

Wolli Creek Update

FROM THE WOLLI CREEK PRESERVATION SOCIETY INC.

No. 11, DECEMBER 1990



The document that

doesn't exist...

WALMURRAY, Minister for Roads and Deputy Premier, has denied the existence of a confidential DMR review of the 1980 Kirby Inquiry into southern Sydney freeway proposals.

The denial came in Mr Murray's answers to a series of questions on roads issues tabled in the NSW Parliament by the Independent member of North Sydney, Ms Robyn Read.

But the Wolli Creek Preservation Society has a copy of the confidential review which is titled *Relevance of the Kyeemagh-Chullora Road Inquiry Findings 1980/81*, prepared by Traffic Planning P/L in 1987.

The RTA has been leaking the document to organisations known to be favourable to its freeway schemes for southern Sydney.

In his replies to Parliament Murray also admitted the RTA's notorious "Home truths about the south western freeway" advertisement, which appeared in the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* in August 1989, had advised the public "in error" that NSW law required that environmental impact statements must be independently prepared.

Mr Murray revealed that the advertisement had been initiated by the F5 road design engineer, Bruce Fishburn and approved by the minister then responsible for the RTA, Bruce Baird.

The review is highly prejudicial to the RTA's campaign for the F5 freeway because it confirms that the Kirby Inquiry was right on all the major judgements which it took on freeways in general and the F5 in particular.

Undermines

The review undermines the view the RTA has sought to foster in the Rockdale, Bexley and Earlwood communities that construction of the F5 freeway would remove virtually all container trucks from local streets and casts doubt on transport information in the F5 EIS.

Discussing a 1985 survey of container trucks the review says: "The implications of such surveys and analysis would appear to be that even if the Port Botany container trucks use a new road such as the South Western Free-

way [F5] it is possible that as much as 60 per cent of container traffic would still permeate the area using the existing road system."

The review also reveals that annually, up to 47 per cent of containers from the Port Botany CTAL terminal have been transported by rail; showing that it is possible, as the Kirby Inquiry predicted, to remove thousands of containers from the urban road network.

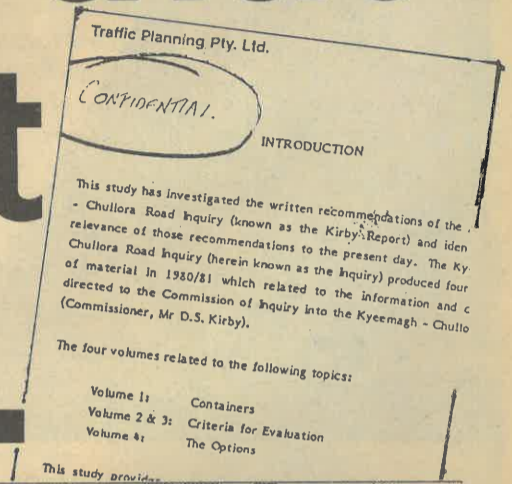
'User-friendly'

The review confirms the judgement reached by the inquiry that new roads tend to encourage people to desert public transport in favour of their cars and that they encourage the expansion of the urban fringe. It admits that: "As far as future road schemes are concerned, the relevance of these two volumes has been a 'user-friendly' handbook on the components of road planning (and how to criticise it)".

It also reminds the department that "some of the senior officers of the Department still involved in highway planning...are quoted liberally in the documents"; a reference to evidence given to the Inquiry which showed that senior DMR officers were aware of the freeway crisis in American cities.

It concludes that "the Inquiry provides an in-depth investigation into transport options in a metropolitan area that is unlikely to be repeated for a long time to come. However many of the areas of investigation and consequently the findings would be relevant to a road proposal instigated today."

The Preservation Society has written to Premier Greiner calling on him to sack Mr Murray from his Cabinet posts.



• Wolli Creek Preservation Society President Tony French: Wal Murray's replies to Parliament raise more questions than they answer...

Baird must face inquiry over RTA operations

PREMIER Nick Greiner must institute a public inquiry into Transport Minister Bruce Baird's involvement in the August 1989 newspaper advertisement backing the Wolli road EIS says WCPs President Tony French.

"The Society finds it very difficult to believe that the road design engineer, Mr Bruce Fishburn, the Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird and their advisors could be so ignorant of state's environmental laws that they could give this advice to the public 'in er-

ror'. It's a fundamental plank of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act that environmental impact statements do not legally have to be 'independently prepared', but that's what this disgraceful advertisement claimed.

"Thousands of dollars of tax[payers money were spent on giving the public the misleading impression that the F5 impact statement was legally guaranteed 'independent' advice. In fact Murray admits that several drafts

of Kinhill's EIS were submitted to the RTA for editorial purposes.

"Mr Murray's replies to Parliament raise more questions than they answer and lend further weight to the recent call by nearly 200 community groups for a royal commission into the operations of the RTA.

"Baird, Murray and their RTA advisers should explain their actions to a public inquiry; it's the only honourable course of action open to the government." Mr French said.

❑ No freeway through the Wolli Creek Valley! ❑ Put the containers on the train!



• Preservation Society Secretary Jo Warrington receiving the Mckell Award from Environment Minister Tim Moore.

'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 electronic media category was won by the ABC's Four Corners and the print media award by Paul Bailey of the Sydney Morning Herald.

The Sir William Mckell Awards are sponsored by the

State Pollution Control Commission. State Environment Minister, Tim Moore, presented the award to Preservation Society Secretary Jo Warrington 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 songbook, is available from the Society for \$10.00 (ring Judy on 559 2821).

WHAT WE SAY

QUESTIONS A ROYAL COMMISSION MUST ANSWER

EVERY year the Roads and Traffic Authority (formerly the DMR) spends billions of dollars of the public's taxes. We are entitled to expect that public spending on our transport infrastructure will be based on rational, objective and up-to-date scientific methods—and a clear evaluation of overseas experience.

Excellent Australian research has shown the disastrous effect freeway spending has had on overseas cities, particularly in the United States. These studies have also shown conclusively that bigger, faster roads lead to sprawling, degraded cities with massive energy consumption.

The US cities which in the past went furthest down the track of total dependence on their freeway networks—in many cases totally abandoning public transport options—have now seen the error of their ways and are embarking on massive programs of investment in public transport.

It's now clear that in NSW the opposite is happening. The Roads Authority are sticking grimly to outmoded plans prepared 40 years ago, and they're using dubious methods to push their plans through against rising community opposition.

The Roads Authority are using dubious methods to push their plans through against rising community opposition...

