence department land is an urban bushland jewel. Any sale of the land for development will destroy its unique environmental values and result in serious degradation of the adjoining Georges River National Park".

The land is a former military reserve between Alfords Point and Sandy Point on the Banks of the Georges River. It adjoins the Georges River National Park and has been acknowledged by the federal Government as being in excellent condition with high conservation value. The land has now been transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration for 'divestment' at full market value.

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"This is publicly owned bushland. As it is no longer needed for defence purposes it should be retained in public ownership and its outstanding conservation values protected by inclusion in the National Park", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

State budget no answer for clean air



Created on Thursday, 06 June 2002 10:00

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Western Sydney is choking under severe air pollution and traffic congestion, while commitments made before the last state election to boost public transport and improve air quality are hopelessly behind schedule. The lack of funding for new public transport infrastructure projects in this budget is a major blow to residents seeking relief from car dependency and polluted air.

Despite announcements of some funding for new rolling stock and track upgrading, essential projects such as the Parramatta to Epping section of the Parramatta to Chatswood rail link and the north west rail link remain stalled with no firm funding commitments or commencement dates.

"While new carriages and track improvements are welcome and long overdue, they will do nothing to address inadequate system capacity and provide relief to residents of north and south west Sydney who have extremely poor access to public transport. These are band-aid solutions to a problem that requires major surgery", Mr Martin said.

TEC has warned the government public transport will be a key issue at next year's state election and that it faces a major voter backlash in western Sydney unless it acts immediately to boost public transport funding and developer contributions.

"There can be no excuses for further delays in fixing the appalling lack of public transport in western Sydney", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Sydney Water fails water conservation test - goes for cash



Created on Thursday, 13 June 2002 10:00

Sydney Water is reaping a financial bonanza from the public as a result of failing to meet crucial water conservation targets which would have stopped a new dam on the Shoalhaven River, latest information from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) reveals.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Leigh Martin said "Sydney Water's performance in promoting water conservation is scandalous. Their failure to adequately reduce demand for water in Sydney is undermining the State Government's decision not to build the Welcome Reef Dam which would devastate the environment of the Shoalhaven River and cost up to a billion dollars of taxpayer funds".

Crucial demand management targets enshrined in Sydney Water's Operating Licence require the Corporation to ensure that daily per capita water consumption is reduced from 506 litres in 1991 to 364 litres in June 2005 and 329 litres in June 2010.

The targets, to be met through a combination of water saving measures such as fixing leaking water mains, promoting water efficiency and increasing the use of recycled wastewater, would eliminate the need for a new dam. Sydney Water's own figures, however, show that, following a fall in usage to 401 litres in December 1999, water consumption has risen sharply to 421.9 litres in February this year.

Alarming, demand from October to December 2001 was the highest for the last 10 years.

"Rather than reducing demand to meet the targets the trend is in exactly the opposite direction. It is clear that Sydney Water has dropped the ball on demand management. No doubt the Treasury are pleased, but it is short term gain, for large environment and future capital expenditure pain. To add insult to injury Sydney Water are proposing that they should not be set any demand management target for 2015", Mr Martin said.

Water prices determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in 2000 were set at a level needed to ensure Sydney Water recovered its costs and remained a viable business, assuming they sold only as much water as their demand management targets required. IPART now estimates that by selling water far in excess of these targets they will receive between \$35M and \$72M in surplus revenue.

"That's \$35-72M in revenue directly from the public that Sydney Water doesn't need. Had IPART known how much water Sydney Water would actually sell they would have set a significantly lower price for customers", Mr Martin said.

TEC has told IPART and the NSW Government that major reform is needed to Sydney Water's Operating Licence and pricing structure.

"The present system contains a massive financial incentive for failure to implement demand management. Sydney Water must not be allowed to rake in profit from the public while at the same time placing at risk the health of a major river system", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Parliament set to wind back diesel controls



Created on Friday, 08 November 2002 11:00

A motion to be considered by State Parliament next Tuesday would revoke a fundamental clean air law controlling diesel exhaust and expose pedestrians, cyclists and other road users to increased levels of highly dangerous fine particles the Total Environment Centre (TEC) warned today.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "State Parliament is being asked to turn the clock back 26 years on diesel exhausts and place at risk the health of all other road users and the community at large".

The motion, by the Chairman of Parliament's Regulation Review Committee and Member for Bathurst Gerard Martin, seeks to disallow a clause of the State Government's Protection of the Environment (Clean Air - Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicles Fuels) Regulation 2002 requiring diesel vehicles over 4.5 tonnes to be fitted with vertical exhausts. Vertical exhausts direct emissions higher into the air, allowing greater dispersal and reducing the exposure of other road users to particulate pollution.

The requirement has been in place since 1976 and has been renewed in the new regulation which was gazetted on 4 September 2002. In recognition of improvements to engine technology, Vehicles manufactured after 2007, which will comply with the strict Australian Design Rule (ADR) 80/01 (Euro 4) emission standards, will be exempt.

These vehicles will produce particulate emissions around 94% lower than current models, eliminating the need for vertical exhausts.

If passed by Parliament, however, the disallowance motion will mean that heavy diesels will no longer be required to have vertical exhausts whether they meet the new standard or not.

"This is a crazy, irresponsible motion that will seriously undermine current air quality and public health strategies. It will also mean that there is little incentive for the trucking industry to move to much cleaner ADR 80/01 compliant vehicles", Mr Martin said.

Particulate pollution from diesel vehicles have been found to cause respiratory damage and, increase mortality from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and reduce lung function in children with asthma.

TEC has urged the State Government and the Minister for the Environment the Hon Bob Debus MP to vigorously oppose the resolution when Parliament resumes next week. "No government that claims to be serious about reducing air pollution and protecting public health could possibly support such an outrageous idea", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Transport levy win for air quality and Western Sydney



Created on Wednesday, 20 November 2002 11:00

A decision by the State Government to impose a transport levy on land releases in Western Sydney is a major step forward for clean air and better public transport the Total Environment Centre (TEC) said today.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Decades of urban sprawl without adequate public transport have created an air pollution and traffic congestion nightmare in Western Sydney. The introduction of a levy on new land releases will provide much needed funds for rail links, bus transitways and other public transport improvements".

Previous land releases in Western Sydney have not been accompanied by improvements in public transport. The result has been a vicious cycle of car dependency and worsening air quality as existing infrastructure has failed to cope with a surge in population.

"The current public transport system is already bursting at the seams. Delays in the construction of vital transport links such as the Parramatta to Chatswood Rail Link and Bus-Only Transitways due to funding shortfalls have highlighted the need to ensure that public transport in new release areas is fully funded", Mr Martin said.

While welcoming the transport levy, TEC has cautioned that development of the release areas should also be governed by stringent building and subdivision codes such as those developed for the 'Green Olympics'.

"Providing better public transport is a vital part of ensuring an environmentally sustainable future for Western Sydney. However, the gains will mean little if nothing is done to improve water efficiency, promote renewable energy use and protect sensitive bushland areas", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Pubic meeting opposes bushland sale



Created on Sunday, 01 December 2002 11:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "This parcel of former defence department land is an urban bushland jewel. Any sale of the land for development will destroy its unique environmental values and result in serious degradation of the adjoining Georges River National Park".

The land is a former military reserve between Alfords Point and Sandy Point on the Banks of the Georges River. It adjoins the Georges River National Park and has been acknowledged by the federal Government as being in excellent condition with high conservation value. The land has now been transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration for 'divestment' at full market value.

The meeting has called for the land to be preserved in public ownership, and included in the Georges River National Park, just as lands around Sydney Harbour have been included in the Federation Trust.

Ms Sharyn Cullis of the Georges River Environmental Alliance said "In March last year the Federal Government preserved seven parcels of former Defence and other Commonwealth lands on the shores of Sydney Harbour in the Federation Trust. There is no reason why people in the Georges River area should not be entitled to the same deal".

The meeting also called on the State Government to prevent development of the land by refusing to provide any infrastructure to support residential development and continue pressing for its inclusion in the National Park.

"The State Government has a key role to play in blocking the sale of the land. It must send a clear message to the Federal Government and prospective developers before the State Election that it will not provide any support for residential development", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

Sydney - call for environmental sustainability



Created on Friday, 24 January 2003 11:00

"The report, 'Sydney - the urban consolidation challenge' - supports high quality urban consolidation as a key way to meet population and environmental problems, as well as new sustainable development and community participation policies. The bushfire crisis also demonstrates a big problem with fringe development," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"We need an environmental model of Sydney so that the city's ecological footprint can be monitored and managed. All development should be filtered by environmental sustainability principles," Mr Angel said.

"As Sydney enters the 21st century embroiled in controversies about its future shape and environment, it is timely to push the debate towards a new vision. Perhaps more than at any period in its past there are contradictory forces battling to put their stamp on the city - medium density; fringe development; international city; car-dependent, resource-guzzling metropolis; sustainable city - are all themes currently in play. Population growth and reducing the impacts of the existing population, are essential concerns."

"For example, Sydney landfills 4.5m tonnes of waste each year; disposes of 1.3m litres of wastewater each day and trips by cars have increased by 20m km per day since 1990."

We are inviting public comment on 'Sydney - the urban consolidation challenge'. It can be found on our website - www.tec.org.au - click on Sustainable Sydney.

Further information: Jeff Angel (02) 9299 5680

Sydney at a glance:

Population growth - 54,800 pa

Population by 2021 - 5 million

Occupancy ratios - 2.92 in 1981, 2.68 in 2001

Car use - extra 20m km per day compared to 1990

Air pollution - 2.5m people exposed to WHO 0.08ppm standard

Transport CO₂ - 4m tonnes pa

Rail - need 45% increase in patronage to reach air quality goals

Water - more than 1,600m litres used each day

Wastewater disposed - more than 1,300m litres each day

Electricity greenhouse emissions - 8.40 tonnes per person pa

Waste landfilled - 4.5m tonnes pa

Latest News

Community Forums demand better public transport



Created on Monday, 24 February 2003 11:00

Over 100 representatives from leading public transport, environmental, health and social service advocacy groups attended the two forums and developed a range of public transport recommendations which will be presented to the major political parties.

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "Residents in Western and Southern Sydney are subjected to the worst air pollution in the region. At the same time they are denied access to effective public transport which would provide a solution to air pollution and transport chaos".

The forums were organised by the Total Environment Centre (TEC). Speakers from TEC, the NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS), Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC), Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF), Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and STEP Inc discussed environmental, health and social problems caused by lack of public transport.

High on the agenda was improving the frequency, reliability and accessibility of public transport, chronically lacking in the Western and Southern Sydney Regions.

The forums called for the development of a comprehensive public transport network which should include major new investment in new rail lines, investigation of light rail, extension of concessions on Government buses to private services, and integrated fares and ticketing.

At the Sutherland forum yesterday, the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre launched its 'Peoples' Vision for Transport in the Southern Sector Region', a major report on the problems and solutions for public transport in the area.

"It's time to start thinking of transport issues in an integrated way." said Dr Miriam Verbeek, Chair of SSEC. "We should be thinking of the different ways people can move through areas. Road transport is not the only way and often not the best way. Public transport, pedestrian and cycle facilities are often better."

"It is clear that public transport will be a key state election issue. The public have a right to demand clean air and effective public transport. Urgent action is needed to bring forward major public transport initiatives and reduce emissions". Mr Angel said.

Latest News

SUTHERLAND COUNCIL URGED TO BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN BUSHLAND JEWELL



Created on Wednesday, 16 April 2003 10:00

Environment groups fighting to stop the sale of 3 kms of pristine bushland on former defence land along the banks of the Georges River have called on Sutherland Shire Council to reverse its half-baked plan for the area and place the entire site in an Environmental Protection zone in the Shire's draft Local Environment Plan currently on public exhibition.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Despite overwhelming community opposition and State Government commitment to fight the sale, the Commonwealth Government is still intent on handing this urban bushland jewel to developers. It is vital that the entire site be placed in an Environmental Protection Zone to send a clear message to the Federal Government and developers that development will not be permitted and that the land should be transferred to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service for inclusion in the adjoining Georges River National Park".

Under the draft LEP part of the site has been included in a proposed Environmental Protection (Bushland) Zone that would prohibit residential development. Some areas, however, have been placed in an unzoned category that could permit residential development in the future.

Placing part of the Commonwealth land in the Environmental Protection Zone is a welcome step, however, unless the entire site is protected serious degradation as a result of urban development is inevitable", Mr Martin said

Adding support to the call, Georges River Environmental Alliance Secretary Ms Sharyn Cullis stressed the need for comprehensive protection of the Shire's remaining bushland areas "the draft LEP clearly demonstrates that the bulk of the West Menai lands should be off limits for development because of its environmental value. Furthermore, the massive traffic and transport problems require a moratorium on development until comprehensive transport solution, involving public transport options is in place".

Submissions on the draft LEP close 30 April 2003 and residents have been urged to make a submission. "It is vital that a clear message be sent to Council that the community will not accept any development of the former defence land", Mr Martin said.

Latest News

STATE GOVERNMENT TOLD CONGESTION CHARGING RIGHT FOR CARS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Created on Thursday, 10 July 2003 10:00

Congestion charging should be introduced for cars entering the Sydney CBD during peak times, to match existing congestion pricing for rail commuters and all the extra funds used to increase public transport services, by doubling the rate of new infrastructure building the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has told the State Government.

Congestion charging should be introduced for cars entering the Sydney CBD during peak times, to match existing congestion pricing for rail commuters and all the extra funds used to increase public transport services, by doubling the rate of new infrastructure building the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has told the State Government.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Rail users for travelling during peak periods already pay congestion prices. We need to discourage people from taking the car and provide funds for new public transport infrastructure and services".

In a submission to Transport Services Minister Michael Costa's Ministerial Inquiry into public transport infrastructure and funding TEC has urged the Government to introduce congestion charging on vehicles entering the Sydney CBD to reduce traffic congestion and fund public transport improvements.

TEC also did not rule out progressive increases in public transport fares. TEC is calling on the Government to provide a massive boost to public transport funding to bring forward capital works on new rail lines, light rail and bus transitways. Congestion charging for vehicles - already being used in London to fight traffic chaos and fund public transport - would provide a major source of revenue to fix Sydney's transport woes.

"Just like London, Sydney is choking with worsening air pollution and traffic chaos from ever increasing car use. We need at least a doubling of the annual capital works budget for public transport and reduction in spending on new roads, which are the real causes preventing public transport from playing a major role", Mr Martin said.

TEC has also called on the Government to seek revenue for public transport improvements from developer levies in new release areas and major urban redevelopment projects, redirection of funds from the roads budget, and to join forces with other State Governments to campaign for Federal funding. "

The public are crying out for improved services and new transport infrastructure. We need a bold approach and a willingness to embrace new ideas to fund desperately needed improvements. The alternative is worsening air pollution and transport chaos for years to come", Mr Martin said.

