

Wolli Creek Update

From the Wolli Creek Preservation Society Inc



Roads Authority's 'Yes Minister' ploy...

Wal changes the rules

THE Greiner government is stumbling from crisis to crisis over the Wolli freeway issue.

In a desperate manoeuvre to avoid an objective study of the transport needs of inner southern Sydney the Deputy Premier and Minister for Roads Wal Murray has announced an inter-departmental "study team" to identify "transportation options" for the region.

The team will report direct to the Roads and Traffic Authority in June 1991. It is headed by the hard-line, pro-freeway, RTA central region strategic planner, John Brewer, and is dominated by government departments which are pro-freeway.

❑ What are they really up to?

The move reflects a crisis within senior government and RTA circles following the release of Commissioner Woodward's findings on the F2 (Castlereagh) freeway. These were highly critical of the RTA and led to a call by nearly 200 community groups for a Royal Commission into the authority's operations.

Announcing the F5 freeway 'study group', Deputy Premier

Wal Murray said that the issues raised by Commissioner Woodward in relation to the F2 were similar to those of the F5. Mr Murray admitted that Commissioner Woodward in his findings on the Castlereagh Freeway "challenged the strategic justification for the project in the context of the total transport system for both freight and people".

❑ What are they trying to avoid?

No doubt uppermost in the Deputy Premier's mind is the need to avoid a public inquiry into the Roads Authority.

Then there is the government's need to phase out the 'F5 advisory committee'.

This body was set up in April in an attempt to head-off calls for an inquiry into the F5 EIS and the RTA's public misinformation campaigns. It was boycotted by the Preservation Society and the Cooks River Valley Association.

The announcement of the 'study team' is a blatant move

OVER

'Eyes on Wolli' wins McKell Award



The Preservation Society's development of environmental education in local schools has been rewarded with the prestigious Sir William McKell Award for excellence in environmental reporting.

Eyes on Wolli, a cassette and songbook of original environmental songs, won Children's Media category.

The songs were composed by students of Earlwood Public and Our Lady of Lourdes schools, with assistance from composer John Shortis. The Preservation Society co-ordinated the project, arranging the Australia Council grant used to employ John and leading the walks through the valley which formed the inspiration for the songs.

The Sir William McKell Awards are sponsored by the State Pollution Control Commission. State Environment Minister, Tim Moore, presented the award to Preservation Secretary Jo Warrington (pictured, left) at a ceremony in September. Mr Moore praised the project and the role of the Preservation Society in using the media to protect the environment.

The *Eyes on Wolli* kit, comprising the professionally recorded cassette and illustrated songbook, is available from the Society for \$10.00 (ring Judy on 559 2821).

Wal changes the rules

to preempt the 'advisory committee' voting on a consultant for the F5 supplementary impact statement. It is believed that a clear majority on the committee favoured Jacana Consulting, a group the RTA would be anxious to prevent winning the contract.

In June the RTA placed large advertisements in major Sydney newspapers promising that the 'advisory committee' alone would decide on the consultant. The vote was expected to take place in August, but meetings of the committee were continually postponed by the RTA.

The RTA and the government are known to have been horrified by the possibility that Jacana would be granted the contract, in view of Jacana's recent proposals for expanding Sydney's rail network. These were part of a study commissioned by the NSW Labor Council which demonstrated Jacana's preference for integrated analysis of all transport options, including rail commuter and freight transport.

□ What's the scenario for the next few months?

The inter-departmental 'study group' is a classic bureaucratic tactic straight out of *Yes Minister*.

Firstly, the 'study team' will reduce the 'advisory committee' to total impotence. The committee will be called only occasionally to hear reports on the progress of the team's work. When the inter-departmental team eventually makes its report, a convenient pretext to disband the committee will be found.

Secondly, the study will focus on road options. In the words of Wal Murray's media release it will "provide important strategies for the preparation of the supplementary EIS". This means that it will preempt any independent analysis of the integrated transport needs of Sydney and hand the selected consultant for the so-called 'supplementary EIS' the RTA's 'preferred option' — you guessed it, the elevated six lane Wolli Creek route.

This is not the way to go.

Throughout the world, freeways have failed. What Sydney needs is an independent, objective study of its transport needs for the 21st century. The government's 'study group' is not the body to do the job. It is clearly biased. It is an attempt to whitewash the Roads Authority and avoid the Royal Commission into the Authority's affairs being demanded by community groups. It should not be allowed to proceed.

☛ What you should do

Write to:

- The Premier, The Hon. Nick Greiner and,
- The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bob Carr, (both care of Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney 2000), supporting the call by 190 community groups for a Royal Commission into the operations of the Roads and Traffic Authority.

Celebrate our great year at the Annual Dinner!

Tickets are selling fast for the Preservation Society's Annual Dinner to celebrate the successes of the 'Eyes on Wolli' and 'Images of Wolli' projects.

1990 has been a year of great success, what with our major victories in the political sphere, the receipt of the Mckell Award for 'Eyes' and the response from both entrants and sponsors for 'Images'.

The dinner will be held at the Earlwood-Bardwell Bark RSL on Friday November 2, commencing at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$30 - ring Rhonda Gardiner on 718 1598 after 6:00 pm. **We must have final numbers by Friday, October 26.**

Get in quick and join us for a great night to celebrate a great year!

• Annual General Meeting here again!

- It's Preservation Society AGM time and we urge you to come along and have your say in how the battle for the valley is carried out.
- The AGM is to be held in the meeting rooms of Earlwood-Bardwell Park RSL on Wednesday November 7 at 7:30pm.
- All twelve elected positions on the Executive Committee will be decided at the meeting, so please ensure a good roll-up!



Wolli Creek Preservation Society Inc. membership application

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

Name

Address.....

Postcode..... Phone No.....

Please tick

Family \$7

Individual \$5

Concession \$2

Donation \$ _____

By mail to:WCPS, PO Box 270, Earlwood NSW 2206