Over the last two years the RTA has used a repertoire of "dirty tricks" against the community and their critics in the scientific world. Many questions need to be answered—these are just a few of them...

- Why has the Minister for Roads, Mr Wal Murray, denied the existence of the 1987 review of the Kirby Inquiry commissioned by the DMR? Why is this document "confidential"?

- Which RTA officers were behind the notorious "fear and anxiety" campaign which tried to manipulate public opinion in favour of new road plans for the Wolli Creek Valley? Was their campaign approved by the Minister for Transport, Bruce Baird?

- Which RTA officers took the decision to accept the discredited ERTAG petition in favour of the Wolli Creek F5 route which carried as its only identification the name and address of the Department of Main Roads?

- Which RTA officers collaborated in the production of the discredited environmental impact statement for the F5 freeway? Did they approve of the alteration of scientific data supplied by specialist subconsultants?

- Why did the Road Engineer for the F5 initiate the production of a full page advertisement in the *St George Leader* which misinformed the public on basic facts of environmental law? Why did the then Minister for Transport, Mr Bruce Baird give his approval for this advertisement?

These questions must be asked by a royal commission and they must be asked now. If they are not asked the public will have good grounds to continue to speculate on whether the government is abetting and protecting a group of high-ranking public servants whose activities are against the public interest.

Birds of Wolli Creek

By Neil Rankin

Please send me.....copies of 'Birds of Wolli Creek', I enclose \$....., being \$6.00 per copy (packing and postage included)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

This booklet summarises nearly fifty years of birdwatching in the Wolli Creek Valley, the last area of bushland in Sydney's inner south-west. It will long remain a valuable resource for birdwatching beginners and committed amateur ornithologists

POST TO: Wolli Creek Preservation Society, PO Box 270, Earlwood NSW 2206

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 RTA central region strategic planner, John Brewer, and is dominated by government departments which are pro-freeway.

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 team, 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".

Avoid inquiry

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 to pre-empt the advisory committee voting on a consultant for the F5 supplementary impact statement. 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.

Horrified

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 rail unions which demonstrated Jacana's preference for integrated analysis of all transport options, including rail commuter and freight transport.

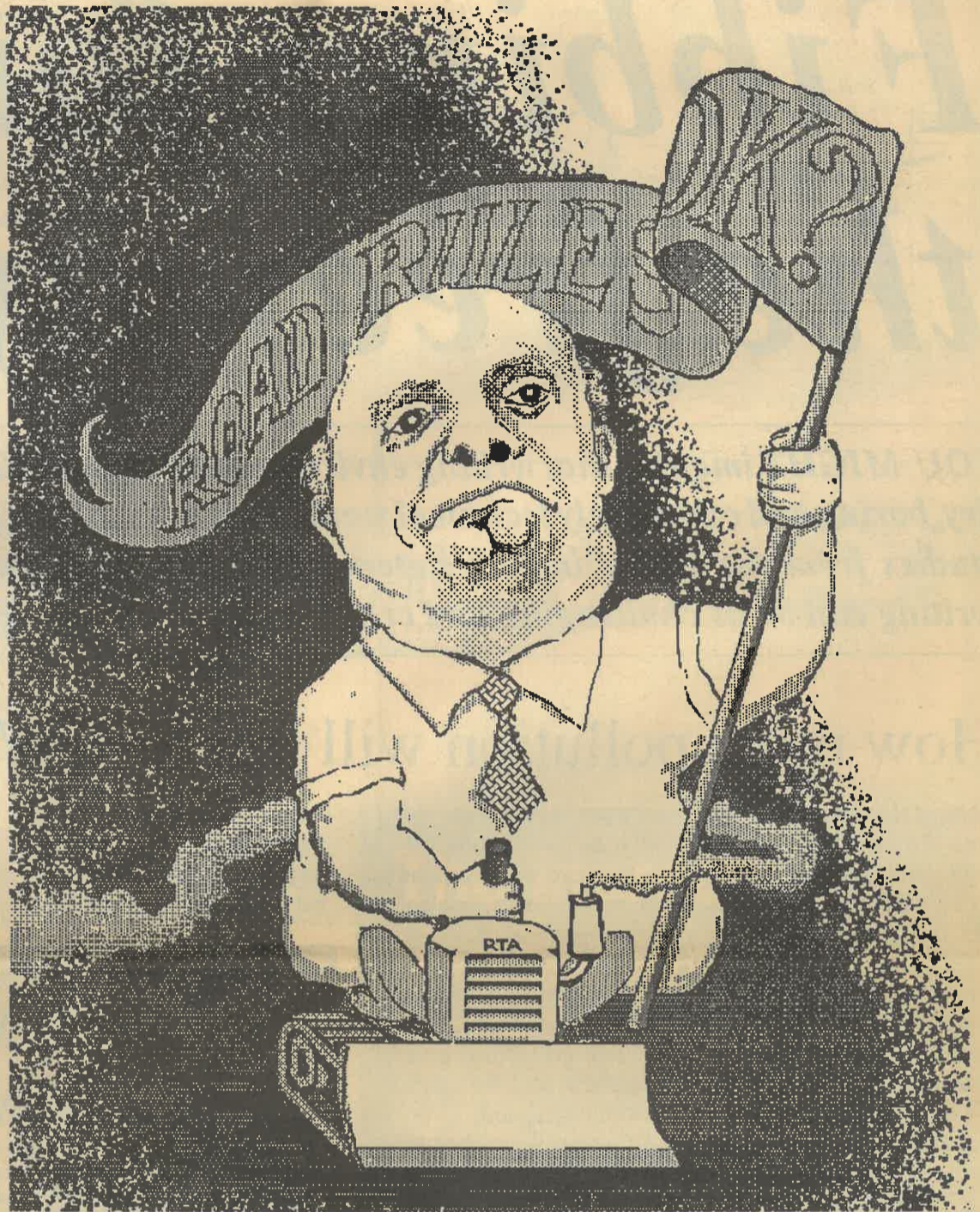
Meanwhile, the anti-environmentalist ERTAG organisation, is using its position on the advisory committee to plan a pro-road campaign, including public meetings.

Clearly, for the RTA bureaucrats, the advisory committee adventure has gone too far.

The inter-departmental study team 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 study team's work. When the inter-departmental team eventually makes its report, a convenient pretext to disband the committee will be found.

The study team's report 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 pre-empt 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 team 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.

Third runway under fire

THE BATTLE to save Wolli Creek from the RTA's bulldozers isn't the only environmental fight taking place in your region. Other groups are fighting similar destructive developments, in an attempt to preserve your quality of life.