Public Transport Funding Submission (2003)

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

GreenSafe Car Profiler a positive step for clean air



Created on Thursday, 24 July 2003 10:00

The launch of the GreenSafe Car Profiler by NRMA Insurance and the NSW Environment Minister, Bob Debus is a positive step toward promoting cleaner vehicles and reducing air pollution the Total Environment Centre (TEC), said today.

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "Promoting a switch to cleaner, more fuel efficient vehicles is an important step toward combating air pollution and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Providing consumers with information on environmental performance will enable them to make more environmentally responsible purchasing decisions. The one-stop shop car profile, from NRMA Insurance is a powerful message".

"With emissions from vehicles a major and growing source of air pollution and greenhouse gases, encouraging the uptake of cleaner vehicle technology has an important role to play in cleaning the air, alongside better public transport and cleaner fuels. It helps create an ethic of the sustainable consumer", Mr Angel said

TEC also called on State and Federal Governments to build on the initiative by providing financial incentives for people to switch to cleaner vehicles, such as reduced registration costs and stamp duty relief.

Latest News

New Plan for Sydney's Water



Created on Wednesday, 06 August 2003 10:00

An alliance of peak environment groups released details today of a comprehensive plan for a sustainable water future in Sydney. The groups claimed significant failings over the last few years had worsened the water and sewerage crisis:

- Poor performance by Sydney Water in meeting critical water conservation and recycling targets. Less than 2% of total water used is recycled and 1999 effluent recycling targets have been abandoned. Mandated demand management targets for 2001/2 were not met, and 2004/5 and 2011/12 targets are in serious doubt.
- A conflict of interest between maximising revenue from water sales and reducing consumption.
- Sydney Water's strategic decision-making processes are hidden from the public and regulatory agencies such as the EPA and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).
- Present arrangements provide few incentives for success and no effective penalties for failure.

The groups, have recommended radical reforms including:

- Establish a total consumption target of 500GL/year (after allowing for environmental flows). Current consumption is 630GL/year.
- Introduce permanent low-level restrictions on outdoor water use similar to those adopted by Melbourne Water to promote behavioural change and provide water for environmental flows.
- Reduce security of supply criteria from 97% to 95%, which will increase the frequency of restrictions from 3% to 5% of the time. Consider further reduction to 90%.
- Introduce financial penalties on Sydney Water for where bulk water purchases from the Sydney Catchment Authority are in excess of sustainable consumption targets.
- Introduce inclining block pricing to encourage more efficient water use by customers.
- Create a market for innovative solutions, including trading of water conservation credits, to encourage private sector involvement.
- Harvest stormwater as an alternative supply source.
- Re-establish strict water recycling targets for Sydney Water.
- Restore degraded urban streams and stormwater canals to more natural systems.
- Reform of Sydney Water's decision-making processes.
- Reform and change of focus towards sustainability for the key pricing regulator (IPART), including an environmental expert on the tribunal.

These reforms must be embraced urgently if Sydney is to escape its growing environmental and water resource crisis, the groups said.

The proposals are based on a major new report, "Sydney's Water - Going to Waste?" by the Peak Environment Non-Government Organisations (PENGOs), the result of a 12 month project examining Sydney Water's environmental performance, to be released soon.

Latest News

PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEEDS MONEY



Created on Monday, 08 September 2003 10:00

"Carl Scully's rejection of a toll on the M5 East or the rejection of any other idea at this stage is reprehensible - Sydney cannot afford to be complacent in the face of its greatest environmental and efficiency challenge. If it involves some financial pain over the coming decade - so be it," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Congestion is out of control with new roads being only bandaid patches; air pollution is spiralling to higher levels with the increase in car traffic and continued urban growth stretches an already parlous situation into a social and environmental nightmare."

"We welcome the IPART draft report as a breath of fresh air. Political games should not be part of the scene - genuine commitment to getting on top of the problem should be. We support building public infrastructure twice as fast as planned by the government."

"Sydney will get one chance in this electoral cycle - if we fail we condemn present and future generations to massive traffic congestion and worsening air pollution," Mr Angel said.

Latest News

WATER RESTRICTIONS ESSENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE



Created on Thursday, 11 September 2003 10:00

Conservationists have welcomed the introduction of mandatory water restrictions for Sydney today as an essential step to conserve scarce water resources and called on the Government to make them permanent.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "The introduction of outdoor water restrictions today is a sensible and necessary step to conserve supplies as summer approaches. Long term sustainable water resource management in Sydney will depend on these restrictions being made permanent".

With current water use exceeding long term sustainable supply there is a pressing need for a long term change in water use patterns. Current water use for Sydney is 630 Gigalitres per year while sustainable yield from supplies (allowing for desperately needed environmental flows for the stressed Hawkesbury-Nepean River system) is 500 GL per year.

"Sydney's shortage of water is not limited to current drought conditions. We must major and make long term improvements in water conservation if we are to avoid the expense and environmental devastation of a new dam on the Shoalhaven River", Mr Martin said.

With drought conditions focusing public attention on the need to conserve water there will never be a better time to for the government to introduce permanent water conservation requirements.

"Sydney is a city reliant on a low rainfall catchment. There can be no justification for allowing wasteful outdoor water use such as hosing down paths and buildings. We must take this opportunity to make Sydney's water use more sustainable by introducing permanent restrictions just as Melbourne has recently done", Mr Martin said.

TEC has also called on the government to promote water conservation by providing more incentives for rainwater tanks and encouraging recycling of sewage effluent.

"While we have a dry catchment the city itself experiences relatively high rainfall. We must make better use of this water and reuse sewage affluent to reduce pressure on drinking water supplies", Mr Martin said

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

WATER PRICING CHANGES A GOOD START BUT CAP ON SYDNEY WATER MUST BE STRICTER



Created on Thursday, 25 September 2003 10:00

Conservationists have welcomed today's announcement of strict new water pricing measures to encourage water conservation but warned that a 600 gegalitre a year limit on extractions by Sydney Water will do nothing to save the stressed Hawkesbury-Nepean river system.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "The new pricing arrangements are an important first step to improving water conservation, however, a limit of 500 gegalitres per year should be placed on Sydney Water to force them to invest in water conservation and recycling schemes and provide desperately needed environmental flows for the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system".

With current water use exceeding long term sustainable supply there is a pressing need for a long term change in water use patterns. Current water use for Sydney is 630 Gegalitres per year while sustainable yield from supplies (allowing for environmental flows for the stressed Hawkesbury-Nepean River system) is 500 GL per year.

"The 600GL limit proposed by the government will ensure the continued deterioration of Sydney's major river system. An extra 100GL of water must be set aside immediately for an effective environmental flows regime", Mr Martin said.

Setting a tougher limit of 500GL per year before financial penalties are imposed on Sydney Water would also increase the viability of new water conservation and recycling schemes by increasing the size of the market.

"The government is hoping to attract private investment in recycled water schemes. For this to occur the potential reuse market must be large enough to ensure the profitability of reuse projects. Only a tougher limit on extractions from the dams will create a large enough market to attract significant investment", Mr Martin said.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

OPPOSITION CALL FOR DAM INQUIRY SHOWS LACK OF VISION ON WATER MANAGEMENT



Created on Thursday, 02 October 2003 10:00

Calls by NSW Shadow Minister for Energy and Utilities Brad Hazzard for an inquiry into constructing a new water supply dam for Sydney are outdated and reveal ignorance of sustainable water cycle management according to the Total Environment Centre (TEC).

