



# Newsletter June 2009

## Draft Local Environmental Plan

The LEP with its accompanying maps has been a long time coming but hopefully will be worth the wait. There are many good features, for example, important areas for biodiversity and habitat corridors are shown overlain on property boundaries. Hazardous areas such as those that are likely to be flooded or inundated with sea water or that may have acid sulphate soils are also mapped. The Environment E2 zoning of some private land should constrain unsuitable development. Development standards such as height and floor space ratio are now in the LEP where they should be given more weight when applications are assessed.

Your committee is urging everyone to have a look at the Draft LEP and maps. They are on Council's website (if you have fast Broadband) [www.esc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au) and on display at Council and local libraries until 12<sup>th</sup> June. Council has set up a LEP hotline on 4474 7486 to answer questions.

We'd love to have your feedback. In particular look at the draft zoning map for your neighbourhood and the permitted land uses in the LEP document. Please let us know if there is land in your locality that you think is incorrectly zoned and why. We need to hear from you as soon as possible so that we can include your comments in our submission.

## ESC Management Plan For 2009

No one wants a rate rise but Council managers have threatened to target environment programs such as estuary management, environmental protection and noxious weed control for large cuts in their budgets unless some rise above the pegged limit is granted by the Department of Local Government. Coastwatchers will be urging Council to stop cost-shifting -- basic services like sewerage and water should be paid for from the General Rates instead of being partly funded by the Environment Levy.

Comments should be sent to The General Manager, Draft Management Plan, PO Box 99, Moruya 2537 or email [council@eurocoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@eurocoast.nsw.gov.au) by Monday 1 June.

### QUARTERLY MEETING

Saturday 13 June 2009 at 2pm  
Tomakin Community Hall

**Please note our meeting is one week later than usual as we have not had very good attendances on long weekends in past years.**

**GUEST SPEAKER - Guest Speaker – David Seymour** will give us his thoughts on the Draft Local Environmental Plan. David was the Senior Strategic Planner with Council, specialising in the economics of development. He assisted the team in drafting the LEP and related policies and has only recently left to set up a private consultancy.

He says this LEP is the first principal local planning instrument that includes such environmental concerns as biodiversity, climate change and flooding and should have a lot more teeth than previous instruments. Don't miss this great opportunity to find out more about this very important planning document that will greatly influence the quality of our Shire's future environment and development.

## Minister To Decide On Eden Wood- Fired Power Station

*By Sheila Monahan*

NSW Planning Minister Kristina Keneally has taken over approval of this proposal under Part 3A of the State Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Since Premier Rees has announced that all Part 3A proposals will be fast tracked the opportunity for scrutiny of the proposal by both the State Government and the public may be shortened.

Details of the wood fired power station application to NSW Planning Minister are now available on the Department of Planning website: [http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=2914](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=2914)

The Department says that “... the proponent must submit a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) which will be reviewed for adequacy. After the EA has been accepted, it is then to be made publicly available (advertised in the local paper and on the Department's website) for a period of at least 30 days during which any person (including a public authority) may make a written submission to the Director-General concerning the proposal.”

The establishment of a similar power station in Eurobodalla has not been ruled out and it is important that Coastwatchers members write submissions relating to the devastation of native forests, greenhouse impacts of the plant, local air quality and the loss of sustainable jobs in tourism and genuine clean energy.

## Coastwatchers Members Support Senator Bob Brown Events

By Sheila Monahan

Many members were among the more than 1000 people who visited the photographic exhibition entitled “Bob Brown’s Tasmania” which ran from 14 March to 5 April 2009.

Visitors were delighted to see the stunning photographs of the flora, fauna and wild places of Tasmania, many of which are now under threat.



Welcome to Country from Lionel Mongta



Bob The Auctioneer

Coastwatchers members also joined the more than three hundred people who saw Laura Tingle, chief political correspondent with the Australian Financial Review, in conversation with Senator Brown at Bodalla Public School on 15 March 2009.

The audience relished the opportunity to become acquainted with the less well known side of the prominent senator, conservationist and humanitarian. They learned how his love of nature has guided the prominent senator’s life in politics and inspired his photography



In conversation with Laura Tingle

## Moruya High School Creek Rehabilitation Project

By Keith Joliffe

Moruya High School has an ongoing Student Environment Group comprising 24 Years 7 to 10 students who conduct various projects ranging from cleanups of the Moruya North Head precinct, to conducting information days on photovoltaic equipment, and monitoring power consumption by the school.