The Federal government's proposal to build a third runway at Sydney airport is the subject of staunch opposition from residents' groups, scientific experts and 14 local councils.

The construction of the third runway is closely tied to the plans for the F5 freeway through Wolli Creek and the F6 freeway through the vital Rockdale wetlands. The Federal Airports Corporation is one of the strongest supporters of these freeways, short-sightedly pushing the view that they would

reducetraffic congestion and allow easier access to the airport.

This argument has been disproved time and time again but Kinhill Engineers, the consultants for both the third runway and F5 impact statements, promote it blindly.

The selection of Kinhill as the consultants for the third runway EIS was met with howls of disbelief, following as it did on the heels of the Preservation Society's exposure of the faults of the F5 EIS. Our submission to the Roads and Traffic Authority stated that the EIS was inadequate, incomplete and misleading. We also showed that the EIS editors had apparently altered data supplied to them by specialist subconsultants, in an effort to gloss over major detrimental im-

pacts of the freeway. (See *Fibbing for the freeway?* in this edition).

History, it seems, does repeat! The EIS for the third runway is being torn to shreds by independent specialists. Kinhill's treatment of major adverse impacts is again under fire. More importantly, a leaked memo from the federal Department of Environment suggests that the EIS was delayed by rewriting to make sure its authors were "getting it right".

The Preservation Society opposes the third runway proposal on environmental and social grounds. We see it leading to a destruction of Botany Bay's vital marine environments. This view is backed by a report prepared by Associate Professor Tony Larkum and Dr David Murray of Sydney

University's School of Biological Sciences. The report, prepared for the 14 councils represented on the Airport Co-ordinating Taskforce (ACT), criticises the third runway EIS for not adequately addressing the impact of the development on Botany Bay's seagrasses and fisheries.

Open space

We also oppose the loss of open space associated with this project. This part of Sydney is characterised by a chronic shortage of greenspace—we cannot afford to lose one kilometre of Botany Bay's foreshore. Visual and noise impacts would also lead to a deterioration of this important recreational area. When combined with the loss of open space caused by the construction of the F5 and

the F6, the effect on the quality of life in this region would be devastating.

The ACT have received similar reports from a variety of experts which question the EIS's findings on housing values, environmental health, noise, economic benefits, hazard assessment and urban planning. The specialists paint a completely different picture to the Kinhill EIS - they show that the third runway would be an environmental nightmare.

Submissions with the Department of Environment close on December 20. Our campaign against the F5 showed the importance of logical submissions against the recommendations of environmental impact statements. Make sure you get your submission in!

STRANGE TALES FROM THE RTA'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Fibbing for the freeway?

YOU MIGHT imagine that writing environmental impact statements would be dry, boring and excessively technical work. Not so. As this brief selection of case studies from the RTA's impact statement for the Wolli freeway shows, EIS writing can be as challenging and creative as writing advertising copy...

How more pollution will improve Wolli Creek

ONE of the most artful sections of the EIS deals with the thorny problem of water quality in Wolli Creek. Remember that Wolli is a major tributary of Cooks River, so any increase in pollution here also has a degrading effect on Cooks River and Botany Bay.

Remember also that the RTA estimates the freeway would channel an additional 60,000 vehicles a day through the Wolli Valley directly above the creek or just next to it.

All those cars and trucks would leave residues of oil, rubber and heavy metals on the road and these would be washed into the creek. Lots of litter would also be thrown from vehicles.

You can imagine the folk from the RTA sitting around trying to put the best possible face on this one. How could they sort of admit that the problem couldn't be solved while saying that the creek would be better off with the road?

Step one was to make much play of "gross pollutant traps". These devices remove large items of litter (particularly floating litter) from waterways and their installation on Wolli is long overdue. But with a freeway running above the length of the creek they could hardly compensate for the massive increase in this type of pollution.

Even so the authors must have thought it was better not to promise too much because

only two "minor gross pollutant traps" were proposed!

Step two was to talk away the more serious problem of rubber particles, heavy metals, oil, and the danger of a disastrous toxic spill resulting from a tanker crash.

"Sedimentation ponds" must have been the only idea that sounded good.

These shallow poison ponds would have to be located on the Wolli floodplain and under, or overshadowed by, the freeway.

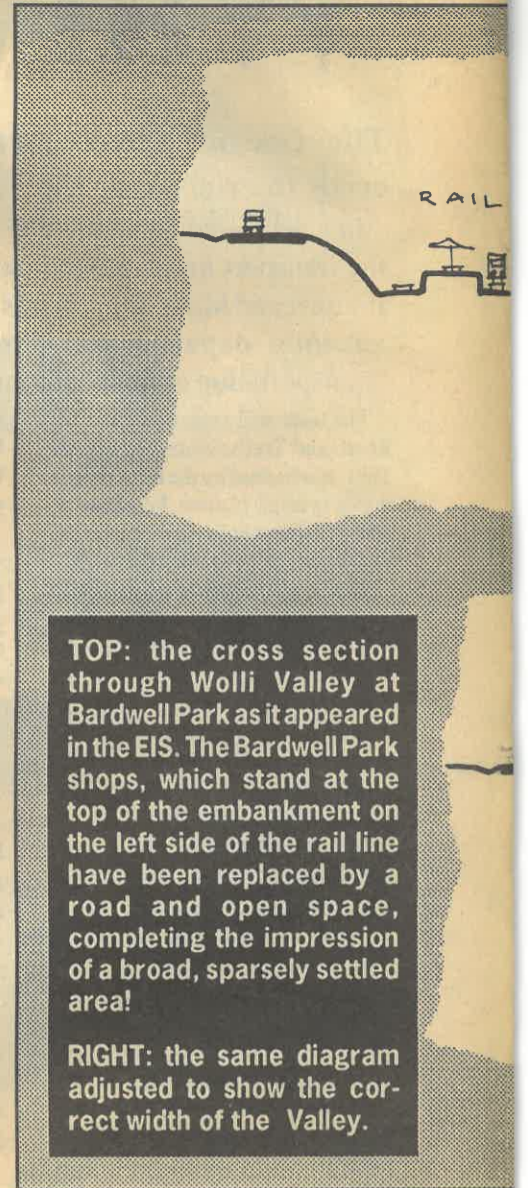
The EIS says that all drainage from the freeway would be piped to these ponds which would filter out: "...some of the heavy metal contaminants in the pavement runoff. The basins would receive *all runoff* from the freeway carriageways and during *dry weather* would have adequate emergency capacity to hold any spills from tankers. This would *permit* removal or neutralisation of contaminants before discharge into Wolli Creek..." (emphasis added).