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "Building a new dam would devastate the fragile environment of the Shoalhaven River and require massive expenditure of taxpayers funds that would need to be recovered through higher water bills".

Speaking on Sydney radio yesterday Mr Hazzard expressed support for effluent recycling and stormwater harvesting as well as holding an inquiry into constructing a major new dam for Sydney.

"While Mr Hazzard's support for effluent and stormwater recycling is welcome, building a new dam is one idea that shouldn't be recycled. Anyone with responsibility for developing water policy should know that improved water conservation, rainwater tanks, stormwater harvesting and effluent recycling can address our water shortage without the need for an expensive and unsustainable new dam", Mr Angel said.

TEC called on the Shadow Minister to take a more constructive approach to the debate on Sydney's water resources.

"Sydney faces some tough decisions on water management and pricing that must be considered in a responsible and constructive manner. Simplistic and populist calls for consideration of a new dam will do nothing to promote sustainable water management", Mr Angel said.

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel - Director

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

Call to Build an Invisible Dam for Sydney



Created on Thursday, 02 October 2003 10:00

"It's a dam made up of water conservation and recycling efforts involving major changes to our water supply infrastructure and consumption practices. It won't be a boutique dam, but will allow Sydney to stabilise water consumption at sustainable levels and even allow growth," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Our report card contains the core elements that will build an invisible dam - so far the government has delivered only 2 out of 12 items. Even if we get good rains in coming months the underlying unsustainable situation faced by Sydney will not change. So we will continue to report on the government's progress.

Brooke Flanagan, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council said: "Recent measures announced by the Government to reduce water consumption are a good start. But we need to be looking beyond these measures in order to reach a sustainable level of water use."

"Reducing our water consumption to sustainable levels must become a way of life. Building another monolithic concrete dam on yet another river is just not an option. We need to be using what we have for more effectively. We need an invisible dam."

REPORT CARD ITEMS

TOTAL CONSUMPTION TARGET (500gl)
PERMANENT WATER RESTRICTIONS
REVISE SECURITY OF SUPPLY
MANDATORY CONSERVATION (new dwellings)- p
SYDNEY RETROFIT (existing dwellings)
UNRESTRICTED RAIN'W'TANK USE - p, d
RAIN'W'TANK REBATE - p, d
PENALTY PRICING SWC - p
WATER EFFICIENCY CREDITS -p
HIGHER WATER PRICING - p
RECYCLING TARGET
REFORM IPART
p = promised d = delivered

Latest News

Origin's Greener Power Set to Take NSW by Storm



Created on Tuesday, 06 April 2004 10:00

Origin Energy topped the 2003 Green Electricity Watch environment group survey of Green Power products, and is set to steal market share from under-performing companies such as Energy Australia, which lagged behind in 12th place.

"Green Power under-performers are finally having to face the potential loss of customers to a significantly better product in NSW," said Jeff Angel, TEC Director. "It's a slap in the face for companies like Energy Australia, which has had its Green Power sales in decline for too long."

The 2003 Green Power Annual Audit Report found that Energy Australia lost over 22% of its green power purchasers in 2003. Simultaneously, interstate providers such as Energex, Ergon, and Origin Energy reported strong growth figures in excess of 20% per annum.

"Energy Australia's loss of Green Power customers has put around 8,200 tonnes per annum of greenhouse gas emission reductions at risk. That's about the same as running 13,500 cars. If Origin can win customers back with a superior product, it will significantly reduce CO2 emissions in New South Wales and help in the fight against global warming."

"NSW cannot maintain its reputation as an environmental leader when the government owned energy companies continue to drag their feet on climate change. The Premier should be taking immediate action to retrieve some mileage and rectify this embarrassing failure."

Origin's GreenEarth electricity products allow customers to contribute to helping the environment by buying 100 per cent of their power from renewable energy sources including solar, wind and hydro.

2003 Green Electricity Watch survey

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

SYDNEY ON THE BRINK



Created on Thursday, 22 April 2004 10:00

"Sydney is in crisis and the only way to prevent a terminal situation is bold intervention now. The announcements about BASIX; extending light rail; sustainability criteria as conditions for approval of land releases; and Sustainability Commissioners are welcome," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"However, the proposal for an M4 East extension is a glaring anomaly that weakens an otherwise positive strategy. History has shown that road extensions lead to increased traffic and congestion (just like the existing M4 did, despite optimistic projections).

The government should not be promoting a new road as part of a sustainable Sydney."

"The Blueprint is very largely concerned with new development, but it is the vast mass of existing suburbia that creates our unsustainable ecological footprint. Conservation of water and energy resources and improved public transport must apply to the existing urban fabric. Vigorous demand management policies and financial policies, such as congestion charging are needed," Mr Angel said.

Further information: Jeff Angel (02) 9299 5680

Latest News

PORT BOTANY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY MUST CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS



Created on Monday, 07 June 2004 10:00

TEC Director Jeff Angel said, "The proposed Port Botany expansion has the potential to cause significant environmental impacts, including damage to migratory bird habitat and increased risk of chemical spills. We welcome the decision to examine an alternative proposal by P&O, however, other options such as upgrading facilities at Newcastle and Port Kembla should also be considered"

The proposed expansion of container facilities at Port Botany has sparked concern from local residents and environment groups over the possible environmental impacts. There have been strong calls for facilities at Newcastle and Port Kembla to be upgraded as an alternative to expansion at Port Botany. A NSW Parliamentary Committee recommend that the COI consider all viable alternatives.

At the COI's first day of sittings the Government expanded the COI's terms of reference to include consideration of potentially feasible alternatives, however specific mention was made only of the P&O proposal.

"Decisions made on the expansion of container facilities will have major environmental and economic implications. It is vital that the government and community are provided with a thorough and objective analysis of the costs and benefits of all alternative proposals", Mr Angel said.

Latest News

CALL FOR FAIR DINKUM EFFORT FROM WATER MINISTERS



Created on Friday, 11 June 2004 10:00

"We are seeking a 10% increase in environmental water delivered to stressed rivers over the next 10 years, with government compensating irrigators for about a third. The industry should bear the remainder (6.5%) as it will be receiving a big financial gain from perpetual property rights over the same period. We will be pressing very hard for the NSW Natural Resources Minister Craig Knowles to make this the NSW Government position," said Jeff Angel, Executive Director of Total Environment Centre.

"It is important to realize that in NSW the Government is handing over virtual water property rights from July 1, 2004. This is a windfall gain for individual farm assets that must be balanced by environmental gains at the same time. We will not accept a decade delay for additional environmental flows into the rivers, as some have argued."

Rachael Young, Water Policy Officer for the NSW Nature Conservation Council said: "At each step of the water negotiations since 1994, private property rights over water have made huge strides, with the environment being left behind. At this critical window of state and federal negotiations, this must stop. The Carr Government should not sign up to a mediocre result from the COAG process."

Brendan Fletcher, Inland Rivers Network Coordinator said: "The NSW water plans that will take effect for 10 years are completely inadequate. They will not deliver healthy rivers and need to be overhauled. COAG originally called for healthy rivers by 2005. Action now can save our rivers."

"We note the threat by the National Farmers Federation to walk away from the process if they don't get what they want. But this is simply an attempt to put political pressure on the Federal Government. Bully boy tactics do not impress the community and it certainly displays a lack of regard for the health of our rivers," Mr Angel said.

Our plan calls for:

- 7% increase in environmental water (above the small amounts currently planned) delivered to stressed rivers between 2007 and 2013;
- Government pays for half of this 7% allocation;
- Another 3% delivered in the first year (2014-15) after the water plans expire;
- Another 10% should be delivered over the following ten years.

