

Wolli Creek Update

From the Wolli Creek Preservation Society

No.2 August 1987

Unsworth confirms F5 madness

Proposals for massive new development projects are now again threatening the Wolli Creek Valley. In addition to the F5 expressway project, recently reaffirmed by Premier and MP for Rockdale, Barrie Unsworth, a private consortium is planning to route two private lines for the Very Fast Train (VFT) to Melbourne through the Valley.

In a press release dated June 23, the Premier has reaffirmed his determination to build the F5 although he states; "I am fully conscious of the environmental delicacy of the Wolli Valley". He goes on to say "as soon as funds become available for that section of the freeway the first step will be an environmental impact study".

The Premier is saying that the destruction of the Wolli Valley will proceed but that it will first be blessed by an Environmental Impact Study. Experience elsewhere has

shown that if the EIS recommends against a development the Government is capable of overriding the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act with special legislation.

The Wolli Creek freeway issue should have been laid to rest six years ago after the most authoritative planning inquiry ever undertaken in NSW. The Kyeemagh to Chullora Road Inquiry recommended that containers should be removed from local roads by railing them to and from Port Botany, and that the Wolli Creek Valley should be returned to the people.

The Inquiry, under commissioner David Kirby, rejected the Wolli Creek route on economic, environmental and social grounds. It was a model for enquiries under the subsequently passed EPA Act. It must be allowed to stand.

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C.U.T.S. founded

In June, the Society became a founding member of CUTS, the *Coalition for Urban Transport Sanity*. The group was started by the Nature Conservation Council and the Society for Social Responsibility in Engineering. It includes environmentalists, public transport activists, engineers and others who want the state government to adopt a more responsible approach to Sydney's urban transport planning. CUTS will be taking a high profile on the Wolli Creek issue...so stand by for announcements.

Please note - our new address is P.O. Box 270, Earlwood 2206

Bangalays or Bloodwoods?

If you don't know the difference between a Bangalay and a Bloodwood, Les Robinson's "Trees of Wolli Creek" is the field guide for you! The Society's first venture into publishing, it was launched in Girrahween Park by radio naturalist John Dengate on June 21.

The 16 page book is beautifully illustrated and is organised so that closely related and easily confused species are grouped together and distinguished by simple 'field marks'.

The shape and growth habit of each species is also illustrated and Les has included notes on the aboriginal and European uses and cultural history of each species.

The occasion for the launch was a walk through the valley organised for the Association for Environmental Education, a lobby group made up of teachers and other professional educators. All agreed that the book (and other forthcoming flora guides being written for the valley by Les) would be a valuable tool for environmental education in local schools and tertiary courses. The society is already receiving orders for "Trees of Wolli Creek"

Apart from being a dedicated amateur botanist, Les Robinson is a professional cartoonist and illustrator. Les lives at Bronte and the long hours he puts into the Wolli Creek fight is proof of the support our campaign is receiving from conservationists from all over Sydney.

There's a coupon for "Trees of Wolli Creek" on the back page.



Les and friend posing at the launch of "Trees of Wolli Creek".

The society is incorporating

At our Special General meeting of 30 March there was a unanimous vote to incorporate and also to shorten our name to the Wolli Creek Preservation Society. The society's aims, including those relating to Bardwell Valley, of course, remain unchanged. Incorporation is now being finalised.

F5 madness

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What would the new proposal mean?

An additional SRA rail line from Tempe to Campbelltown is already likely with the opening of the Campbelltown connection in November. To this, the new proposals would add at least 6 lanes of elevated road and 2 special VFT tracks.

Imagine 11 lanes of high speed traffic, 8 of which are built, owned and operated by multinational profiteers going right through the middle of the most sensitive and valuable natural area in inner suburban Sydney.

Imagine also that both the tollway viaduct and the two VFT tracks will be shielded at the side with 4 metre concrete and steel screens and you have some idea of the environmental vandalism that is proposed.

Who will build the proposals?

The Premier is now proposing that the construction of major transport links should be handed over to giant multinational corporations. According to the Daily Telegraph (16.5.87) -

"Premier Barrie Unsworth has asked Roads Minister Laurie Brereton to investigate two massive private enterprise tollway projects". The article goes on to name the F5 expressway from Alexandria to Glenfield and the planned Very Fast Train project.