Let's run that by again slowly. What they mean is this: The basins would receive all runoff from the freeway but most of the heavy metal contaminants would make their way into the creek (and then Botany Bay) and in wet weather the basins wouldn't be able to contain a toxic spill from a road tanker.

Of course the EIS also says that water quality "...could be improved by the installation of permanent water quality

measures, such as gross pollutant traps, once freeway construction was completed", but then environmental im-

perfect statements are probably best thought of as an art form and nobody demands scientific consistency in art.



TOP: the cross section through Wolli Valley at Bardwell Park as it appeared in the EIS. The Bardwell Park shops, which stand at the top of the embankment on the left side of the rail line have been replaced by a road and open space, completing the impression of a broad, sparsely settled area!

RIGHT: the same diagram adjusted to show the correct width of the Valley.

What the subconsultant said...

TABLE III
CALCULATED L_{eq} VALUES FOR THE PERIOD 10 pm - 6 am

SITE	NIGHT-TIME L_{eq}	
	BEFORE CONTROL	AFTER CONTROL
H	60	53
N	56	53
CRITERION		55

What appeared

Table 6.11 Calculated L_{eq} values for the

Site	Before Control	After Control
H	53	53
N	53	53
Criterion		55 dB(A)

Source: Renzo Tonin and Associates 1989

The disappearing decibels

THE complex scientific data for an environmental impact statement is usually supplied by subconsultants who are specialists in disciplines which the EIS editor will usually have only a passing knowledge of—or may know nothing about at all.

In the case of this EIS however, some fascinating changes to data supplied by the subconsultants have mysteriously occurred. Take the case of the disappearing decibels.

The table on the left is from the subconsultant's report, the right hand table from the EIS. Both tables represent estima-

tions of noise levels at two sites in the Wolli Valley and give an estimation of the noise levels "before control" and "after control"—that is, without noise barriers on the freeway and with noise barriers.

You'll notice that the estimates for "before control" in the bottom version are both three dB(A) lower than in the table supplied by the subconsultant.

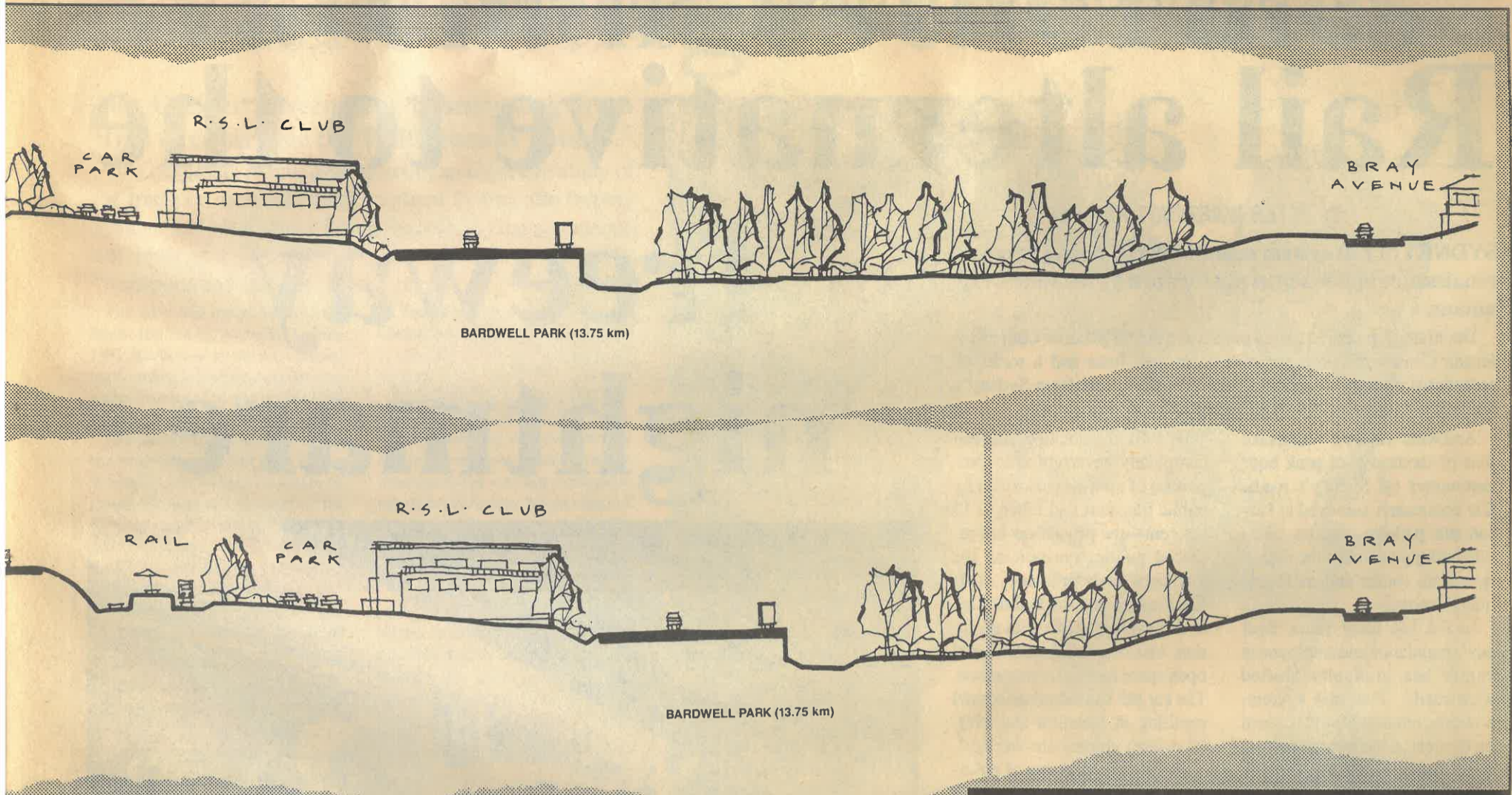
To understand why that might have "happened" you have to appreciate the importance of the 53 dB(A) figure given in both cases as the estimated noise at the two sites after noise control barriers

are in place.

The RTA's criterion for night-time noise levels is 55 dB(A) and the biggest and most elaborate noise screens the RTA are proposing to install anywhere on the freeway, barriers three and a half metres high, can only lower freeway noise by 6 dB(A).