This plan allows a ramp up from 2004 and recognizes the dire state of many rivers. It also ensures action during the next electoral terms of the NSW and Commonwealth Governments, rather than being put off into the never-never.

Latest News

Lazy industry should not stand in the way of sustainable building law



Created on Thursday, 01 July 2004 10:00

Criticism from the Housing Industry Association reflects laziness, because some builders don't want to change their habits of building energy and water wasting housing. Their basic housing package is really a financial penalty on those who will be paying the high and rising energy and water bills.

"The BASIX law makes sustainable building, mainstream. This means that house buyers will not have to battle builders and councils to get water and energy savings measures. And because there will be much more demand for energy and water saving appliances, solar hot water and rainwater tanks, these will become cheaper as production is ramped up. Further there will be significant reductions in energy and water bills over the years, as people pay off their mortgages," said Jeff Angel, Director of the Centre.

"As a government regulation it provides an objective and practical tool that will have a pervasive impact on new residential construction in our urban areas. Not only does it set a minimum benchmark that can be measured and allows flexibility in how you achieve the environmental results, but it will also create a stable foundation for the growth of those businesses, products and services that enable homes to reduce their ecological footprint."

The new laws that come into effect today require a 40% cut in use of potable water and 25% cut in energy, compared to the average house. It is firstly applied to single dwellings but will be expanded to units, town houses, mixed use developments in October 2004. Alterations and additions will come under the scheme in October 2005. Energy saving requirements will rise to 40% in 2006.

"The next raft of policies and regulations will be no less important," Mr Angel said.

"We need to address the vast bulk of resource inefficient housing that already exists - with substantial demand management programs for energy and water and applying BASIX to renovations and commercial buildings. New neighbourhoods and suburbs will also need to meet strict standards for resource conservation; public transport use and protection of biodiversity, otherwise they should be taken off the drawing board."

Latest News

OPPOSITION CALL FOR DAM INVESTIGATION SHOWS LACK OF VISION ON WATER MANAGEMENT



Created on Friday, 02 July 2004 10:00

Calls by NSW Opposition Leader John Brogden for an investigation of a new dam for Sydney are outdated and reveal a disturbing ignorance of sustainable water cycle management according to the Total Environment Centre (TEC).

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "Building a new dam would devastate the fragile environment of the Shoalhaven River and require massive expenditure of taxpayers funds that would need to be recovered through higher water bills. The possible site at Welcome Reef is also in a rain shadow and there are serious question marks how often it would ever fill".

In a press conference yesterday Mr Brogden called on the NSW Government to begin investigation of a new dam at Welcome Reef on the Shoalhaven River and claimed that the Government's opposition to a new dam was simply a play for green votes.

"Far from being about green votes, the policy of not building a new dam is about ensuring Sydney's long term sustainability and correcting decades of wasteful water resource management. It recognises that better water conservation, rainwater tanks, stormwater harvesting and effluent recycling can address our water shortage without the need for an expensive and unsustainable new dam", Mr Angel said.

TEC called on the Opposition Leader to take a more constructive approach to the debate on Sydney's water resources.

"Sydney faces some tough decisions on water management and pricing that must be considered in a responsible and constructive manner. The Opposition Leader should be pushing the Government and Sydney Water to lift their game on water conservation and effluent recycling. Simplistic and populist calls for a new dam will do nothing to promote sustainable water management", Mr Angel said.

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel - Director

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

WATER PRICING CHANGES A GOOD START BUT MORE WILL BE NEEDED



Created on Friday, 30 July 2004 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "A two-tier price system is an important first step to promote water conservation. Charging highest volume users more for their water will provide a clear signal that Sydney's water is too precious to waste and will encourage more sustainable water use practices".

IPART has recommended significantly higher charges for customers who use more than 400 kilolitres each year. Average household consumption in Sydney is currently around 290 kilolitres a year.

While welcoming the recommendation for a two-tier price structure TEC has warned that the 'step point' will need to be lower to achieve sufficient water savings.

"The 400 kilolitre step point will be a useful start to introduce customers to a two-tiered system, however achieving long term sustainability will demand that this figure be reduced over time. This should be coupled with assistance to vulnerable families to reduce their water use", Mr Martin said.

TEC also welcomed recommendations to significantly reduce fixed charges in water bills.

"The high level of fixed charges in current water bills provides little incentive for customers to conserve water as even a major reduction in consumption will produce only a modest reduction in their bills. Reducing fixed charges will give customers more control over the size of their bills and reward people who make the effort to use less water", Mr Martin said.

A flaw in the recommendations is the failure to recommend a two-tier wholesale price structure so that Sydney Water would be penalised for failing to meet its water conservation targets.

"Present pricing arrangements provide little incentive for Sydney Water to invest in water conservation. The more water they sell the greater their profit. A wholesale step price is needed to penalise Sydney Water for any water they purchase from the Sydney Catchment in excess of their demand management targets", Mr Martin said.

TEC has also told the government that pricing reform must be coupled with other water saving measures such as effluent recycling and more rainwater tanks. A major report on achieving water sustainability in Sydney will be released by environment groups next week.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

Environment Groups Release Water Plan for Sydney



Created on Friday, 06 August 2004 10:00

"The plan is for an invisible dam, made up of conservation and recycling actions rather than one big massive structure. We believe it would be a better use of the several billion dollar price tag for a new dam.* Importantly it puts Sydney on a sustainable footing recognizing our drying climate, instead of reinforcing water guzzling habits," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Our proposal shares the load amongst the community and business - it is more directed to those who need to save water and creates big business opportunities in the recycling and water conservation industries. By not building a new dam, we diversify our water resources and harness the commitment to conservation and sustainability," Brooke Flanagan, Executive Officer of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

The plan calls for:

- * rainwater tanks connected to toilet, laundry and outdoor uses, so that within 50 years half the houses have one - recognizing it rains more in Sydney than in the dams' water catchment;
 - * water conservation so that half the houses in Sydney are retrofitted within 50 years;
 - * permanent low level restrictions (eg, ban daytime use of sprinkler systems, hosing paths) for residential, commercial and public uses;
 - * recycling targets for industry, new development and existing areas (3% of annual consumption per year);
 - * 90% security of supply (meaning the likelihood of full scale restrictions is 10 years out of every 100 years).
- These actions would be supported by two step pricing, a demand management fund and new planning requirements on single and multi-unit housing and commercial development. Water licensing of industry should also target recycling.

The Carr Government is expected to announce its water strategy for Sydney, this month.

A copy of the summary report can be downloaded from - www.tec.org.au or www.nccnsw.org.au

* In 1994 the Greiner/Murray government told the joint Select Committee on the Water Board that the Welcome Reef dam would cost \$1.8 billion.

Latest News

ENVIRONMENTALISTS WELCOME NCC DRAFT DETERMINATION ON SERVICES SYDNEY PROPOSAL



Created on Thursday, 12 August 2004 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) has welcomed a draft determination by the National Competition Council (NCC) granting Services Sydney access to Sydney Water infrastructure for recycling sewage effluent.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "This decision opens the way for large scale effluent re-use to substitute millions of litres of water currently drawn from our drinking water supplies. Using recycled water for outdoor, industrial and irrigation purposes will take pressure of our scarce supplies and free up water for environmental flows to the stressed Hawkesbury-Nepean river system"

Despite pressure for many years to increase the use of recycled effluent Sydney Water has failed dismally to develop infrastructure for effluent recycling and create markets for recycled water. Recently the corporation abandoned the proposed Georges River Recycled Water Pipeline that would have recycled large volumes of sewage for non drinking purposes.

"This decision by the NCC is particularly important in light of Sydney Water's abject failure to develop and promote effluent re-use as an alternative to current supplies. Their inaction has made competition from the private sector necessary", Mr Martin said.

By capturing sewage currently discharged from the ocean outfalls and treating it for re-use the proposal would also stop millions of litre of sewage effluent being discharged into the ocean every day.

TEC has called on the NSW Government and Sydney Water to work with the private sector to promote effluent re-use and develop markets for recycled water as a key plank of the forthcoming water strategy.

Environment groups recently called for 130 Gigalitres of sewage to be recycled each year to avoid a new dam on the Shoalhaven River.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

Metro Strategy - Sydney's last chance



Created on Thursday, 16 September 2004 10:00

"The Government has drawn a large canvass with some exciting new concepts and effective implementation will be the proof in the pudding. It appears traditional barriers to good environmental planning are being broken down but at all times we will have to be vigilant so that the community's vision of a sustainable, affordable and healthy place to live in, is not wrecked by vested interests," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"Key areas are:

- the proposed Development Corporations, which should be bodies that can provide real environmental gains, not the usual club for property development interests;
- regulating for clear zonings that protect conservation and agricultural lands;
- ensuring that infrastructure development is tightly linked to appropriate development areas, and not having suburbs marooned from public transport, health and education services;
- independent monitoring to publicly report on achievement of targets (not greenwash)."

"We will continue working with the government and advocating environmentally sustainable results, from this great urban task. This really is Sydney's last chance to get it right for the next 30 years," said Mr Angel.

Latest News

GEORGES RIVER BUSHLAND ANNOUNCEMENT ATTACKED



Created on Friday, 24 September 2004 10:00

Conservationists have attacked the Federal Member for Hughes, Dana Vale for announcing negotiations for the sale of publicly owned bushland along the Georges River to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) which they have been campaigning to have transferred immediately at no cost.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "This is publicly owned bushland which environment and community groups are simply seeking to have transferred from one level of government to another. Taxpayers should not have to pay for land they already own".

The land is a former military reserve between Alfords Point and Sandy Point on the banks of the Georges River. It adjoins the Georges River National Park and is home to Quolls, Koalas and other threatened species, as well as significant Aboriginal Heritage.

Its conservation value has been acknowledged by the Federal Government. An alliance of environment and community groups have been campaigning for several years to have the land transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at no cost, however, the Commonwealth has always appeared determined to sell the land at full market value.

"Dana Vale's announcement can hardly be seen as a victory for the environment or residents. It appears, in fact, that little if anything has changed. This announcement won't close the door on sale to developers if negotiations between the State and Federal Governments are unsuccessful", Mr Martin said.

A precedent for transfer to the State Government at no cost has already been set with seven former defence sites around Sydney Harbour. These sites were preserved in the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. When the Trust was established it was announced that at least some of these sites would eventually be transferred to the State Government

"Residents along the Georges River deserve the same deal as that done for former defence land around Sydney Harbour. It's time for the Federal Government to stop playing political games and simply transfer the land to the NSW NPWS", Mr Martin said.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

GOVERNMENT WATER ANNOUNCEMENTS NOT A LONG TERM SOLUTION



Created on Monday, 18 October 2004 10:00

NSW Government announcements of increased transfers from the Shoalhaven River, deep pumping from dams and investigation of desalination do not provide a long term solution to Sydney's water crisis as they fail to address the underlying problem of unsustainable demand and wasteful water use the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has warned.

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "Sydney's water problems stem from decades of wasteful water use and a failure by governments to adopt sustainable practices. Deep pumping from dams and transfers from the Shoalhaven still rely on rainfall to maintain supplies. We need a major shift toward new approaches and sustainable sources of water such as recycled effluent for non-drinking uses", Mr Angel said.

While welcoming the announcement of effluent reuse in new development areas TEC has warned that it must be extended to already developed areas.

"Comments by Minister Frank Sartor, limiting the role of recycled water are unacceptable - it's the same old Sydney water propaganda - intended to preserve their monopoly position, Mr Angel said."

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said "Sydney currently wastes millions of litres of water a day by discharging sewage effluent into the oceans. This is a valuable resource that should be used across the city to take pressure off our present and future supplies".

"If this had been done along with substantial water conservation measures, before the current water crisis, then there would be much more water left in the dams. It is a lesson we should learn before the next crisis hits."

TEC also attacked the announcement of a \$4million feasibility study of desalination.

"Desalination is an unsustainable approach that will require massive amounts of electricity and cause an unacceptable increase in greenhouse gas emissions. This money would be better spent on developing sustainable options and assisting the public to reduce consumption", Mr Angel said.

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel - Director

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

REDUCING DEMAND A VITAL STEP THAT WILL NEED PRICING SUPPORT



Created on Tuesday, 19 October 2004 10:00

Environmentalists have welcomed today's announcement of measures to reduce demand for water by businesses and the community and have told the government that pricing reform will be needed to make it work.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "requiring business, Government agencies and Councils to develop water conservation plans is a vital step toward curbing water wastage. It is vital that pricing mechanisms be introduced that reward those who save water with lower bills but punish water wasters who resist reform. This would put businesses on the same footing as households".

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal recently recommended the introduction of 'step pricing' for residential customers to target high water users. Under this system customers would pay a higher rate per kilolitre if their consumption exceeds a preset level. A similar system should be used for businesses and industry by charging a higher rate to those whose water use exceeds efficient levels for their industry sector.

"Step pricing for industry would mean smaller bills for business that develop effective water conservation plans and punish industries that continue to waste water with higher charges. This will create a powerful incentive to save water and switch to options such as effluent reuse", Mr Angel said

TEC also welcomed the announcement of a demand management fund to support water conservation initiatives, water efficiency labelling and requirements that all existing homes sold after July 1 2007 be certified as water efficient.

"These measures will assist in changing behaviour and making homes and business more water efficient" Mr Angel said

"We will also be releasing a report card on the Government's announcements, this week", he said

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel - Director

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

Water Strategy Scorecard



Created on Friday, 22 October 2004 10:00

TEC Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "While the strategy is a welcome improvement in Sydney's urban water management it still falls well short of a sustainable water strategy".

The report gives the Government high marks for demand management with requirements that business, Councils and Government agencies develop water conservation plans and that all properties must be certified as water efficient prior to sale likely to ensure major improvements in water efficiency.

The government has scored poorly, however, in the areas of sustainable raw water supplies, effluent reuse and environmental flows for stressed rivers.

"Deep pumping from dams and transfers from the Shoalhaven River do not provide a long term solution as they still rely on rainfall in a drying climate to maintain supplies. Development of effluent reuse for non drinking water purposes in new urban release areas is a step forward, however, it must be extended across the existing city to take pressure off our precious drinking water supplies", Mr Angel said.

TEC also attacked the announcement of a \$4million feasibility study of desalination.

"Desalination is an unsustainable approach that will require massive amounts of electricity and cause an unacceptable increase in greenhouse gas emissions. This money would be better spent on developing sustainable options such as effluent reuse", Mr Angel said.

A major shortcoming of the strategy is the failure to provide a proper environmental flow regime for the Hawkesbury-Nepean river system.

"It is unclear how effective the environmental flow package will be as availability of flows will depend on dam levels. The failure to set limit on extractions from dams will impair ability to provide flows. In addition no commitment has been given to flows from Warragamba, where the bulk will need to come from", Mr Angel said.