For the ordinary citizen, the takeover of transport planning and development by giant corporations will spell the end of any ability to influence the course of transport planning.

It is known that a consortium of three powerful corporations, TNT (the monorail), Kumagai-Gumi (the harbour tunnel) and Transfield are involved in the Wolli Creek expressway/VFT proposal.

The wider issues

The Wran government pioneered progressive environmental planning, it proposed to protect wetlands and urban bushland. Now the Brereton/Unsworth government, under the influence of the multinational roads lobby, is trying to turn back the clock to the bad old days of environmental vandalism.

Local members and Labor Party activists, environmentalists and residents of all political persuasions fought hard to establish these progressive environmental policies. They must not be torn up now.

What you can do

• Labor Party members and supporters must renew the

Putting Wolli Creek on the conservation map

"Where the hell is Wolli Creek?", a question most of us have heard a few times, expresses a major problem in the fight to save the valley. We have tackled it by taking our photographic and information display to two recent festivals.

In April we attended the Heritage Week fair in Macquarie Street and in May the Cooks River Festival. In Macquarie St we reaped the benefits of being one of the very few information activities amid a sea of Devonshire tea stalls! Hundreds of people viewed the display and signed our anti-F5 petition.

The information stall at the Cooks River Festival was also well received. A special vote of thanks goes to the River Canoe Club, who took part, with Society members, in a "paddling protest" against the F5 plans. The vivid banners flown from the canoes helped to brighten an otherwise bleak and overcast day! The "paddling protest" received publicity on 2BL, 2WS and in "Metro".

Diary dates

August 24, Monday, WCPS General meeting, 7.30 pm Community Resource Centre 11-13 Hartill-Law Ave, Bardwell Park.

October 26, Monday, WCPS Annual General meeting, 7.30pm, Community Resource Centre 11-13 Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park.

fight to defend environmental planning principles developed during the early years of the Wran government. Labor's poor showing in Sydney electorates in the Federal elections reflects a disenchantment with the State government's retreat on urban environmental issues. This is a point not lost on opposition leader Nick Greiner who has recently come out in favour of the Kirby Inquiry and its findings.

• Local residents and environmentalists must immediately show their abhorrence of the recently announced Unsworth proposals. Write, telegram or phone the following -
Barrie Unsworth (Premier and member for Rockdale)
Bob Carr (Minister for the Environment)
Ken Gabb (Member for Earlwood)
Andrew Refshauge (Member for Marrickville)
[All C/- Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.]

• Join the Wolli Creek Preservation Society and become active in its work.

An alternative - an expressway for birds

A sunny afternoon day and a desire to relax led to a walk through Girrahween Park, Coolabah Reserve, along the Banks of the Wolli Creek and into the open park area adjacent to Banks Road. During this walk 39 species of birds were recorded in two and a half hours.

One pondered on a major issue affecting this area - the grab by vested interests, based on profit motives, or the retention of a life style, where people can enjoy the simple pleasures of life. Basically this is the question the residents of Wolli Creek Valley must address!

To observe 39 species in such a small area is a reflection of the habitats which exist in one of the few nature areas in the metropolis of Sydney. It certainly is a place of natural wonderment and it is not a costly exercise to enjoy it.

Birds recorded

Introduced species

Common Starling
Common Myna
Bulbul
House Sparrow
Spotted Dove
Feral Pidgeon
Blackbird
Greyfinch

Eastern Spinebill
White-plumed Honeyeater
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater
Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo,
Red-browed Finch
Brown Goshawk
Wagtail
Raven

Australian species

White-faced Heron,
Little Grebe,
Little Pied Cormorant
Purple Swamphen
Dusky Moorhen
Coot
Wood Duck
Black Duck
Chestnut Teal
Grey Teal

Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike
Grey Butcherbird
Spotted Pardalote
Blue Wren
Silvereye
Kookaburra
Welcome Swallow
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Magpie
Golden-headed Cisticola
Yellow-rumped Thornbill

During June 55 species of birds were recorded in the area.

Your preference - count and listen to birds and their song OR count and be overwhelmed by the sight of mechanical objects on wheels and their audible and visual pollution.