But at site H (the northern end of Water Street, Bardwell Park) the subconsultant was optimistically estimating that noise barriers could lower night time noise by 7 dB(A). At site N (near the Shaw Avenue, Forest Road corner in Earlwood—more than 100 metres from the freeway) his

T STATEMENT FOR THE WOLLI CREEK SECTION OF THE F5 ...



n the EIS...

period 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Night-time Leq	
Before control	After cont.
57	53
53	53

s mystery

estimate for the lowering effect was 4 dB(A), which could only be met by installing a three metre barrier.

How convenient then, that three dB(A) disappeared from the table before it appeared in the EIS!

Incidentally, the Director of the Department specifically suggested that a map depicting anticipated noise contour levels should be included in the EIS but her suggestion was ignored. A noise contour map would have allowed residents to easily check what the estimated noise levels for their home were.

The strange case of the vanishing wildlife

The EIS Summary chapter—which is the bit most people read most carefully—says “A survey of the proposed freeway corridor located eight mammal, forty-nine bird, two frog and three reptile species. No native animals were recorded...” This is a breathtaking bit of misinformation. Of the 62 animals located by the study, 44 (or 71 percent) are in fact native!

But the problem doesn't stop there. The study was never intended by the subconsultants to be a comprehensive survey of wildlife in the area; a task which can only be undertaken over a number of years by dedicated naturalists.

For this reason the subconsultants included, for instance, a list of 22 reptiles and seven frogs “known from the study area” in their report. This list was the result of years of observation by naturalists.

So the EIS consultants evidently chose to ignore the long term evidence in favour of the number of species seen on a quick survey. If all the native animals which reputable naturalists have recently sighted in the Valley were included in the EIS, the percent-



A great egret, one of the protected species, photographed in the Wolli Valley in 1988

age of native animals present would rise to well over 90 percent of the species found. So much for the RTA's “...no native animals in Wolli Creek”!

Four of the eight species of bird protected by the Australia-Japan and the Australia-China migratory bird treaties have been recorded by competent observers since 1970, a fact reported by the subconsultants. But look what the RTA say in the EIS: “Species considered as having conservation importance, such as the migratory bird species protected by treaties between Australia and Japan and Australia and China... have not been seen in the area since 1970...”

The incredible expanding valley

One of the RTA's big problems with the freeway is the Bardwell Park area. Anybody who has stood on the Hartill-Law Avenue bridge knows that at this point the massive elevated structure of the freeway would completely dominate the narrow Wolli Valley.

A cross section of the Valley at Bardwell Park showing the freeway is provided in the EIS but an extra 30 metres has mysteriously appeared between the northern edge of the freeway and Bray Avenue! This makes the impact of the road appear less serious.

Freeways look better to EIS editors than they do to landscape planners

POOR blind Freddy could see that an elevated freeway would look awful in a narrow valley. The EIS consultants employed a reputable firm of landscape architects and planners to quantify the freeway's impact on the Valley with scientifically accepted methods.

For subzone 4c, Forsite Landscape Architects and Planners assessed the likely visual impact as “high” (which means something like “terrible” in normal language). The EIS changed this to “significant” (read “very ugly”).

In subzone 4e where the Forsite assessment was “very high” (read “bloody appalling”) the EIS substituted “high” (read “terrible”).

In our submission to the EIS we said “this whole matter has been most dishonestly dealt with by the statement”. What more could we say?

A solution to Sydney's transport tangle...

Rail alternative to the freeway nightmare

By PETER WARRINGTON

SYDNEY'S rail system could undergo a long overdue renaissance under a plan put forward by the state's rail unions.

The strategy, prepared for rail unions and the NSW Labor Council by Jacana Consulting, proposes two major new links and a series of operational changes designed to take people to and from Sydney's regional employment and shopping centres far more quickly.

And what's more it would take tens of thousands of peak hour commuters off Sydney's roads. Car commuters surveyed at Parramatta parking stations overwhelmingly endorsed the idea of new train routes and more frequent services.

In the last forty years, Sydney's population and employment centre has gradually shifted westwards. The rail system, however, remains firmly focussed on the central business district—most cross-regional trips involve interchange at Redfern or Central with substantial time penalties.

Under the strategy, two major new rail links would be constructed:

- **Hurstville to Punchbowl via Beverly Hills**—this would allow direct services from Sutherland and Hurstville via Bankstown to Parramatta and Blacktown.

- **Epping to Parramatta via Carlingford**—this would allow direct services from Hornsby and Epping to Parramatta, Liverpool and Campbelltown.

Parramatta station would undergo major renovations, making it the major interchange point for north-south and east-west services. This would help nurture its role as Sydney's second major employment centre.

The strategy also endorses existing plans for the Harris Park Y-link allowing direct Campbelltown-Parramatta services and a link between Kingsford-Smith Airport, the existing rail system and Badgery's Creek Airport (if built).

In addition, minor operational changes using existing lines could allow commuters more options and greater mobility by cross-regional routing of trains.

Decline of public transport

Up to the end of World War Two, Sydney's rail and tram systems were the major components of a well-balanced, efficient transport system.

In 1946-47, over two million daily trips were undertaken on rail and tram, compared with less than 400,000 by private car. With buses included, the proportion of all trips performed by public transport was 87 per cent. The other 13 per cent of trips were by car.

By 1981, the situation had been completely reversed! The proportion of all trips performed by public transport had fallen to 13 per cent—the private car has replaced public transport as the dominant mode in Sydney. This has resulted in a marked decline in our quality of life with pollution, loss of urban bushland and open space for road construction. The car has caused urban sprawl resulting in isolation and ever-increasing journeys-to-work.

Despite the clap-trap of politicians, this is not a reflection of "choice"—they stuffed it up!

So what went wrong?

The decline in public transport over the last forty years corresponds with the dominance of the Department of Main Roads (DMR) and its successor the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). The road planners have monopolised all transport planning, at the expense of cheap, efficient and environmentally sound public transport.

The following quote from the DMR's self-commissioned history, *Bulldozer*, shows the arrogant tactics adopted by this body:

"Without disclosing why, the Department has to obtain by resumption and purchase the ribbons where it will build..."

The DMR prepared its "Main Road Development Plan" in 1946. Despite the overwhelming dominance of public transport at the time, most of the DMR's plan was incorporated into Sydney's first statutory metropolitan plan, the 1951 County of Cumberland Scheme.

Even at that time there was overwhelming evidence that the DMR plan could never adequately cater for transport demands. The few independent transport inquiries undertaken since that time have confirmed this fact. But the DMR's discredited road plan has survived virtually intact—it still forms the basis for Sydney's transport planning.