METROPOLITAN WATER STRATEGY ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD

During the week of 17 October the Carr Government released its Metro Water Strategy, arguably the best attempt at urban water policy for 30 years - however it still falls short of a sustainable water strategy.

SUSTAINABLE RAW WATER SUPPLIES 4/10

Deep pumping from dams and pumping from Shoalhaven River won't provide a long term solution to water shortage. They depend on rainfall and simply feed unsustainable demand rather than seeking to change wasteful water use practices. Pumping from the Shoalhaven River transfers environmental impact from Sydney to the Shoalhaven basin.

While Demand Management and recycling in new areas will help curb growing consumption, the announcements fail to place a sustainable limit on extractions from dams. This will inhibit ability to provide environmental flows and avoids a strong signal to switch to sustainable supplies such as recycling in existing areas. Sustainable yield from present supplies is 500 Gigalitres (GL) per year, allowing for environmental flows.

Tapping groundwater reserves may have adverse impacts on sensitive groundwater dependent ecosystems. Resource also prone to be depleted faster than infiltration can recharge it.

Desalination is expensive and unsustainable. It will require massive electricity consumption with unacceptable

greenhouse gas emissions. Seawater is purified, then once again pumped for single use. Problems also arise with disposal of highly concentrated brine which is a by-product of the desalination process.

ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS 4/10

Announcement of environmental flows package is welcome, however, it is unclear how effective this will be as availability of flows will depend on dam levels. No decision on flows from Warragamba, where the bulk of the flows will need to come from. Failure to set limit on extractions from dams will impair ability to provide flows.

WISE RESOURCE USE 5/10

Effluent recycling for new urban release areas is a major step forward. Failure to commit to recycling for developed areas is a major blow, however, as recycling could massively ease pressure on drinking water supplies and provide a more sustainable source of water, significantly boosting drought security.

Government's strategy will simply entrench Sydney Water's monopoly despite the fact that they have abjectly failed to develop reuse.

Permanent water restrictions (as adopted by Melbourne) and changes to security of supply criteria should be announced to put an end to wasteful consumption.

Insufficient attention given to new technologies such as stormwater recycling and decentralized systems as a way to take pressure off current supplies.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT 7/10

Water conservation plans for businesses, councils and government agencies a good step toward improving water efficiency. Success will depend on support from pricing mechanisms to reward good performance and penalise those who resist reform. Step pricing, as proposed for residential customers, should be extended to the commercial and industrial sectors to provide incentives to be more efficient and switch to sustainable options such as effluent reuse.

Residential retrofit and requirements that properties must be certified as water efficient prior to sale will ensure major improvement in performance of existing building stock. Extension of rainwater tank subsidy to 2008 a valuable step toward easing pressure on drinking water supplies.

Water efficiency labeling of household appliances valuable in allowing consumers to identify and choose products based on water efficiency.

Wholesale step pricing should be used to remove perverse incentive for Sydney Water to sell more water. In 2002 IPART estimated that by failing to meet demand management targets Sydney Water would receive additional revenue of between \$35M and \$72M. Wholesale step pricing would penalise Sydney Water if they purchase more water from the Sydney Catchment Authority than allowed by demand management targets. This would provide a strong incentive to invest in demand management and effluent reuse.

OVERALL SCORE 5/10

Latest News

MINISTER URGED TO REVOKE GOSFORD CITY COUNCIL'S PLANNING POWERS



Created on Friday, 13 May 2005 10:00

Gosford City Council should be immediately stripped of its planning powers following a decision to axe its Environment Directorate the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has told NSW Planning Minister Mr Craig Knowles MP.

TEC Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "With no Environment Directorate to provide objective environmental advice, Council will not be able to meet its obligations under the Environmental Planning and Assessment and Local Government Acts. Minister Knowles should act immediately to strip Council of its planning powers and hand them to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources. This is particularly important with greater metro planning currently underway".

Both the Local Government and Environmental Planning and Assessment Acts require Councils to properly address environmental protection and ESD principles in their operations and decision making processes. At Tuesday night's meeting, however, a late Mayoral Minute was moved to restructure Council and abolish the Environment Directorate without any advertising or community consultation.

"The shabby, underhanded manner in which Gosford Council has made this decision shows that it cannot be trusted to deal with environmental concerns in an open and transparent way and is unfit to act as a planning consent authority", Mr Martin said.

The decision flies in the face of recommendations made by an independent management structure audit of Gosford Council by KPMG only four years ago to create a separate environment unit to remove conflicts of interest caused by having environmental matters considered within the development unit. There are now serious concerns that the major environmental pressures affecting the Central Coast will not be given adequate attention by Gosford Council.

"Gosford is a rapidly growing area with ever increasing pressure being placed on its environment and resources as more and more people settle in the area. The provision of high quality, independent environmental advice is crucial if Council is to make decisions that reflect the long term best interests of the Central Coast and its fragile environment. It appears, however, that Council is only interested in facilitating rapid developer profits at the expense of sound planning", Mr Martin said.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

WATER PRICING CHANGES A STEP TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY



Created on Friday, 17 June 2005 10:00

Conservationists have welcomed today's announcement of a system of 'step pricing' for residential Sydney Water customers to target water wasters and encourage water conservation as a crucial step toward sustainable water management in Sydney.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director Mr Jeff Angel said, "The new pricing arrangements are essential to reducing water wastage and sending strong conservation signals to consumers. Without these reforms there will be little chance of achieving long term sustainable water cycle management in Sydney".

Under the new rules customers will be charged \$1.13 per kilolitre for the first 400 kilolitres every year. After the first 400 kilolitres a year, residential customers will pay \$1.44 per kilolitre. These rates will increase over time to \$1.33 per kilolitre for the first 400 kilolitres and \$2 for each additional kilolitre by 2008-09.

"These changes will provide strong incentives for customers to install rainwater tanks, water efficient showerheads and choose water efficient household appliances. Existing pricing structures provide very little incentive to save water and are clearly inadequate for a city facing major long term challenges to its water supply and demand balance", Mr Angel said.

TEC has told the Government, however, that the price changes must be part of broader strategy including large scale recycling of treated sewerage effluent.

"Sydney is wasting millions of litres of water each day by discharging sewage effluent into the ocean. This water could be treated and reused for a wide range of applications to take pressure of our scarce drinking water supplies. Price reform must be supported by a major investment in effluent reuse and other water conservation initiatives", Mr Angel said.

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel - Director

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

PUBLIC MEETING - THE F6 AND SYDNEY'S TRANSPORT FUTURE



Created on Tuesday, 21 June 2005 10:00

Coinciding with the launching of the campaign against the proposed F6 Motorway Sutherland Shire Environment Centre and the Total Environment Centre will hold an important meeting to discuss this issue at Parliament House on Thursday evening from 6-8pm.

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre Patron Bob Walshe said "The meeting will provide a forum for giving voice to community opposition to the proposed motorway".

"The F6 would destroy sensitive wetlands, damage the Royal National Park, require demolition of hundreds of homes and create a traffic congestion nightmare in the Sutherland Shire", Mr Walshe said.

The meeting will also make clear that the proposed F6 has wider implications for Sydney as a whole.

TEC Director Jeff Angel said "Building more roads is a failed and discredited approach to addressing Sydney's transport needs. The F6 will simply worsen chronic traffic congestion and air pollution throughout Sydney. This project must immediately be scrapped in favour of sustainable public transport solutions".

The meeting will be addressed by speakers including Jack Munday, Transport Planner Michelle Ziebots, TEC Director Jeff Angel, and Member for Miranda Barry Collier MP. It will chaired by Elsa Atkin, Executive Director National Trust (NSW).

The meeting will be held in the NSW Parliament House Theatre, Macquarie Street Sydney. Enquiries and registration - Sutherland Shire Environment Centre 9545 3077

For further information

Contact

:

Jeff Angel - Director

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

WATER PRICING CHANGES AN IMPORTANT STEP BUT FUNDS WASTED ON DESALINATION



Created on Friday, 02 September 2005 10:00

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "Increasing the price per kilolitre of water and adopting a two tiered price structure for large users is crucial in providing a strong resource conservation signal. Revenue being directed to desalination, should however be directed toward sustainable options such as recycling, stormwater harvesting and rainwater tanks. It seems Sydney residents will be getting a taste of just how expensive this unsustainable desalination plant will be before so much as a brick or pipe has been laid".

"The \$94 million dollars to be devoted to desalination could provide a major kick start to development of recycling for Sydney. Devoting these funds to desalination is a wasted opportunity", Mr Martin said.

TEC called on the NSW Opposition to support diverting these funds to recycling consistent with their recent support for recycling initiatives.

"The NSW Opposition now has an opportunity nail their colours to the mast on recycling. Their resistance to desalination needs to be backed by strongly supporting funding for developing recycling options", Mr Martin said.

TEC also welcomed recommendations by IPART to open some sectors of the water industry to competition as a way of promoting recycling and other innovative options.

"Sydney Water's abject failure to develop or promote recycling for many years has made the entry of other players into the market a necessity", Mr Martin said

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) confirmed the introduction of a two tiered residential price structure, with customers using more than 400 kilolitres per year paying a higher price for any water used above that mark. Prices for each kilolitre will be higher than anticipated in the draft determination in June due to increased scarcity resulting from the drought and early desalination plant expenses.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

HEALTH AND FUEL COSTS MAKE COMPELLING CASE FOR GAS BUSES



Created on Thursday, 22 September 2005 10:00

Massive differences in both health and fuel costs should compel State Transit to resume buying compressed natural gas (CNG) powered buses instead of diesel fuel models the Total Environment Centre (TEC) has told the NSW Government.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Urban Campaigner Mr Leigh Martin said, "Rising fuel costs have prompted Deputy Premier and Transport Minister John Watkins to reveal that the government is reconsidering its decision to stop buying CNG buses, however, comparison of health costs should make CNG buses the obvious choice".

CNG buses have lower tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases - particularly CO₂ - and significantly lower emissions of air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM) than diesel than Euro 3 standard diesel buses currently being purchased by State Transit.

One Euro 3 diesel bus travelling 41,529 km/year would emit approximately 14.12 kg of particulate matter (PM) per year. In contrast, a CNG bus would be expected to emit 0.83 kg of PM per year. The addition of 180 diesel buses to the Sydney fleet would therefore emit 2.54 tonnes of PM per year, whereas the same number of CNG buses would emit only 0.15 tonnes of PM per year. Over an average 12 year life span, 180 new diesel buses are likely to emit approximately 30.5 tonnes of PM, compared to approximately 1.79 tonnes of PM for a fleet of CNG buses.

"The decision to cease purchasing CNG buses will result in a major increase in fine particle pollution from the State Transit bus fleet. This will have a direct effect on air quality and public health. Reversing this decision would have clear benefits to the community through improved public health and reduced health costs" Mr Martin said.

Using best available estimates of health costs of fine particle pollution of A\$147,400 per tonne, the cost the community could be valued conservatively at A\$366,908 per year. Over an average life span, 180 diesel buses could cost the community A\$4.4 million in health costs due to particulate matter alone. Oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) are likely to cost an additional \$1.3 million. As particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen constitute only a small proportion of pollutants emitted by diesel engines, the true costs to the community would be much higher than estimates for particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen alone.

"Rising fuel costs simply make the case for CNG buses even more compelling. The government should act in the interests of public health and the State's finances by committing to purchasing only gas buses for the State Transit fleet", Mr Martin said.

For further information

Contact

:

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner

Phone

:

61 2 9299 5599

Email

:

tec@tec.org.au

WWW

:

<http://www.tec.org.au/>

Latest News

Alternative to desalination in Sydney launched



Created on Tuesday, 27 September 2005 10:00

The plan treats the water twice and dilutes it twice.

Total Environment Centre (TEC) Director Jeff Angel said "Desalination is an expensive and unsustainable option that will punish customers through massive price increases and result in massive greenhouse gas emissions. Combining indirect reuse and permanent water restrictions offers an environmentally friendly alternative with less cost to the public".

The plan would involve recycling 35 Gigalitres (GL) from the high standard tertiary Western Sydney STPs and redirecting the water back into Warragamba Dam or Prospect Reservoir for dilution. Water would then be subject to further treatment at the Prospect Water Filtration Plant and further diluted in the water delivery system. Contrary to options discussed by the Government recycled water would not come from ocean STPs and would therefore be much cheaper.

"Recycled water would be treated twice and diluted twice before reaching the consumer. Under this plan approximately 0.67 GL of water would be recycled each week. If directed into Prospect Reservoir this would represent only 5.2% of its capacity. If directed into Warragamba the dilution factor would obviously be even higher", Mr Angel said

Permanent water restrictions would be set at a level needed to conserve an additional 40 GL per year. This would be less stringent than restrictions currently in place which are saving around 63 GL per year.

"Sydney residents have accepted the need for water restrictions and shown strong support for permanent water conservation measures. It's time we followed the example set by other Australian cities and took this important and necessary step toward sustainable water management", Mr Angel said.

Research released by the NSW Independent and Regulatory Tribunal last year showed 70% support for some form of permanent water restrictions.

The total contribution of recycling and restrictions would be 75GL each year. This would easily negate two of the Government's three desalination options which would produce 45 GL and 72.8 GL respectively each year.

The third option for 182 GL per year is an unrealistic and highly expensive ambit claim that would equate to 29% of current (pre-restrictions) demand. Capacity in excess of demand would represent a major stranded investment that and require a major increase in water bills to fund.

TEC called on the State Government to give detailed consideration to the plan and assess its costs and benefits.

"An independent investigation is necessary", Mr Angel said

Latest News

Metro Strategy - implementation the acid test



Created on Sunday, 04 December 2005 11:00

"Its release has been long awaited and now we can move to the next crucial stage of implementing policies to make Sydney more liveable; reduce its damaging environmental footprint; have jobs close to where people live and public transport; and expand protected green spaces," said Jeff Angel, Director of Total Environment Centre.

"The big gap is an infrastructure plan, with for example expanded public transport beyond current inadequate promises. The acid test is now on Infrastructure Minister Costa, who if he performs badly will make a mess of the Strategy and cause great political damage to the Government."

"We see the main pluses of the plan as:

- * A clear picture of the environmental problems with facts and figures that will operate as benchmarks for future progress;
- * A range of environmental targets on waste, air pollution and greenhouse, now given force through the planning laws;
- * Continued focus on housing in built up areas, to limit the urban sprawl;
- * The Macarthur South region and rural lands outside the growth zones are 'off-limits' to prevent speculation for rezoning to urban."

"An ongoing concern is the lack of external and independent monitoring and reporting. It's all in-house and surely the government cannot expect to get a full and frank picture of impacts and progress from this process. The public will need more transparency and independent reporting."

"We also await the government's Energy White Paper which will determine the city's greenhouse gas emissions in the future and the biodiversity strategy to protect native vegetation," Mr Angel said.