There are alternatives! Think about it and be prepared to act.

A Wolli Birdo



Trees of Wolli Creek

by cartoonist Les Robinson

A simple illustrated guide to the identification of 36 species of native and exotic trees found in the Wolli Creek Valley.

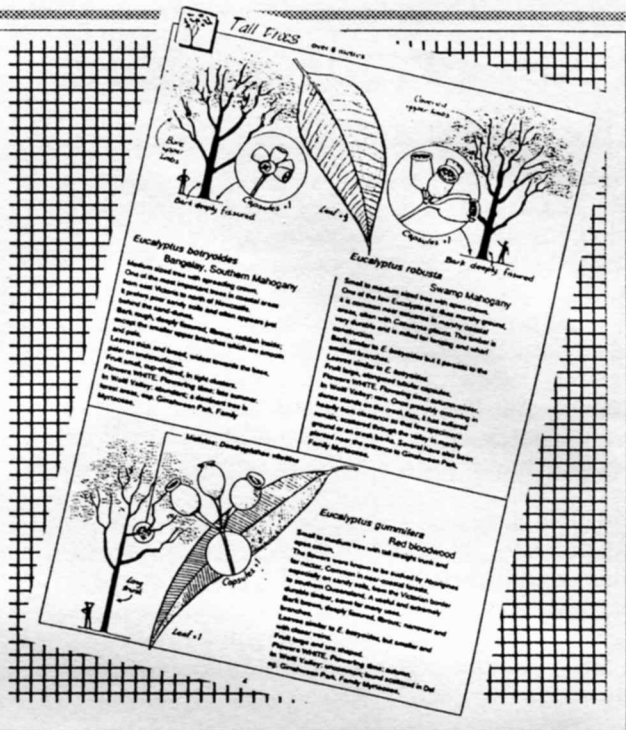
Please send me a copy of "The Trees of Wolli Creek". I enclose \$4.00 (\$3.00 purchase price plus \$1.00 postage) [Bulk orders \$2 each for orders of 5 or more.]

Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....Postcode.....

Cut out and post to Wolli Creek Preservation Society, PO Box 270 Earlwood, 2206



Thanks for your support!

Since our appeal for funds in the last issue of "Wolli Update" we have received a total of \$372 in donations. We took up collections at the Heritage Week Fair, the Cooks River Festival and the launch of the "Trees of Wolli Creek" book. Our thanks for individual donations go to ; F.J.M. Reid, G. Gatenby, L.M. Hoffmann, I. Bridges, W. Taylor, J. Thompson, K.L. Hope. Please, keep it up. Money is urgently needed for the organisational and publishing tasks necessary to save the valley. Write us a cheque now. (Payable to the Wolli Creek Preservation Society - post to PO Box 270 Earlwood, NSW 2206.)

Sorry, they're booked out....

That was the response to dozens of requests for places in our school holiday activities, organised through the department of Sport and Recreation in April and July. The three days of bushwalks, games and crafts were attended by around 130 people. We will be running these each school holidays, so if you can spare some time to help please ring us (59 8502). Also booked out is a walk through the valley for the Australians Museum Society (TAMS). Ninety people will be taking part on July 26.

Can you help?

★ We have a continuing program of guide walks through the valley for groups ranging from school classes to flora and fauna societies. If you know the valley or know about birds, plants, reptiles, insects or local history, why not help others to learn?

★ We are forming a working group to take over hand delivery of "Update" and other literature in the local area.

If you can do a letterbox drop on foot or by car your services are urgently needed for a big campaign we will be running for the council elections in September and the state elections next year.

★ We also need volunteers to:

- Staff information stalls
- Circulate our anti-F5 petition
- Write letters to politicians and newspapers

- Assist in bush regeneration
- Help write and produce "Update"
- Work on committees
- Do historical research

Please ring 59 8502 or 559 1269

Membership form

Yes, I would like to join the Wolli Creek Preservation Society

Name.....

Address.....

.....PhonePostcode.....

I enclose membership fee of \$.....

Signed..... Date.....

Membership Fees:

Full fee: \$5 per year Concession: \$2 per year

Families: \$7 per year

Post to: Wolli Creek Preservation Society
PO Box 270 Earlwood 2206