While the bureaucrats were planning almost exclusively for roads, public transport received little funding and was allowed to run down:

- **Trams** were phased out from 1948-61, on the advice of British



• **Parramatta Station: it would be the hub of a revitalised western suburbs rail network under the plan put forward by the NSW Labor Council.**

Post-war decline of public transport

Annual passenger trips in the Sydney region 1946-81

Year	Trips per private vehicle	Proportion of all trips by private vehicle (%)	Public transport trips (in millions)
1946-7	780	13	850
1960	1000	47	586
1971	1220	72	571
1981	2381	87	457

and American consultants—it is no coincidence that cities in these countries are as sprawling and inefficient as Sydney. Most European nations, including those in the Soviet bloc such as Moscow, Prague and Budapest, retained and improved their tram networks, resulting in more pleasant and energy efficient cities. Even Melbourne managed to hang on to its trams—just this month, an international panel ranked it the equal-most pleasant city in the world!

- **Government bus services** were expanded to fill the void left by the trams. However, busses have to compete with private cars for road space. Two-thirds of Sydney is still served by private bus services of variable standards,

many running infrequently and virtually none offering multi-modal tickets such as *Travelpass*. • **Train services** were allowed to deteriorate, with patronage falling drastically under the Askin Liberal government. The election of the Wran Labor government saw some recovery in rail patronage, due to cheaper fares, new trains and positive marketing.

Road spending has escalated, fuelling urban sprawl and adding to problems caused by the low-density policies of councils and land developers. Sydney has become a chaotic city, with congestion, chronic pollution problems and very high energy consumption. Recent studies indicate that Sydney's petrol consumption per person is twice as high as it is in

the average European city with an excellent public transport system.

Rail is the solution

Our rail system is virtually unchanged since the 1930s. There have been two minor additions in the last 15 years—the Eastern Suburbs Railway, completed in 1979 and the extension of the East Hills line to Glenfield, in 1987.

Both these projects have been successful beyond the planners' wildest dreams.

Patronage on the Eastern Suburbs Railway is up to 18 per cent above estimates and continues to rise, despite static population levels. Patronage on the Glenfield extension has increased by 47 per cent since the line was opened.

These figures prove that commuters will use rail systems that are swift, comfortable and efficient. Obviously, rail needs to again become the focus of transport planning if Sydney's quality of life and energy consumption are to improve.

The authors of the rail unions' plan, Jacana Consulting, estimate that the Hurstville-Punchbowl link would carry 16,000 commuters between the southern and

The view from the bulldozer

FREEWAYS are my business. You name it and I know it. Bulldozers, concrete, cut and fill, hotmix, fuel consumption. You could name the people who know more about freeways than me on the fingers of one badly mutilated hand. I guess that's the reason the greenie freaks who put out this newsletter have asked me to comment on the the freeway issue as it stands at the moment.

Why did I agree to do it? Well frankly, because I love this country and I can't stand what the pointy-headed academics and fuzzy-minded greenies are doing to it. Look, there was a time when you could drive anywhere in this country. In 1968 I drove my F100 right to the summit of Mt Kosciusko. I went there on behalf of the department to look into putting four lanes all the way to the summit... and a carpark for 200 with a turning circle for buses. Now they want people to walk.

Walk! Listen did walking ever make this nation great? No you're bloody well right it didn't. I was talking to Geoff Blainey mid-week and he pointed out that it's a fact that the country never really got on its feet until it sat down in the FJ Holden. I'd go further and say that the real birth of the nation was in 1966 when the first of the V8 Interceptors rolled off the production line.

Frankly the F5 should have been completed in 1988 and I blame the Department—or the Authority, or whatever we've called it now.

You can see everything that's wrong with the department if you look at the gormless yuppies in our Environmental Section. Just for a start a road building department has no business having an Environmental Section meddling in what should be an automatic decision to build a new road whenever you can't achieve an average speed of 89.7 kph in the direction of the peak traffic flow without breaking the law.

The Environmental Section are always jabbering on about planting trees and shrubs along the edge of the road. They claim this makes it look *acceptable* but it actually makes things worse. Go for a burn out along the F4 and you'll see what I mean. There's rubbish two foot deep on the ground under all the trees and shrubs which is impossible to get rid of unless you do it on foot. In the old days we just waited 'till it built up to an economic level—say about four and a half foot—then we shredded it with the mower, ran the D9 'dozer along the verge and dumped the lot in the trucks. Sold it for landfill and the money went in the blokes' Christmas party fund.

As for grass... well don't talk to me about grass. Planting grass leads to vastly increased fuel consumption. I ran a test on this a couple of years ago and it's a dead-set fact that grass causes drag on the mower blades. We reckoned we could mow a hectare of concrete in half the time it took to mow a hectare of grass and with only 0.34 percent of the fuel consumption.

