



### INTRODUCTION

As the environmental battle ebbs and flows, TEC presses on. The last year has seen an intensification of public concern about climate change; a counter attack by some industry wishing to avoid responsibility for waste; rural land clearing laws being tested in their first year of operation; a new focus on urban land clearing; and finally release of Sydney's Metro Strategy. NSW saw the resignation of Premier Bob Carr and environmental groups had to reconnect to a new administration, under Morris Iemma. Federally the Howard Government continued to evade effective climate change policies, instead preferring nuclear power and geosequestration to support more coal fired generation.

### CAMPAIGNS

#### Natural Environment

- » **Coastal strategies have been in the process of completion and at the time of writing the Lower Hunter plan had just been released.** It was a mixed bag with over 20,000ha of public land made new park; and through a series of deals with big developers, some 12,000ha of private land will be handed over to conservation. On the other hand the Strategy adds another 4,500ha of bushland to urban development further increasing existing clearing threats; and the extra greenfield sites will mean more car based development. As part of its work with over 160 groups along the coast, TEC employed 3 coastal planners to help prepare submissions to the draft strategies, including a consolidated report opposing a dozen sensitive south coast sites, that if developed would represent a massive assault on the coastline.
- » **Land clearing laws in NSW were activated at the end of 2005.** The major gap was a compliance policy and it was only some months later that the Minister and Department promulgated one. To date the laws have significantly limited broadscale clearing of remnant vegetation and many millions of dollars have been disbursed to farmers for environmental restoration works. TEC has undertaken workshops with environment groups about the new laws and also visited a number of farms to inspect clearing and restoration proposals.
- » **A new way to merge urban development with biodiversity protection was proposed by the government – biobanking.** TEC has called for an end to urban land clearing and for this to drive the new system. However, the Government's plan not only seeks to allow such clearing with some offsets (and a capacity for developers to opt out of the process entirely), but also creates different rules to those applying to farmers.

#### Climate change

- » **The majority of our climate change work is with the electricity sector, the largest and fastest growing emitter (our campaign on public transport also plays a role).** We completed the NSW Energy Plan and are pressing for a mandatory state renewables target. TEC has also been the leader in lobbying for energy conservation programs. Interestingly the review of a national emissions trading scheme found that its 'price shock' would be much alleviated by energy conservation. The new Premier of NSW sought to lay claim to green credentials with release of the NSW Greenhouse Plan.
- » **The National Electricity Market (NEM) continues to be a focus.** It's not a sexy issue but is fundamental to the energy mix delivered to Australians. It has barriers to renewables and energy conservation. We have made submissions on reform of the NEM and are campaigning for the inclusion of an environmental objective to broaden its current narrow approach.
- » **TEC has also been at the forefront of the emissions trading (ET) debate.** Some in the community believe that we don't need such a mechanism. However we firmly believe in the need to reform the economy and a price signal under the regime of an emissions cap is the best way. How else can we mobilise widespread capital and business interest in embracing reduced carbon inputs? Importantly the debate about ET brings sharp focus to transition for carbon-intensive sectors. If we don't bring them out into the open; make them accountable and find solutions, they will continue to work against significantly reduced emissions solely behind closed doors. On a bright note the work of the states' taskforce on ET has continued and it poses a major challenge to the Howard Government which continues to rely on the discredited ABARE report on economic impacts to counter a price on carbon.
- » **The pioneering NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme is under review.** Initially major improvements were to be canvassed but now only minimalist changes are being proposed. As a result absolute emissions will increase rapidly. This is unacceptable and TEC is lobbying for a tougher target that will drive investment in new green industry.
- » **TEC is managing a national review of Green Power Schemes, as a public information service to consumers who don't want to be ripped off by products that don't increase the amount of renewable generation.** To date, some products have simply re-badged existing generation such as old hydro, to suggest it is new and making a difference, when in fact it is power all of us have already been using. Only new green generation is worth paying the price.

#### Urban Sustainability

- » **The Sydney Metro Strategy was released at the end of 2005.** TEC was successful in its work with the inclusion of specific sustainability targets. Then the government decided to reduce the proposed green belts. In compensation it imposed a levy on development that would raise some \$500m over 30 years for acquisition of land for parks in and around the new growth zones. Our work with the 'metro alliance' of stakeholders resulted in a report card and the group continues to monitor implementation. We continue to strongly urge new public transport, including light rail emanating from the CBD and quicker building of new rail lines to the north-west.