The Student Environment Group has applied to Coastwatchers’ Environment Fund for funding for a creek rehabilitation project.

The students wish to align a new security fence (funded by the NSW Department of Education) so that it will enclose a tributary of the Moruya River which runs inside the Western edge of the school property. The purpose is to rehabilitate the degraded creek by enhancing pondage, repairing erosion, planting suitable native reeds, grasses, trees and shrubs, and encouraging the return of native fauna, especially small water creatures and birds. The location will be used as an environmental learning and community asset while it is being prepared, and in the longer term.

Coastwatchers personnel have discussed the proposal with the supervising Deputy Principal and have participated in a site visit with student representatives to obtain information and give preliminary advice on project design.

A collaborative resource model is being pursued, whereby Eurobodalla Shire Council supplies granite for the proposed low wall, plus some plants in conjunction with the Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens at no cost, while Coastwatchers shares the remaining costs (labour and materials) with the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

Although Council's Environment Education Officer has been appraised of the project by email, the students will be expected to approach Council formally. Coastwatchers President Mark Fleming has opened discussion with the CMA.

Coastwatchers Management Committee sees advantages in the project from several viewpoints, including the direct environmental advantages, the involvement of youth in project design and management, the provision of a long term accessible educational resource, and the engagement of several agencies in collaborative action.



Coastwatchers, Students and Deputy, Inspect the Site

## The Dreaded Mynah

An Opinion Piece By Keith Joliffe



As an ex-Canberra "Westie", I have first hand knowledge of how devastating the arrival of Indian Mynahs can be, and was very disturbed to see healthy ones around Tuross and beside the Princes Highway near Bergalia recently.

Once Indian Mynahs get a foothold, hollow-nesting native birds are in serious trouble. Indian Mynahs love suburbs and semi-wooded farmland, they evict native species from their nesting hollows, and they infest hollows with lice and disease making them uninhabitable for other birds later. My impression is there is no complete eradication method. These are tough, omnivorous (eg they eat dog pellets - a readily accessible meal), fast, people-shy birds. They are known variously as "rats with wings" and "the cane toads of the air", for example.

During my time in Canberra, a pilot volunteer trapping effort organised by local government was undertaken, but I felt the Indian Mynah population had not been controlled and they had become a dominant species by the year 2000, beginning from a family of about 6 deliberately imported from Melbourne in 1972 it's said. Since then, I understand a strong volunteer trapping program has removed some 70,000 from the ACT. I'm happy that this is so, but on a recent visit to my family's Canberra home I noticed two Indian Mynahs fly into the back yard and perch on a tree, indicating the importance of sustained, intensive control efforts. Only days later I had the same experience when visiting Councillor Graham Scobie in Moruya. We noticed two Indian Mynahs perched on a telegraph pole behind Councillor Scobie's house (the first he had seen there), confirming my suspicion that Moruya is already strongly infested.

I followed up in Tuross by contacting Council rangers and, thanks to Coastwatchers Vice President Sheila Monahan, Tuross' own Indian Mynah activist Peter Christie. Peter has built and refined effective traps and has prepared a comprehensive report on his Tuross work. On 13th May, Peter participated in a Southern NSW Regional Indian Myna (both spellings are acceptable) Conference on best practice control methods, also attended by Eurobodalla Shire Council, whose direct contact is Courtney Fink-Downes. One of the most contentious issues is finding a humane method of despatching large numbers of captured birds, eg through gassing. I'm impatient about conferences and debate, because I think we need to act instantly. I think so far the best control method is for gangs of local volunteers to try and save semi-isolated native bird havens like Tuross, using the controversial trap-and-wring-necks (officially called "cervical dislocation") technique.

I have offered to help Peter, who is hoping Council will coordinate a volunteer trapping effort. For Tuross, we think about six traps continuously operating would be enough. We are prepared to build the traps but will need a few extra volunteers to operate them. The traps cost about \$30 each to construct or \$50 bought ready made from Canberra. We are contemplating asking Coastwatchers for financial help.

Anyone else interested in the Indian Mynah issue, and in doing something small-scale and practical, should look at the following links: [www.indianmyna.org](http://www.indianmyna.org) and [www.indianmynaaction.org.au](http://www.indianmynaaction.org.au) where you will find things like trap designs and references to the relevant legislation on cruelty to animals and the animal welfare protocol, which must be observed. Please contact Keith Joliffe (0427 546 156, or 4473 8519) if you are willing to join a Tuross volunteer trapping project.

PS If you know of Indian Mynahs in other parts of Eurobodalla Shire please contact Council's Courtney Fink-Downes Ph 4474 7442.

## Important Recommendation on the EPBC Act

By Sheila Monahan

The Senate Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts recently released a second report on the operation of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. This report focuses on Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs).

The committee notes that the Minister for Environment has formally asked the Independent Review of the EPBC Act to consider the findings and recommendations of this inquiry. Drawing heavily on the Wielangta case, the Committee recommends proposals for reform that would ensure that RFAs, in respect of matters within the scope of Part 3 of the EPBC Act, deliver environmental protection outcomes, appeal rights, and enforcement mechanisms no weaker than if the EPBC Act directly applied.

The onus is now on the EPBC Review to recommend reforms – a crucial responsibility. The Review is due to report in October 2009 with an interim report in mid-2009.

Read the Senate Environment Committee report at: [http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/eca\\_ctte/epbc\\_act/final\\_report/report.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/eca_ctte/epbc_act/final_report/report.pdf)

More information on the Independent Review of the EPBC Act: <http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/review/index.html>

## \$14 Million Loss is Just the Tip of the Iceberg at Forests NSW

By Mike Thompson

Forests NSW lost \$14.4 million in just this last year, according to the NSW Auditor General. For two consecutive years the NSW Government's own independent Auditor's report has had to qualify Forests NSW's annual accounts because he did not trust their figures "related to the valuation of biological assets". Native forest valuation remains the key problem, and the Auditor recommended

they continue to improve current methods. Forests NSW has valued the 2 million hectares of native forests they manage on our behalf at \$333 million.

The 2009 Audit Report continues with a timely warning: "The Productivity Commission's Financial Performance of Government Trading Enterprises" said that in 2007, along with three other States, "Forests NSW are not operating on a commercially viable basis".

Community groups have been promised a transparent review of NSW Regional Forest Agreements to be completed before the end of 2009, but we remain concerned because the terms of reference for this NSW Review have still not been released. Again in 2009, the Auditor has had to remind Forests NSW of "some areas of non compliance with RFA milestones".

"Compliance with Regional Forest Agreements" is a major heading in the Auditor General's 2009 Report, in which he reminds us that the RFA's "intentions include:

*reducing uncertainty in the forest industry and avoiding duplication of government processes for land use decision making*

*providing longterm solutions that meet the requirements of government, the community and industry, while also being consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development*

*the equitable balance of competing objectives and coordinating the policies and activities of government."*

The value of carbon credits is a concern expressed by the Auditor. Forests NSW manages our native forests, and we now want to see NSW profit from the recent Bali Action Plan which we hope will lead to a final agreement on Climate Change in Copenhagen this December. Part of that post-Kyoto deal will include REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) which could provide a new carbon credit opportunity for the NSW Treasury - in return for Forests NSW kicking their wasteful wood-chipping dependency habit.

Information gleaned by Coastwatchers to-date suggests this year's loss of \$14 million is just the tip of the iceberg at Forests NSW in terms of the real costs being borne by NSW taxpayers and ratepayers – let alone future generations and our beautiful South Coast environment.

## Forest News in Brief

By Sheila Monahan

### Forestry productivity falling in South Coast/Southern Region

Forests NSW figures from 98/99 to 06/07 for this region (which covers around 200,000 hectares) show that forest productivity per hectare has fallen substantially:

- the area being logged has increased significantly but the output of large saw logs has remained relatively constant
- in contrast the volume of pulp produced has increased by 68% since 04/05
- the time period for the cutting cycle has fallen to less than 20 years

This is in contrast to the comment made on 29 May 2007 by the NSW Minister for Primary Industries that woodchipping is the thinning of a forest to improve productivity.

The March 2009 IFOA report reveals that there are currently 15 different compartments being logged in the area, totaling 3071 hectares. Compartment 186 of Mogo SF is undergoing the Australian Group Selection (AGS) treatment which in effect leads to mini clear fells dotted through the compartment. This style of logging is quite new to the coastal zone but it is expected to become the norm as supplies for the chipper dwindle.

The future looks no less grim for the region. Twenty compartments are reported as pending for future disturbance, totaling over 2900 hectares. They are all slated to be underway in the next 12 months.



Buckenbowra March 2009

### Woodchipping affected by recession

Over Easter the Eden chipmill closed for almost 3 weeks, longer than a national shutdown of 10 days at the same time. There have also been reports of ships leaving Eden empty or loaded with pine chips; cancellation of 6 ship loads of chips;

and a large decrease in truck activity to the mill. Conservationists also expect calls for lower woodchip royalty prices as the 20 year Eden Wood Supply Agreement comes up for renewal in September. This would be in spite of the fact that in real terms, prices are now about half what they were 15 years ago. Governments should seize this opportunity to restructure the industry out of native forests and into plantations. Most workers have skills that are readily transferable to other forestry sectors, such as plantations or other industries altogether.

**Native forest wood now renewable Energy**

On 30 April 2009 the Council of Australian Governments approved the expanded Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) which allows burning certain types of native forest wood “waste” as eligible renewable energy. [http://www.coag.gov.au/coag\\_meeting\\_outcomes/2009-04-30/docs/Renewable\\_Energy\\_Target\\_Scheme.pdf](http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2009-04-30/docs/Renewable_Energy_Target_Scheme.pdf)

.....



**Talking to polities** - In March Coastwatchers’ made presentations to Minister MacDonald and some cabinet members re the carbon storage potential of native forests versus logging for woodchips.

**East Moruya retirement village** – Coastwatchers was very disappointed with Councillors’ support for this non-complying proposal. However, we were pleased that Planning Minister Keneally subsequently approved the concept but refused the Development Application. She agreed with us that transport links to the town are inadequate, Moruya cannot currently cope with the health needs of the residents, and the height, bulk and scale of some buildings are inappropriate. Negotiations between the Minister and the proponents are continuing.

**Council’s proposed Estuary Management Advisory Committee** - Coastwatchers nominated a representative and alternate for this committee but remain concerned that conservation and Landcare will only have one representative each, and that a representative from each of the previous estuary management committees may not get on the new body.

**Weak state sea level rise policy** - Coastwatchers made a submission on the state government’s recently released policy on coastal development in hazard prone areas. It makes sensible predictions about climate change and sea level rise but has no enforceable development controls.

**Federal Inquiry on Climate Change Impacts in the Coastal Zone** – Following on our earlier submission to this inquiry we are hoping to get a hearing when the Inquiry meets in Canberra.

**Boat launching at Long Beach**

Coastwatchers wrote to Council on behalf of members concerned about the launching of boats over the sand dunes at the eastern end of Bay Road, Long Beach. Council’s response confirmed that bollards would be installed on either side of the track to the beach preventing vehicles from driving over the dunes or parking on the Council reserve. However, it seems that Council will still allow 4x4 vehicles to drive onto the beach to launch an assortment of craft, despite residents’ concern about the safety of other beach users, especially over the summer months when the beach is crowded with holidaymakers. Who would be liable in the event of a casualty?

**Sandy Place inaction** – Last year Coastwatchers asked Council to delay development on land adjacent to the eroding culvert which drains Reed Swamp to the beach at Sandy Place, Long Beach. The development was approved and the building is well underway without explanation of who is responsible for reinforcement of the culvert, despite our requests for information.

**Goodbye to Wharf Road development?**

After years of objecting to proposed developments on the hazard prone land at Wharf Rd, Batemans Bay, it seems Coastwatchers may have had a win. Council adopted the Coastal Hazard Assessment and Hazard Management Plan for the area which will block development of the waterfront and under-water “land”. Council’s development group manager, Lindsay Usher, successfully proposed council should rezone the land and investigate voluntary resumption. The Draft LEP has the part of the land that is above high tide level zoned E2 Environmental Conservation, which only allows environmental protection works or environmental facilities, while the submerged part is not zoned.



Part of the Hazardous Land at Wharf Rd

**Container deposit legislation and E-waste**

Coastwatchers supported the campaign by peak environment groups to have national container deposit legislation and a national scheme for the recycling and reuse of electronic waste (computers, mobile phones, etc). Unfortunately the state and federal governments have opted to put off a decision.