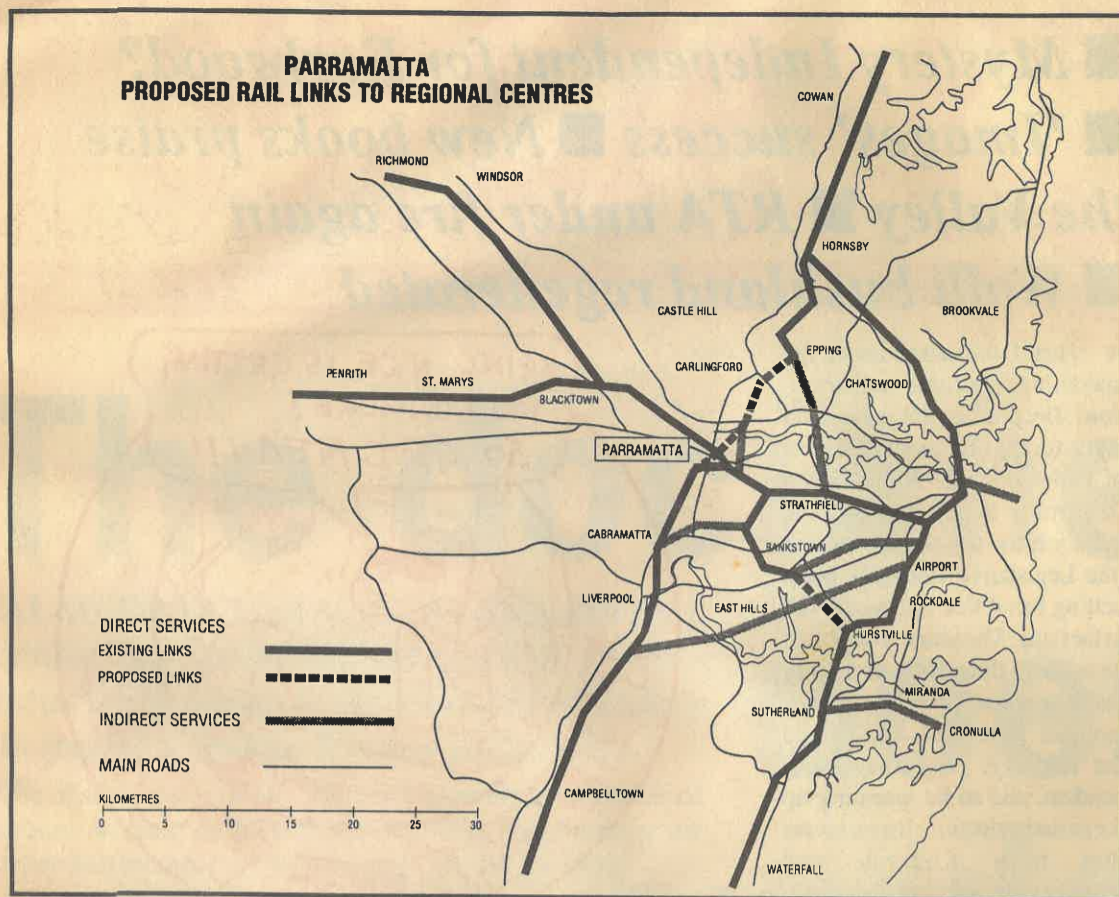
That's one reason these elevated freeways are a real advance—they solve the waste disposal problem altogether, particularly since they almost always run on top of a creek or stormwater drain or something. Big Braddie Rassmussen—from Engineering—and I, ran a few tests out along the F4 last week. Bottles are no problem at all and with aluminium cans you have to scrunch them up to improve the mass-to-surface-area ratio. With Big Mac styrofoam boxes you can slow down to, say, 90 and pull into the left-hand lane, but they throw better if you wrap them round a bottle. Sure, there was an ugly scene with a yuppie who reckoned the bottle went through the soft top of his BMW as he was pulling out of the Polaris Auto Spa under the freeway at Harris Park but Legal squared it up with him.

The whole problem is that the Department has become concerned about its *image*. The PR wimps in Environmental are putting it about that roads ought to look *sensitive*. Who are they fooling? Listen, some of these PR people have obviously never been near a freeway. Take it from me—the moment you start trying to please the pinkos and mentally diseased environmentalist pansies you might as well go belly-up straight away. Young Dave from Accident Statistics started listening to their garbage about *traffic calming* and *public transport* and the next thing we knew he was walking to the damn station and catching the train to work, worrying about air pollution and *shaving his legs in the shower*...

Frankly, the whole subject is ugly and depressing. We are witnessing the passing a vital part of our heritage... the end of a way of life where a man could pick up a six-pack and a big bucket of chicken from the Colonel's and just go for a burn out to Penrith and back on a nice summer evening. Our society will be the poorer for it...



Chief Roads Development Engineer KEN WORTH argues that freeways are a vital part of our heritage...



western suburbs in the morning peak period.

This link, costing \$217 million, would be in a tunnel under King Georges Road and could drastically reduce road congestion in the region.

Compare the positive thrust of this proposal with the destructive F5 Freeway, estimated to cost in excess of \$500 million. The F5 would deal a massive blow to quality of life without any improvement in traffic conditions.

The proposed Epping-Parramatta rail link, costing \$358 million, would carry up to 12,500 commuters between the northern and southern suburbs in the morning peak. This again would ease congestion and obviate the need for planned major road construction.

Sydney faces a series of interconnected environmental crises in the next decade.

• A recent CSIRO report found

that Sydney's air quality is appalling and will worsen to critical levels if proposed freeway and industrial developments occur.

• The cost of providing essential services to the sprawling city created by our planners' bias towards road transport is exorbitant. Services inner Sydney residents take for granted; like cheap, efficient public transport and adequate social and recreational facilities will never be built in the outer suburbs unless freeway spending is redirected to public transport and regional development.

• Our few remaining pockets of vital urban bushland and open space are threatened by outdated freeway proposals.

The Wolli Creek Preservation Society believes the rail unions' plan is a major step towards solving these problems and improving our quality of life.

What can I do?

• Write to the Premier, Mr Greiner (Parliament House, Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000), and demand he abandon the freeway nightmare in favour of the rail solution. Please keep a copy of your letter and forward it to The Wolli Creek Preservation Society, PO Box 270, Earlwood, NSW 2206.

• Copies of a brochure outlining the rail plan are available from the the Preservation Society (phone 559 1269). The full report is available from the Australian Railways Union (phone 267 6116). The unions are seeking written comments from the public and would make speakers available to discuss the plan at meetings of your organisation.

Subscribe to...

URBAN ACTION

The first newsletter of urban environmental activism for Sydney and environs.

- updates on campaigns from Newcastle to the Illawarra
- info, ideas, useful resources, reviews
- an overview of Sydney's environmental problems.

Yes, I would like to become a *Friend of the Coalition* and receive a subscription to *URBAN ACTION*.

Yes, our organisation would like to become a *member of the Urban Environment Coalition* and receive a subscription to *URBAN ACTION*.

I enclose \$(see list of fees below)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Organisation (if relevant): _____

Contact name (if relevant): _____ Contact phone number (if relevant): _____

Publishable address/phone (if relevant): _____

List of Fees: Institutions: \$100 Funded community groups: \$30 Community Groups: \$20 Friend of the coalition \$15 (\$5 conc.)

Post to: Urban Environment Coalition 73 Garden Street, Alexandria NSW 2015





• The view from Nannygoat Hill

Why is Wolli Creek Valley important?

• The Wolli Valley is the last remnant of natural environment in inner south-west Sydney - the only piece of local bushland left for over half a million residents of this environmentally threatened region

• The Valley is accessible to areas of Sydney that are starved of open space. The surrounding suburbs have amongst the worst open-space -to-residents-ratios in Sydney.

• The Valley has an outstanding array of natural environments: mangroves, heaths, eucalypt forest and extensive wetlands. It even has a pocket of coachwood-watergum rainforest.

• Wolli Creek is the only stream left in the vast Cooks River catchment that retains its natural vegetation.

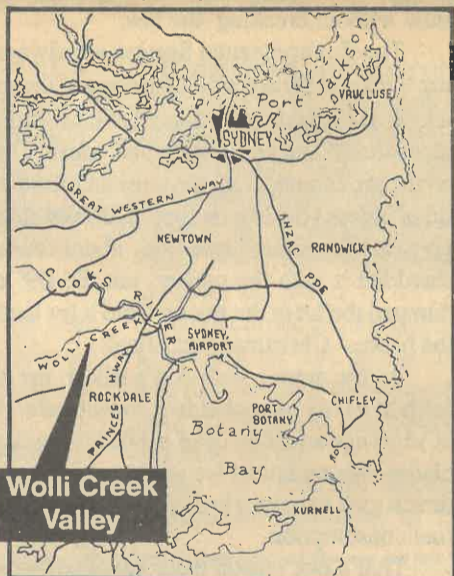
• The Wolli Valley is of great importance to the Koories of Sydney. Wolli means "camping place" in the local Aboriginal dialect. The Valley is the site of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation.

• The Valley is the only major field resource for environmental education in the inner southern suburbs.

• Over 160 species of birds have been recorded as inhabiting the Valley's bush and wetlands. Some of these are migratory species that travel from as far away as Japan, and Siberia.

The 1980 Kyeemagh-Chullora Road Inquiry recommended:

"...the release of that section of [freeway] corridor between the Princes Highway, Tempe and the King Georges Road Beverly Hills...the land must be returned to the public as open space. On no account (either now or in the future) should it be used for residential, commercial or industrial development."

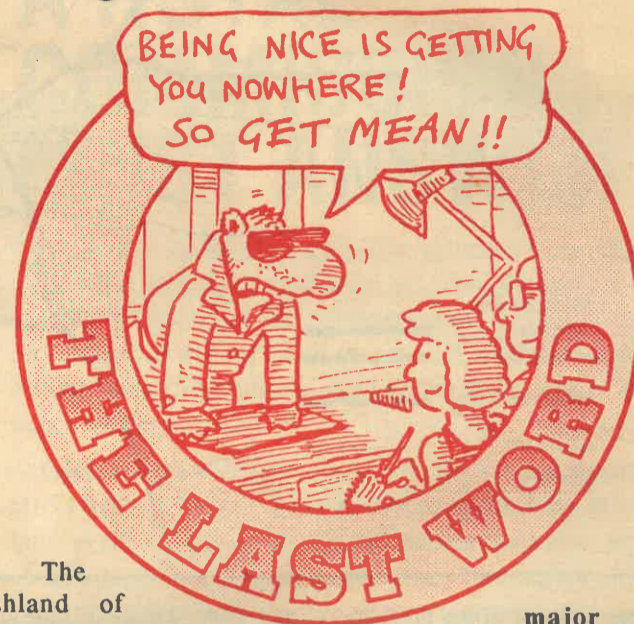


- *Mystery Independent for Earlwood?*
- *'Images' success* ■ *New books praise the Valley* ■ *RTA under fire again*
- *Wolli bushland regenerated*

☛ Heard the latest about the upcoming electoral redistribution? Despite all the early mail being for the abolition of the seat of Earlwood and for Phil White (remember him?) to go to that great job-for-the-boys in the sky (the Legislative Council), latest betting has it that Earlwood will in fact stay. The scene would then be set for a ding-dong three-way battle between Phil White, former member Ken Gabb (ALP) and the mystery, pro-valley independent said to be warming up for an early election. It now seems that both Kogarah and Marrickville will get the bullet instead, causing much factional strife in the ALP as Messrs Langton (ALP Transport spokesperson) and Refshauge (Deputy Opposition Leader) seek new quarters. Watch this one closely!

☛ Wasn't it great to see such a wonderful response to the Preservation Society's photographic competition "Images of Wolli Creek"? We were inundated with entries and offers of sponsorship. Judging was by Graham Ross of 2GB and environmental photographer Phillip Quirk of Wildlight Photographic Agency. Yet another example of the valley's wonderful potential for community activities. If only the RTA could adjust their focus!

☛ More bouquets for the Preservation Society. Author Graham Spindler is set to release the next volume of his *Walking Sydney* series in the new year. Wolli Creek gets a great write-up, with Graham referring to the role of the Preservation Society in this "battle zone". Get set for even more Sydneysiders coming to investigate this precious remnant of urban bushland. Attempts are underway to pre-purchase a copy for Mr Greiner's Christmas stocking.



☛ The bushland of Wolli Creek gets another write-up in the wonderful *Taken for granted*. This book, outlining the necessity to preserve Sydney's remaining bush, has just been released by the Royal Botanic Gardens. As well as an analysis of the vegetation of the valley itself, the lack of bushland on a regional level is fully documented. No prizes for guessing one of the key recommendations—yes, you guessed it: the preservation and enhancement of the Wolli Valley and its protection from the F5.

☛ How satisfying to see the RTA cop a rap over the knuckles in the report of the Castlereagh Freeway (F2) Commission of Inquiry. Commissioner John Woodward was scathing in his criticism of the RTA's impact statement for the F2. He referred to "significant gaps" in the RTA's information and found no evidence to support the RTA's justification for the road. He also repudiated the RTA's cost-benefit analysis, finding that it overstated freeway benefits and understated costs.

☛ As of going to press, the RTA are also under fire over their EIS for the proposed Woronora River bridge. The

major residents' group, the Greater Menai Roads Action Group, has called the EIS "illegal". Even Brian Langton has joined the fray, referring to this EIS and those for the F5 and F2 as "farces". The Royal Commission into the RTA can't be too far away...

☛ If you've taken a walk through the valley lately you would have noticed that large areas of weeds like Lantana and Tradescantia have been rooted out and carried away. You can thank the hardworking bush regeneration team trained by the National Trust. They've also planted hundreds of native shrubs and trees to restore these degraded areas to their former glory!...GKZ

How to contact the Wolli Creek Preservation Society...

Phone 559.1269
(Danny or Neil Rankin)
or write to PO Box 270
Earlwood NSW 2206

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

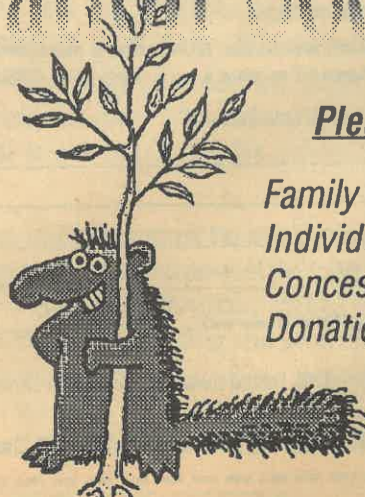
Yes, I would like to join the Wolli Creek Preservation Society

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

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



Please tick

Family \$7

Individual \$5

Concession \$2

Donation \$