- » **The government continued to amend planning and environmental assessment laws at the behest of developers.** The community now has far less influence on major state projects or developments government agrees to remove from local council purview. TEC had to work hard to obtain amendments to the LEP template scheme and Growth Centres SEPP, both of which would have severely disadvantaged environment protection.
- » **BASIX, the law which sets mandatory water and energy use targets for new housing came under attack from apartment developers, who did not want to be subject to tougher energy targets.** Eventually the government caved in for high rise (above 6 floors) but retained the move to the 40% energy target for low rise. High rise will remain a problem with residents being high energy consumers partly due to the lifts, lighting, car parks and pools in the buildings.
- » **As drought and climate change worsens, water is a headline issue.** The Sydney desalination plant was deferred, but central coast councils are pressing ahead with 20 mobile plants. The NSW Government released its Metropolitan Water Plan with a renewed focus on recycling. However, in TEC's view it is not ambitious enough, only aiming for about 10% of annual consumption to be recycled by 2015. We are proposing 25% by 2011; permanent water conservation measures (restrictions currently save 10% of supply, equivalent to a desal plant, for little cost) and serious exploration of indirect potable reuse. TEC has supported private investment in new recycling infrastructure. New pricing policies (called 'block pricing' advocated by TEC) are also being introduced to encourage water conservation.
- » **TEC's waste work has expanded significantly.** We issued ReByte!, a scheme for recycling of electronic waste and developed the Let's Do IT! Alliance of recyclers, environment and local government groups. A broad range of stakeholders are very disenchanted with the lack of federal or state action. Our work with the Boomerang Alliance has focused on monitoring of the National Packaging Covenant; banning the free plastic bag, and supporting the campaign for container deposits in Western Australia. Unfortunately NSW which had been a leader with legislation about producer take-back is now falling behind. The only bright spot has been the large increase in the waste levy, which has accelerated the building of new recycling facilities for municipal waste.
- » **With the support of an Environmental Trust grant,** TEC is now in the second year of our major education effort to reduce hazardous chemicals in the home, under the auspices of the 'Our Environment It's a Living Thing' campaign (see [www.safersolutions.org.au](http://www.safersolutions.org.au)).

## GREEN CAPITAL

**Our Green Capital program now has several arms – the successful debates held in Sydney and Melbourne; research projects into corporate social responsibility; and education in CSR for corporate staff.**

- » Major events were held on – Fuelling the Future – clean solutions to crude problems; Myopia – short termism, a barrier to corporate sustainability?; Sustain the chain, see the gain; Sustainable Finance – shareholders, stakeholders; values and value. Each event is associated with a discussion paper that informs the audience and TEC's position on these critical issues.
- » Green Capital is working with Monash University on GreenSteps – an intern program for advanced university students which places them with aware companies to work on CSR issues.
- » Our project with the Key Centre for Justice, Law and Ethics at Griffith University on mainstreaming socially responsible investment is gaining pace with a final report next year.

## LEGISLATION

**Through the Environmental Liaison Officer supported by TEC and other groups, we were active in drafting amendments and lobbying for improvement to key pieces of legislation including:**

- Biobanking amendments to the Threatened Species Conservation Act
- 'Major development' amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act
- Amendments to pollution and State of Environment legislation

**GOVERNMENT COMMITTEES** – TEC staff were members of: Millenium Parklands Advisory Committee; Natural Resources Advisory Council; EPR Expert Reference Group, Planning Reform Reference Group; Ministerial Review Group on Native Vegetation Laws; National Packaging Covenant Council.

## STAFF

**PAID:** Jeff Angel, Director. Sue Kennedy - Administrator; Assistant Treasurer. Fran Kelly (res), David Burgess - Natural Areas Campaigner.

Leigh Martin - Urban Campaigner. Jane Castle – Resource Conservation Campaigner. Karine Weiss – Waste Minimisation Officer.

Tony Mohr – Associate Director, Green Capital. Julia Lipton (res), Eva Nichols – Green Capital Events and Special Projects.

Danielle Domone-Karlsson – Marketing and Subscriber Services, Green Capital. Anthony Lazzaro – Program Support, Green Capital.

Richard Nicol – Marketing Assistant, Green Capital. Jenny Kent – Safer Solutions Project Manager. Valerie Thompson – North Coast community planner.

James Ryan – Lower Hunter community planner. Mark Fleming – South Coast community planner.

Glyn Mather – NEM Officer. Jo Immig, Ben Cole – toxic chemicals consultant. Morag White – Safer Solutions Communications Officer.

**VOLUNTARY:** Margaret Alexander, Snezan Bajagic, Judy Bartram, Joan Bell, Dave Creevey, Vanessa Cuenca, Ian Edwards, Cameron Eren, Joyce Fu,

Lucie Giraud, Steve Granger, Thelma Hobday, Anne Hughes, Sue Jackson , Abby Lerner, Megan Lewis, Doug Lithgow, Betty Mason,

Nikki McGee, Keith Muir, Lidia Petersen, Angela Raymond, Mike Rolfe, Melissa Sinclair, Irmine Van der Geest.

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:** Sue Salmon (Chairperson), Libby Rankin (Treasurer), Gerri Ormonde (Secretary), James Johnson, Peter Reeves,

Edwina Laginestra, Ian Higgins, Emily Fewster, Jeff Smith, Sebastian Crawford, Jo Drummond. Public Officer – Philip Williams

**COMMITTEES:** Canopy Native Forests

**RESIDENT GROUPS:** Colong Foundation for Wilderness; Sydney Harbour and Foreshores Committee

**AUDITOR:** Barton Sellars - Financial report available on request from TEC

## THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS