

Inner Sydney  
Regional Council



for Social  
Development Inc.

# INNER SYDNEY VOICE

The Journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

*30th Anniversary Edition*

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# PUBLIC ENEMY *Number* 1.

STORY: MARTINE BRIEGER DRAWINGS: MICHELE THOMAS



**Inner Sydney Voice** is the journal of the Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development

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Regional Council



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Development Inc.

Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development (ISRCSD) is a non-profit organisation committed to the idea of information as a tool for community development. The organisation defines Inner Sydney as being the local government areas of Botany Bay, Leichhardt, Randwick, City of Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra.

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# INNER SYDNEY VOICE

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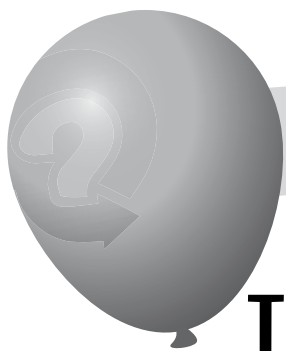
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*Photos in Hyde Park*



**I** was very pleased when I found that part of my new job was to be the Editor of Inner Sydney Voice and was even more pleased when I found that I would be writing my first Editorial for the Thirtieth Anniversary Edition.

Thirty years – what a large slice of the history of our region. When I look back through the early editions of Inner Sydney Voice I can track some of the enormous changes that have taken place in each of our regional areas and the community response to each one – campaigns won or lost, protests successful or unsuccessful; change that comes through the passage of time, new generations and different national and global conditions. And overshadowing the whole discussion are the dramatic technological developments which have in reality changed the size of our world. Not necessarily good or bad change but mostly unavoidable.

## The scene back then

Thirty years ago was the era of the Fraser Government, arguably one of the more controversial periods in Australian political history. This was the time of the original Razor Gang, spiraling unemployment and increasing levels of taxation; the start of stringent budget cuts to the ABC and, despite community protest, Australia officially recognized Indonesia's indoxation of East Timor.

Still this was a kinder, more tolerant Australia than today. Multiculturalism was fashionable, SBS was established and more refugees were allowed into the country than had previously

been the case. However, after 10 years of the Howard government, and attendant intolerances, we can no longer claim to be a kind or tolerant Australia. We are no longer always nice to each other and the famous “mateship” is becoming just another word.

On a State level, in November 1978 when Inner Voice (as it was then) was first produced, Neville Wran was Premier of NSW. He was a popular Premier with a program of reform and change much of which was achieved under his leadership. Unfortunately, many programs and services were later cut, particularly in health and welfare.

In 1978 community sector workers were not organized and there was little or no union coverage. Many services were provided by the churches and “big” organisations such as Barnardo's and Red Cross. However, there were also many smaller agencies responding to the specific needs of their local communities. Funding was submission based and there was little competition between agencies.

This is not the picture today. We are now more organized with Union coverage, and minimum award conditions - all a great improvement. We still have smaller agencies, but not as many and we still have the big organisations, but due to governments' tendency to fund large organisations rather than smaller local community agencies they are now considerably bigger. We also have competitive tendering to deal with and very different, more clinical expectations from government. A sense of rivalry has emerged as

organisations make hard decisions about whether they should tender

for a service presently provided by a sister agency. Clearly the competitive nature of tendering together with the immense workload required is leading to increasing divisiveness and conflict amongst not-for-profit agencies.

We also have more stringent legal requirements in place. While essential to the operations of an agency, membership of a voluntary board was something people did light-heartedly usually to support their favourite organisation. This has changed radically. Today good governance is a fundamental part of management. The legal responsibilities of board members and senior staff should be taken very seriously – it is essential that managements know who is responsible for what in their organisation.

Thirty years at today's accelerated pace of living is a long time. The 111 editions of Sydney Inner Voice reflect this and are a tribute to the local communities who have made the history of the region and to the many activists who have worked in our region over the years, supporting and advocating for their communities. Regional Council and Inner Sydney Voice have played a key role throughout this often tumultuous thirty years and I am certain that both the organisation and the journal will continue to do so for many years to come.

*Pam Marsh*



# Why Inner Sydney Voice?



Only last year, a local politician who is now a Federal Minister said how much she and other politicians look forward to receiving their copy of Inner Sydney Voice. People come up to us at meetings and quietly say, “loved the article on ..... in the last edition”. Also, our last reader survey was very positive. We take all this as encouragement.

## Information role

Regional Council has been funded since 1978 as a regional information and resource service and Inner Sydney Voice is one of the main tools for delivering that service. Our communication strategy also includes a website, emailed information, forums and meetings and other publications. We have also been previously involved in community radio and cable television. We see information as a tool for community development as people are empowered when they are able to access or provide relevant information.

Over the last 30 years, a huge number of social issues have been covered. Our index to 2005 shows 115 pages listing issues covered. Some issues were covered only once, some had strong coverage over several months (such as the Third Runway) and some issues would surprisingly pop up after many years as the situation changed or important battles we thought we lost (or won) re-emerged.

## Lobbying role

Inner Sydney Voice has a strong lobbying role for disadvantaged people and social justice. The strategy is to write up local issues

and larger issues that impact locally and send them to decision makers – politicians state and federal, councillors, community leaders and community organisations. Regional Council has never claimed to put an unbiased view. Our bias is obvious and clearly stated. We are happy for professional media to be even-handed – or posit that they are so. We are battling for our future down here! Our recently rejigged logo also demonstrates this approach – to both inform and question.



## Broad social goals

The UWASIS system of classification for social goals is used throughout Inner Sydney Voice and our library. As explained in the 104th Edition;

*“UWASIS is a broad set of social goals that allow us to identify, classify and define most existing human service programs. It stands for United Way of America Services Identification System, set up in 1972 and introduced into Australia by the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS). It was picked up in NSW by Community Information Services, including regional organisations and some Neighbourhood Centres (Ref United Way of America Library of Congress 1976).*

The UWASIS Goals are:

1. Employment
2. Health
3. Material Needs – including housing, food, clothing, household goods, transport, water electricity and waste services
4. Education
5. Environment

6. Citizens Rights & Safety
7. Family Support & Community Activities
8. Resources and Organisation”.

## The current format

Our last strategic plan took a good hard look at Inner Sydney Voice and agreed to keep it basically the same. We decided to stay with hard copy and not to develop an electronic version, even though many community organisations are going in that direction, because it is cheaper and less time consuming. We wanted to avoid the ‘cut and paste’ temptation and strive to investigate and write articles sourced from our local communities. We also have recently made a particular effort to cover the entire region, to avoid being captured by the huge needs in inner city suburbs.

We changed the name Inner Voice to Inner Sydney Voice to strengthen the locational aspect and move to the ‘voice’ or ‘message’ aspect and away from a personal conscience message.

## Important historical document

If you want a chronicle of social history in the Inner City and Eastern Suburbs over the last 30 years – you have it. We have all editions bound, we have an index of all major articles. The fascinating thing is that in reading back copies, it is clear that we are still struggling over the same issues. The details might be different, but the fight for social justice is ongoing and detailed for posterity.

Here’s to the next 30 years of a feisty, opinionated, honest, upfront account of the life of our city.



**J**ust looking at Issue One (March 1978) many of Inner Sydney Voice's concerns are there from the beginning.

"As early as 1970, Rocks residents were canvassing the need for a local hospital or nursing home for their old folk...The Rocks Cottage Hospital Committee came into being at the tail end of 1975....and obtained approval for a five year lease from the Maritime Services Board of its building in Trinity Avenue." Nita McCrae wrote "The committee's submission to the Health Commission for grant funding has been rejected." Services, or lack of them, in the inner city have been a constant refrain from Inner Sydney Voice.

### And Rachel Forster Hospital

"A secret war has been going on for the past three months over the future of Rachel Forster Hospital in Redfern...The battle has been over changing it from one providing general medical and surgical care to a complex of special units."

### Low cost housing in Ultimo

"A group of some 87 urban residential allotments between Harris Street and Bulwarra Road north of Quarry Street was recently subdivided and released on the private market." The Harris Centre tried to obtain the land with help from the NSW State and rehabilitate the houses at a cost of \$10-20,000 per dwelling. "The proposition for a low cost housing co-operative in the Buckland Estate is lost.....The prospect of providing accommodation to the local families established in the area for many generations has also been lost...people will be forced

out of the area into suburbs with low amenity...." Look at Ultimo now.

### And Booze

In issue 17 Nita McCrae again writes...."I have been a resident of the Rocks area all my life and I have seen that since the Governor's Pleasure Tavern has been granted a permit to trade until 3am...noise, vandalism, personal affront and general disorderly conduct has increased significantly...."

### Rachel Forster

This old girl rears her head with alarming regularity within the pages of Inner Sydney Voice. Now we know that the site is to be sold off by the Health Department, but repeatedly there was a demand for services to be adjusted and for this site to be used for a range of local services.

*Rachel Forster – Thanks for Nothing* was the theme of a 1979 article. It reflects the endless consultations with the community, and the zero response from the superintendent of the hospital. In 1992 the campaign to save the hospital got a reprieve. The campaign literature had this to say:

*"200 new hips, 200 new knees, lots more orthopaedic operations, breast screening, breast surgery, hydrotherapy, physiotherapy...*

*All done with tender loving care*

*Rachel Forster Hospital gave all that and much more last year.*

*Now some bright spark wants to close the old girl down. Does that make sense? Of course not!*

### Low Cost Housing and Services

In 1991 Regional Council ran a major seminar – 'Will a Better City have decent homes for low-income families'. This has been a recurring theme throughout the 30 years.

"Regional Council was formed.... about the impact of government action and inaction on their communities. From the so-called slum clearance programs proposed in Waterloo, to freeway development zig-zagging through and destroying established communities; from university, CBD and tourist expansion into residential areas to land price inflation and gentrification."

Kim Anson finished her speech with Regional Council's concern about affordable housing "opportunities for low-income people to continue to live in inner Sydney, (because) the next phase of redevelopment of the city will mean the end of inner city low-income communities as we know them."

Steve Allen talked about his life in Millers Point. "I've lived in the Rocks and Millers Point area all of my life....I went to school there. My family has lived there for 8 generations ever since 5 of my ancestors were thrown ashore there from the First Fleet in 1788.....I don't own the house I live in, the Department of Housing owns it and I pay rent to live in it...Over the past 200 years my family has owned houses in this area, but they were all forcibly resumed from us back in 1901, and we've paid rent to live in them ever since... We lived in them because no one else wanted to....rising damp, the dry rot, the outdoor toilet,





the tin shed in the backyard for a bathroom...We fought to save the buildings but lost the community.”

*“The poor will always be with us, but does it mean that they have to live in the streets sleep in the parks, eat out of garbage cans. Is that the sort of city you want?”*

### **Booze**

In edition 111, 2008 ISV reported on the new Liquor Act in NSW.

Commissioner Scipione said “Alcohol fueled violence and crime is the major issue facing NSW Police”. He says this at a time when the state Government is freeing up the service and distribution of alcohol throughout the State.

There is a concern that alcohol will be more freely available, applying for licences will be simpler and much much cheaper, precisely at a time when not just the police, but also the public perception, is of increased intoxication in public.

Years ago (as reported more than once in ISV) Waverley Council and the local Police Command did a survey plotting all the violence and crime, where it happened and what time on which day of

the week. The broad conclusion was that if pubs closed at the same time close together then there was a chance of violence within 100 metres of a pub or club, especially at weekends. Many local groups and councils are now arguing that closing times should be earlier, or staggered.

Not much different from the report in Issue One.

### **Big Sites and the Redfern Waterloo Authority**

The other major issue for the Inner City has been the redevelopment of industrial sites, with the Redfern Waterloo Authority taking control of all the major sites – particularly Green Square and the Eveleigh Railway Workshops. The Technology Park, at Eveleigh, has now spawned some superb restoration and reuse of the old railway buildings, but with it has come medium density housing and industrial parks.

### **Green Square**

Green Square is a joint project of the City and Landcom and plans to make the precinct around the Green Square Railway Station a residential, commercial and cultural hub for the 278 hectare Green Square Area, the largest urban renewal project in Australia. The railway station (on the airport underground line) is the only major piece of social infrastructure, built by a public/private partnership. However there are no signs of other social infrastructure, just lots of plans.

*The older houses that could go*

*The dream of developers – so many car spaces..*

### **Regional Council has two concerns for Green Square:**

- The City’s contribution to infrastructure and public works will be financed by levies – if the developers don’t come, the public works don’t happen.
- The second concern that there will be insufficient community services (one council multi-purpose centre for eighty thousand people is all that is planned).

### **The Brewery Site**

This site, at the end of Broadway, was the Carlton United Brewery (CUB). Work has already started. The scale has the residents of Darlington really worried. The proposed huge increase in building scale, new residents and traffic threatens to swamp the precinct.

### **Redfern Waterloo Authority**

The authority has huge powers. The fact that most of the population lives in Department of Housing (now Housing NSW) properties and the RWA is not looking at the impact on this housing defies logic. The biggest results achieved by the RWA are in property development, including upgrading the Eveleigh Precinct and selling public property (Redfern School, Rachel Foster Hospital and the old Court House). The Minister and Department of Planning (along with the City of Sydney) do not seem to want to change this – despite the removal of Frank Sartor as Minister.





## Pollution of our Ocean and Beaches

**N**ow we have the three outfalls going four kilometres into the ocean. In Editions 48 & 50 (1978) a group called Stop the Ocean Pollution (STOP) called for sewerage treatment.

"Most people believe that the sewerage problem stems from domestic sewage. They are unaware of the industrial wastes emptied into the system.....The sewage (it is lighter than seawater) will simply rise to the surface 2 or 3 kilometres further out to sea, only to be blown back by onshore winds. As for the industrial wastes, the toxic sediments will just be dumped a little further out to sea."

Over the years Inner Sydney Voice has reported on sewerage pollution with raw waste going straight into the Harbour and the dioxin and other chemicals in the fish. Stormwater overloads on sewerage pipes (especially on the 12 kilometres to the Bondi outfall) has led to valves opening and leaking raw sewerage into parks and waterways. The Clean Waters Act led to changes to the Cooks, Parramatta and Georges Rivers, but polluters were encouraged to divert to the sewerage system so that industrial wastes are fed straight out to sea.

These issues are still with us today



## Less Park at Moore Park

An article in Issue 1 stated that none of the battles over the parks had been won.

*"The price of parks is eternal vigilance, especially in inner city urban areas. Yet all the evidence we have is that open space for passive and active recreation is of rapidly growing importance to our daily lives. It seems we need a citizens' charter to protect our parks NOW."*

*Moore Park and Centennial Park are all that remain of the Old Sydney Common. And the Save The Parks Campaign was born, belatedly, just a few years ago to protect these two great parks from 'would-be' developers. The main battles that the Campaign has been engaged in are:*

1. *the original Olympic complex proposals sired by Mr Tom Lewis's consultants*
2. *the proposed sand-mining of Moore Park golf course*
3. *the Centennial Park bus roadway*
4. *the over-development of the Marks Athletic Field and its associated car-parking proposals in Moore Park and on the 'Brambles' land*
5. *the ever-present invasion of the motor car."*

Since then building the Football Stadium, giving away the Agricultural Society site to Fox, increased carparking for the Sydney Football Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground, have all made the effective space in Centennial and Moore Parks smaller than ever. In the Leichhardt report there is a similar concern about Callan Park, in Rozelle, the second largest park in Sydney (at 61 hectare).

Interestingly Sydney Common was originally 1000 acres.

## Not Hospital Closures Again

Then there were hospital issues – for Eastern Sydney this means the closure of Crown Street and Prince Henry hospitals. Again and again there was concern that health services were moving out of the inner city to the western suburbs, and the pressure on the major hospitals was increasing and leaning towards most admissions to hospital being through the casualty departments. All of Inner Sydney has experienced these issues, but a repeated concern in the East was not just that services are being transferred out of the inner city, but that the land is being sold off to the highest bidder, and the open space is being reduced or lost.

## Youth

In 1996 there was an article 'Listening at La Pe'. *The Aboriginal Community at La Perouse is one of the three biggest in the inner city (the others being at Redfern and Woolloomooloo). However, of these three, La Perouse is the most isolated and least serviced. Self-determination means our community getting its own services together...having services based here at La Perouse. Their key issues were counselling services and somewhere to go for the youth of the area. In the same issue there was a report of a survey of teenagers in Woollahra. Young people were 17.5% of the population. The report starts: "It would be great to have a friendly place where teenagers can meet to take time out from the stress of school but also a place where they can find help when dealing with school problems."*





## Development Runs Wild at Bondi Junction

**“Bondi junction has, on the whole, not been served well by being divided, like Solomon’s baby, down the middle.”**

In 1997 there was an article on the proposed Westfield at Bondi Junction, and other high rise blocks. The railway finishes at the Junction, so that had to be the sub-regional centre – “So why do we tend to get soulless glass and concrete ghettos where the sun doesn’t shine, the wind blows and the streets are either empty or full of people looking uncomfortable? Why do we end up with Chatswood, Parramatta and now Bondi Junction?”

Bondi Junction has been growing inexorably upwards over the last twenty years...its quiet streets and terrace houses was dealt a body blow in the early 70’s with the construction of the Syd Einfield Expressway cutting a swathe through residential Grafton Street and destroying much of the village atmosphere. Now the developments are just getting higher and higher.

“Why are 230 more shops needed in the Westfield development when there are already 6 empty in the Mall?”

In 1998 Battlers for Bondi Junction reported that the Commission of Inquiry into the proposed Westfield development had handed down its report acknowledging resident’s concerns, but recommending that it go ahead regardless.

## Our Aim in Social Planning

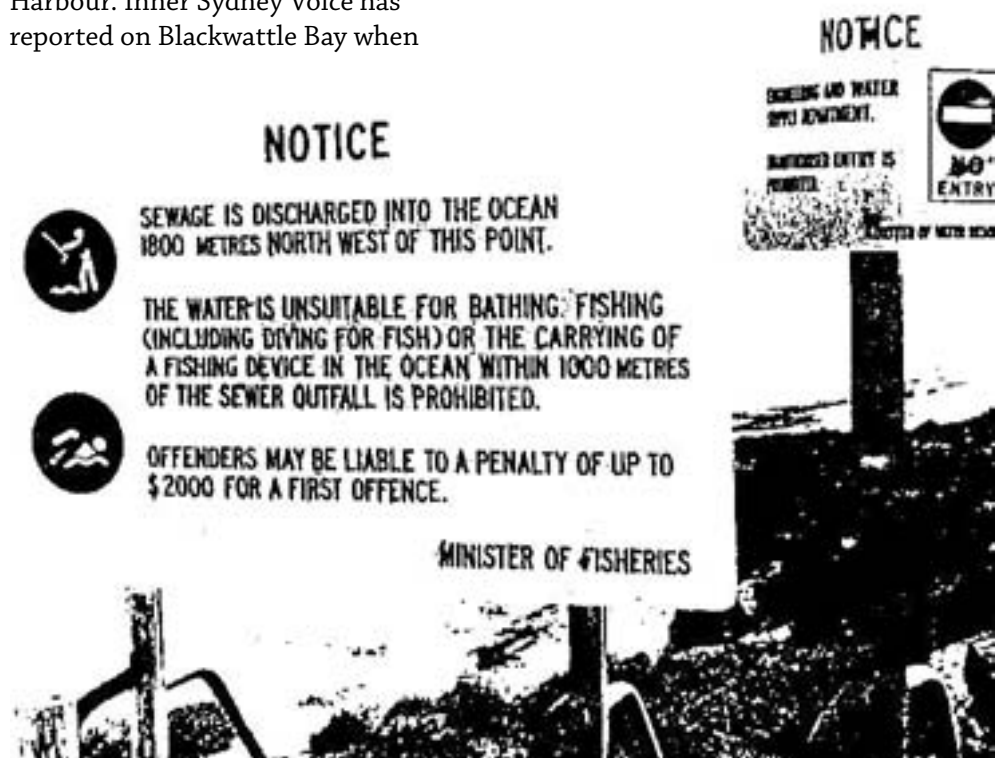
In the same issue (1998) there was a report of a group brought together to address social, cultural and recreational needs and housing issues of concern to low-income and special needs groups. It was aware “of the problems that occur when social planning plays second fiddle to physical planning – it is like pinning the tail on an elephant. In putting people first, the group also agreed that existing communities are key, and must be involved early and in an ongoing way with the newcomers if past planning errors are to be avoided.”

*Inner Sydney Voice’s position couldn’t be put much clearer than this.*

## Yet Another Mega Marina

Gross overdevelopment has not just been in the new shopping centres, or the huge developments of blocks of units but also on the Harbour. Inner Sydney Voice has reported on Blackwattle Bay when

the new Marina for super yachts was set up, and other attempts to phase out the cheap swinging moorings for expensive marinas and attendant boat yards. Now there is an attempt to set up a mega marina in Rose Bay with berths for huge floating gin palaces. In Edition 110 (2008) the biggest concern for residents of Woollahra is the marina, with the number and size of the boats blocking views of the Harbour and increasing traffic congestion. Why should an area with inadequate public transport (particularly ferries) now have to put up with the large carparks needed to service these boat owners? Further to our report the association specialising in taking disabled people sailing has now said that the largest boat bay, able to take boats up to 50 metres long, will block the wind and mean that the club will have to move somewhere else.





# Community Organisations

**A** large part of Regional Council's work is to inform and support local community agencies. Here are a sample of those that have featured in Inner Sydney Voice through the years.

Recently, Holdsworth Community Centre has had a new injection of energy, with a new co-ordinator, Michael Ryan, who is looking at defining new directions for the Centre. One initiative is a new staff position to work on community relations. This includes new promotion material and the dropping of "Street" from the old name to show things have changed. Regional Council went to visit to hear about these changes.

"We might be in Woollahra, but here there is the same cross section of poor and disadvantaged residents as there is in any other community.

## **Holdsworth Community Centre**

*Issue No. 110 –  
Autumn 2008  
Page 12*

## **Bilga Estate Tenants**

*Malabar  
Issue No. 51 –  
December 1988  
Page 46*

This is a tale of perseverance and success, of people determined to forge a sense of community among the tenants of the Housing Department's Bilga Estate, in Malabar.

For 8 years, some of the 1,200 tenants on the estate battled the bureaucracy to get a community centre which the Member for Maroubra, Mr. Bob Carr, opened recently.

Already the centre, designed by the residents including the young people in consultation with an architect, has become a focal point for the community. The teenagers and adults have kept an eye on the brightly-coloured, simple construction, to keep it safe from would-be vandals, and the elderly through to the young have been in to visit.

## **NSW Rape Crisis Centre**

*Issue No. 99 – Winter/Spring 2004  
Page 25*

NSW Rape Crisis Centre is a feminist centre working to challenge sexual violence within our diverse community. The Centre is holistic and empowering in its approach and committed to the rights of women to live in a socially just, equitable and non-violent society.

NSW Rape Crisis Centre is a statewide 24 hour, 7 day crisis intervention, support counselling and referral service for women who have experienced sexual violence. The Centre also provides a service to supporters of survivors of sexual violence, eg family friends and health care professionals. NSW Rape Crisis Centre is a non-government organisation funded by the NSW Department of Health.

In the early days the Centre was unfunded and women gave their time free of charge. These dedicated women would travel around Sydney to collect women who had experienced sexual violence bringing them back to the Centre for counselling, support and medical checks. In 1974, after two years of lobbying, the Centre was funded by the Whitlam Federal Government.

## **The Rocks Cottage** *Issue No. 1 – March 1978 Page 12*

There's no stopping the Rocks residents when it comes to getting on with the job of getting things they see as important for their area. And The Rocks Cottage – Type Nursing Home is no exception.

As early as 1970, Rocks residents were canvassing the need for a local hospital or nursing home for their old folk based in their community.

**R**ozelle Neighbourhood Centre is an interesting place. Physically situated right near the intersection of busy Darling Street and even busier Victoria Road it's not hard to draw parallels with its own existence, a small NGO at the cross roads of the recent tendency of government to fund large organisations, leaving the little ones to continue their proven community based work – on the smell of an oily rag, or perhaps the fumes of the tracks passing by.

Staff at Rozelle describe the beauty of their work with words like 'unique', 'specific', 'complex' and 'responsive'. They recently went to a tribunal having been refused funding by a government department and were told they needed to prove now their service was 'unique' in order to have any hope of success in tenders in the future.

**Eastern Suburbs Community Health Organisation (ECHO)** Issue No.1 – March 1978 Page 16

Many agencies in the city find that they simply cannot find low cost accommodation in the city, despite the fact that they spend an inordinately large amount of time searching for it. This has tied up the resources of the agency not allowing them to fulfil their other functions to their capacity.

Recognising this problem, the Eastern Suburbs Community Help Organisation (ECHO)

started a listing service of low cost accommodation. This service is run by volunteers and is updated weekly.

It is available to all agencies and groups in the area. However, one month ago they found that rents shot up dramatically and their listing had to be changed from accommodation under \$40 per week up to under \$50 per week.

**Redfern Occasional Child Care (ROCC)** Issue No. 71 – Autumn 1995 Page 31

## Redfern Occasional Childcare ROCCs on!

**After 7 years of hard work and determination, parents in Redfern and Waterloo are finally getting a quality, flexible and affordable occasional childcare centre that actually prioritises the local population!**

Building work is in progress on the South Sydney Council-owned building at 55 Pitt Street in Redfern (formerly the Reg. Cope Centre). The Redfern Occasional Child Care (ROCC) working group is hard at work developing policies and procedures for the new centre, becoming incorporated, employing staff, setting up systems etc, and it all should be ready to go by the end of June.

**Harris Community Centre, Ultimo**  
Issue No. 111 – Spring 2008 Page 18

***The centre is there for whoever or whatever comes through the door – both people and issues.***

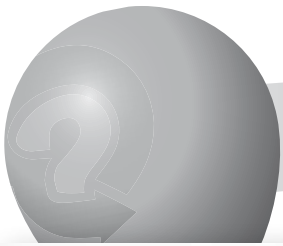
Since 1972 the Centre has been there in Quarry St, Ultimo. It runs a wide range of services and activities and provides support to those who live or work in the area, whether this is for personal or local issues. Every day and every week, there are regular events going on from the Early Childhood Clinic, the Multicultural Playgroup, to the Friendship Group for the over 50's and the shopping bus service. But alongside these regular events there is the creative urgency of an all-purpose generalist community centre where local needs and issues are constantly being discussed and acted on.

### **The Shack**

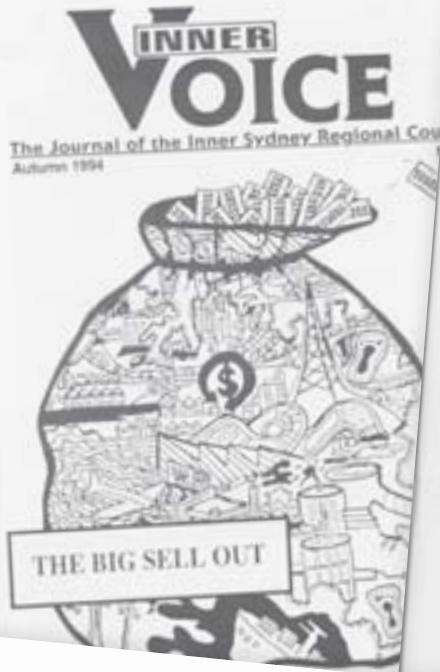
Issue No. 108 – Winter 2006 Page 10

**I**t was a Thursday afternoon when Inner Sydney Voice (ISV) called in at one of the two youth centres run by The Shack Youth Services. This dispirited location has been turned into a youth friendly space with cushions, a computer and, that day, a table full of mop pies. Through an arch at the back is an office for the youth workers and a kitchen and bathroom. Upstairs is a lounge room with a TV, and the coordinator's office. There was noise and laughter. The centre is open for drop in from 3 to 5pm for 14-17 year olds.





inner voice







# Community Development

**I**nnersydney Voice is all about community development, that is achieving social justice by empowering local people in their communities. Over the last 30 years, there have been few articles appearing under the heading of 'Community Development', but those values and strategies are found as an underpinning in most articles, whether talking about public housing, clean air or citizens rights.

## Resident Action Groups

*"The roots of Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development are firmly planted in resident action and the pitched battles in The Rocks, Woolloomooloo, Victoria Street (Kings Cross) Fig Street Ultimo/Pyrmont and Waterloo", as shown in our edition celebrating 20 Years of Regional Council.*

Over the following 30 years, resident action groups have been connected to and received support from Regional Council and their struggles written up in Inner Sydney Voice. They include Chippendale Housing Action

Group (Edition 8/1979) and The Rocks Residents Group (Edition 1/1978 & 4/1978). Both the Finger Wharf (Edition 50/1988) and Erskineville Housing estate (Edition 95/2002) were saved by resident action and all are clear examples of community development.

## Fighting Planners and Developers

In the process of residents trying to protect their homes and communities, they most often run up against either government planning instruments or developers.

*"The development boom in Sydney's CBD built up in the 1960s and boiled over into the surrounding suburbs as the 60s turned into the 70s. Residents formed coalitions to oppose these developments and received support from the militant Builders Labours Federation" (20 Years of Regional Council).*

A later campaign to save the tiny parks in Erskineville brought together the residents of 'Erko' and the saved open space that now bears the name 'Green Bans Parks' (Edition 60/1992).

The most recent fight to curtail developers, and one that has not been won, is against changes to Redfern and Waterloo put in place by the Redfern Waterloo Authority, which has the lethal combination of government consent authority and developer. The RWA is a statutory authority headed by a Minister who is also the Minister for Planning (Edition 104/2006), which facilitated the commercialisation of the historical Eveleigh Railway yards, selling government properties that



Redfern School

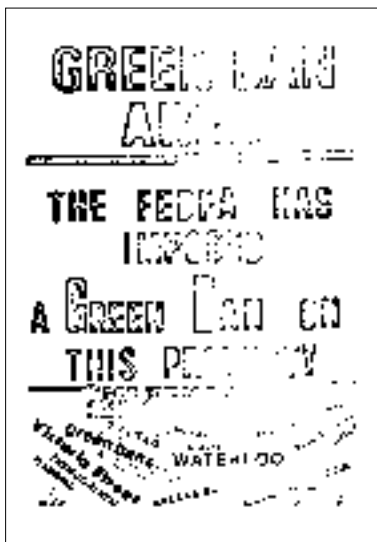
included a school, a hospital and a courthouse (Edition 86/1999).

We interacted with other government planning authorities over traffic and transport, including the new freeways, the 3rd Runway and Port Botany.

Changes to funding, policy and structures of community service programs were a constant battle as we tried to make sure services were sensitive to the needs of local residents, not primarily for meeting the funding department's corporate objectives (Edition 77/1996).

## Supporting Community Organisations

The other element of community development that Inner Sydney Voice continually highlighted was the work of small local community organisations to provide support to people in the community, often by people in the community. This built mutual trust, confidence and knowledge, particularly valuable in the most disadvantaged inner city communities. Inner Sydney Voices over the years featured articles on many local community organisations.







## Marg Barry Memorial Lectures

Marg Barry headed up Regional Council from its early days to her retirement in 1999. Her obituary paid tribute to an extraordinary person and community developer

to the backbone:

*"Marg will stay in the consciousness of community workers as a measure of what community development really means".*

*"She understood the real power of what ordinary people can do when they band together in their communities"* (Edition 91/2001).

These memorial lectures have become extraordinary community building

exercises, bringing together local residents who knew Marg, as well as present and past community workers. The purpose is to highlight the strengths of the inner city community, which although lacking in financial benefits, are rich in social capital. Two great examples reproduced in Inner Sydney Voice are 'We never had a Hotbed of Crime' (Edition 105/06) and 'Reconciliation after the Apology' (Edition 111/2008)

## Economic Rationalism

Over the last ten years, the dominant forces of economic rationalism or free market, with its promotion of individualism, competition and consumption, have proven devastating for community development, which is the direct opposite – consisting of groups of citizens working co-operatively to improve their lives. It is not that we did not recognise the problem. From its first stirrings we were 'onto' it, but were powerless to do anything but hang on for the ride. At least we refused to concede that "community development is dead" (Edition 96/2003) as we were encouraged to do. We railed against its infection of government departments and the subsequent huge impacts on community services (Edition 72/1995). It started with microeconomic reform instigated by the Coalition of Australian Government (COAG), which was about using market principles to manage government programs (Edition 80/1997), resulting in anti-competition, competitive tendering, contracting out, outcomes rather than inputs and purchaser/provider splits, with Professor Fred Hilmer leading the way (Edition 75/1996).

## Social Capital

In order to speak to the economic rationalists on their own terms, academics discovered social capital (Edition 75/1982), which gave us a point to argue for community development with 'econocrats' in government departments, who favoured large organisations that appeared more efficient and effective managers and were

certainly able to compete with great success for government funding.

## Small Organisations

The tendency to prefer large corporate style service providers obviously put huge pressure on small community-based organisations that are powerhouses of community development activity. While not being shut down, they were simply starved of funds. Some decided to survive by growing as not-for-profit service provision businesses and in the process, their community development activities withered. Only strong lobbying and mutual support kept the small community-based organisations from going under - though some did (Edition 89/ 2000 & 95/2002). And they are still chronically underfunded.

## Communities as infrastructure

*"Building strong communities is as important a piece of infrastructure as building a road system"* (Edition 109/2008).

The most recent editions of Inner Sydney Voice have seen us talk at length about building strong communities as social infrastructure as we are coming to realise that people cannot only concern ourselves about individual people or individual businesses and companies. As well as physical infrastructure such as roads, rail, housing so our cities can function, we need to keep our communities alive to allow people to trust and support each other.

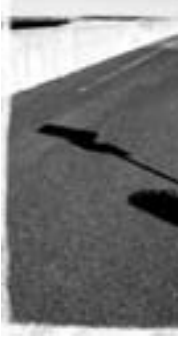
A submission outlining this concept was sent to the 2020 Summit.





# Botany

Port Botany  
A road  
leading to  
nowhere



**Three issues have transfixed our publication – Airport, Port, chemical risks and pollution.**

## Airport

The airport has dominated, as the two runways and then the third runway have affected the whole area. From the very beginning noise and fear of accidents have led to regular articles. Reports of parts of the nose cone of a Thai Airways 747 being dropped on Marrickville, and urine and faeces being discharged from landing planes have been mentioned. One of the most poignant articles was about the death of Sydenham, when the federal government decided to do no more sound insulation, but simply bought up and cleared the housing directly under the flightpath. Even so Inner Sydney Voice has taken up other issues relating to the airport. International aircraft and Qantas vehicles have been washed on the tarmac, and aircraft refuelled (not in hangers which are connected to the sewer). This has meant that highly polluted water runs off into stormwater drains.

## You Lose

In 1992 a report on the Third Runway Verdict stated: “When the High Court decided last month that Federal agencies were exempt from state environmental laws, did it let loose a band of marauding public developers? The Third Runway case has given official sanction to practices that have been the norm for many years. The NSW Land and Environment Court decided that the dredging for the port was incidental to the

Third runway project and declared that no State Environmental Impact Statement was needed. (This is because it was being done by a federal agency)”.

It is interesting that Inner Sydney Voice never said that there should be a second airport at Badgery’s Creek (or elsewhere), but simply reiterated that the issues about Botany were that everything was being concentrated there, and transporting goods and people through crowded streets into inner Sydney was dangerous.

## Port Botany

Long before the Carr government decided to move shipping from Sydney Harbour, to Botany, Wollongong and Newcastle, traffic and pollution have been covered in Inner Sydney Voice.

An insightful article in 2004 suggested that there was spare capacity at Newcastle and Port Kembla and hoped that this could be used instead of Port Botany. “Three times the current amount of freight passing through Port Botany by 2025 and a doubling within 10 years: this is the scenario presented by the Sydney Ports Corporation (a State owned corporation) in its Environmental Impact Statement for a second container terminal at Port Botany”.

“The corridor between the city and Port Botany upon which many trucks (bound for, or departing) Botany Bay will travel, is a corridor which is undergoing major transformation as many redundant industrial sites are being redeveloped to high density residential.”

All this reflects the way in which Inner Sydney Voice not only

reported on issues, but also attempted to provide constructive ways in which the situation could be improved. The crucial claim (not just for the Port, but also the Airport) is that these kinds of developments so close to the centre of Sydney do not fully take into account the damage to the environment from noise and traffic, particularly with increased urban consolidation happening at the same time. To quote again from the article: “In the absence of a comprehensive plan...for population, economic development, transport, freight strategy, environmental protection, tourism and social development, it is unclear why the Government would consider a proposal to add further concentrated economic activity and employment opportunities around Botany Bay and close to the centre of Sydney...Perhaps this is a time to think laterally...to redistribute economic activity, employment opportunities and residential populations ....and achieve a more sustainable future”.

## How Long Will Luck Last?

In 1984 articles about the chemical risks in and around Botany were reported in Inner Sydney Voice.

“The 6000 tonne oil leak at Total Oil Refinery on September 3 took 50 hours to clean up...an oil leak is not a rare event. Port Botany is host to many oil and chemical refineries and there have been spills and fires but no loss of life. So far luck has been on the side of the residents...and then - November 8...South-westerly winds, gusting up to 100km hit the 90,000 tonnes crude



oil tanker, William Dampier, snapping its moorings, rupturing its 2 underwater discharge pipelines and driving the tanker 500 metres across the Bay...

fortunately prompt action saw the operation shut down...even so, crude oil up to 15cm deep on a 50 metre front accumulated on the northern shore."

In 1990 Marg Barry wrote: "this State's first BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Evaporating Vapour Explosion) occurred on the evening of April 1, 1990, when most people, me included, were stretched out in front of The Box watching the Sunday Night Movie...It is obscene that the people of the Botany Bay Region should be sentenced to fiery obliteration living in the shadow of Australia's major petrochemical complex."

Later Inner Sydney Voice reported on new plans. "The chances of disaster at Port Botany continue to skyrocket with the announcement of plans by Elgas to build a huge liquid petroleum gas storage facility under the Bay. The two cathedral-like caverns are to store 90,000 tonnes of the highly explosive material, 9000 times the amount that exploded at Boral's St Peters depot in 1990. All this beneath Australia's heaviest concentration of hazardous industries and the flight path to Kingsford-Smith Airport!"

## How Safe is Sydney?

As well as these concerns there have been articles on the pollution of the groundwater under the old ICI plant in Botany, and dangerous substances distributed all round

Sydney. Inner Sydney Voice understood that the inner city could not be looked at in isolation. When we talk about dangerous chemicals, then the whole Sydney Basin is affected.

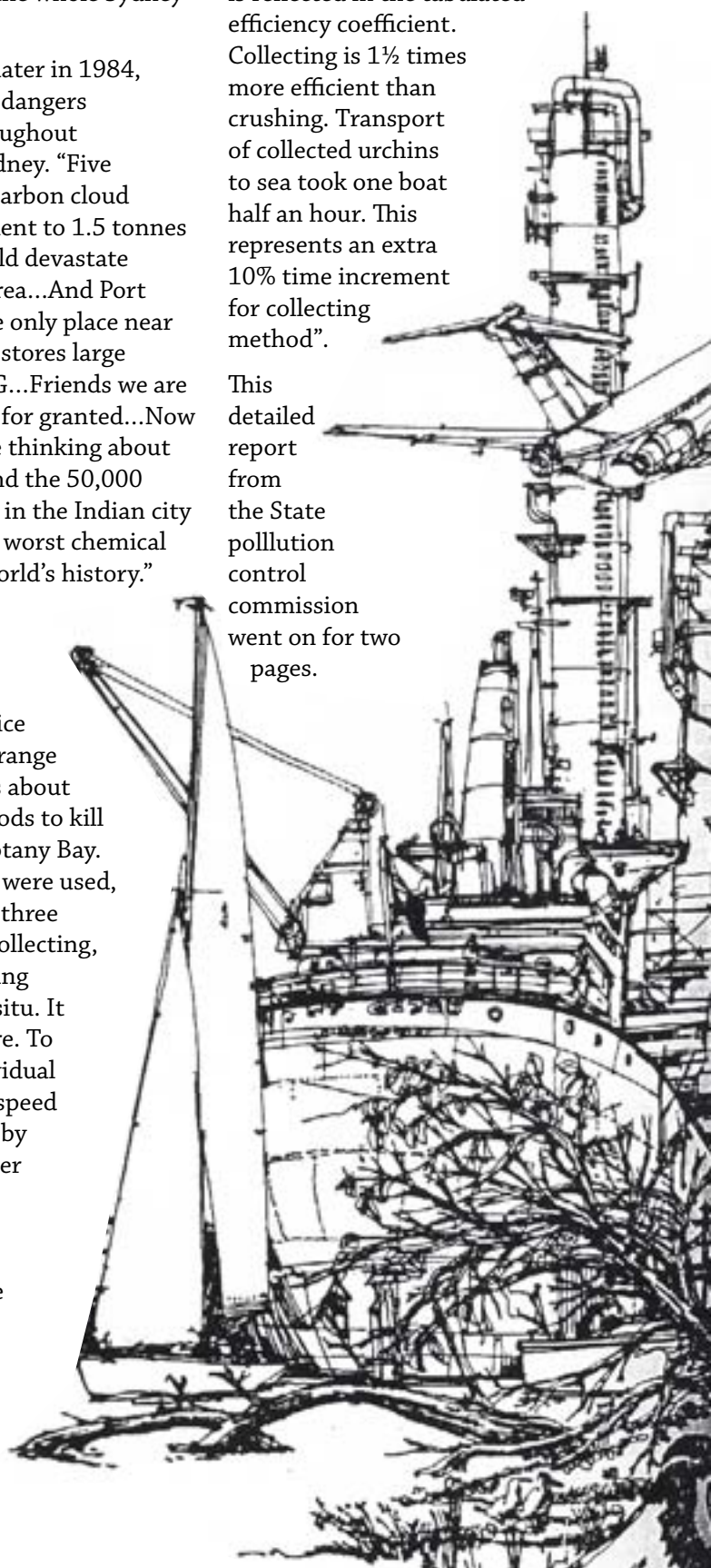
Another article, later in 1984, talked about the dangers to residents throughout metropolitan Sydney. "Five tonnes of hydrocarbon cloud vapour is equivalent to 1.5 tonnes of TNT, and would devastate the immediate area...And Port Botany is not the only place near to Sydney which stores large quantities of LPG...Friends we are taking too much for granted...Now spend some time thinking about the 2000 dead and the 50,000 seriously injured in the Indian city of Bhopal, in the worst chemical disaster in the world's history."

## And the Sea Urchins

Inner Sydney Voice also had some strange articles. One was about the trial of methods to kill sea urchins in Botany Bay. Volunteer divers were used, and divided into three methods: hand collecting, collecting by raking and crushing in situ. It was rather bizarre. To quote: "The individual urchin crushing speed can be increased by employing a better killing device (a heavy hand-held spike). However, use of this device would probably necessitate a longer discrimination

time between dead and live urchins and result in no net time advantage. The problem of search time for the crushing method is reflected in the tabulated efficiency coefficient. Collecting is 1½ times more efficient than crushing. Transport of collected urchins to sea took one boat half an hour. This represents an extra 10% time increment for collecting method".

This detailed report from the State pollution control commission went on for two pages.







## **U**rbans Consolidation – More And More Units, More Cars, More Traffic

Issue Two talked about planning for the Leichhardt Municipality. “In 1968 the then state Planning Authority required high-rise flats for 25% of the area....The revolutionary new ‘open government’ council in 1971 started work on a new Draft Planning Scheme which “the next new council in 1974 substituted with its 1976 Plan, indicating population densities as high as 500 persons per hectare for large sectors of the municipality.”

From then on Inner Sydney Voice reflected the frustration of many residents, particularly in Balmain, against the NSW Government’s demand for medium to high density dwellings on all the old industrial sites in the Municipality.

### **Medium Density Housing in Already Crowded Balmain**

Issue 60 explained the issues of planning in old working class areas of the inner city. Small houses on tiny sites had large families. Once 30,000 lived in Balmain “with high levels of dwelling occupancy, lots of local employment, good public transport, low car ownership, a good local hospital and some crowding in the schools.” The five industrial sites (all severely contaminated) lie in an area with a population then of about 14,000. Richard Smyth argued, very coherently, that if the sites were sold to developers (the view from the old Balmain Power Station close to Iron Cove Bridge was stupendous) then they would want to pack as many units as possible on the sites. Now (in hindsight we see he was right) we have large numbers of units on the waterfront, where they have only two bedrooms – but huge entertaining areas with views.

Richard goes on “If the NSW Government wants urban consolidation to succeed, then it has to be prepared to upgrade the social and physical infrastructure and, in the case of Balmain, especially the transport access for the Peninsula.” So Balmain Hospital has been downgraded, parking and particularly meter parking is a real issue for residents. Another pertinent point in this article was that the access by road to the peninsula from Victoria Road is so poor that congestion is not just on Victoria Road, but on each of the four access roads.

### **Traffic, Congestion and even more Plans**

Traffic and transport has been regularly reported on. The three main arterials in the council area are the City West Link, Victoria Road and Parramatta Road. The Link was only appreciated in the rest it gave to the residents of Lilyfield Road, but the other two remain congestion nightmares. The M4 link from Strathfield to Victoria Road (now planned to tunnel under the expensive City West Link) will just increase the traffic pouring in to the City from the North and West. The one piece of infrastructure that ISV strongly supported was the light rail, now going to Lilyfield, and the only criticism was that it was not kept in State hands, but handed over to a commercial (but subsidised) private company. Over the years ISV has provided endless comment on the need for public transport – heavy rail, light rail, dedicated bus lanes and cycle ways. Further on in this section is a short piece on the extra cost to make the Anzac Bridge so high (unnecessarily).

### **The Loveliest Waterside Park in Sydney**



Callan Park is now (October 2008) to be handed over to Leichhardt Council, perhaps to save the State seat for the Labour Party in the 2011 election. However whether the Council can afford to maintain the park remains to be seen. This saga has constantly been reported on throughout the years, starting with the decision to close the locked wards at the Rozelle Hospital, to empty other wards and let the buildings rot, and finally to move the hospital to a mental health unit on the Concord Hospital site. Each time ISV reported on the lack of other mental health facilities, and the increase in distressed people living in horrible boarding houses and wandering around Rozelle.



**W**hat would become of the site, and particularly the wonderful parkland? The State tried to sell some hectares off to an Italian company to build an old people's home, and then the most recent plan was for a huge new campus for Sydney University with student accommodation as well. Moving the College of Fine Arts into the heritage Kirkbride complex was the only plan welcomed.

In 2001 Dr Jean Lennane wrote of the continuing community action since 1989.

*"Treasury will penalize Central Sydney Area Health up to \$15 million from next financial year's financial budget if it fails to raise money from the site."*

She went on "Callan Park's value to the community lies in its size, which means that people can get away from the sound of traffic, its diversity of landscape forms and the heritage values of beautiful old buildings in their original settings."

## **Ballast Point a Success**

The one previous success, after a long and sustained community campaign was the decision by the Carr Government to give over Ballast Point Caltex fuel storage site to a new park. Like Callan Park ISV can be proud of being another voice, among many, that finally led to the NSW Government buying the site, and funding the gradual turning of the site into a waterside park. We learn that we must keep up the pressure!

## **The Bridge Too High**

The annual report in 1992 had the following gem "City West Strategy – urban consolidation here we come. At least we will have a nice new bridge to view it from. *Pity it (The Anzac Bridge) is \$65 million too high. How was the RTA to know that the only boat using Blackwattle Bay (that required such a bridge) stopped going there last week. One has a sneaking suspicion that it may have been a case of phalocentricity that led to the design of a bridge with two enormous structures*". (The ongoing concern is that now Maritime Services will continue to want to use Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays for large luxury boats, and keep the public away from much of the foreshore).

## **When will we get the Italian Cultural Centre?**

The same Annual Report (1992) reported on the Italian Forum in Leichhardt, which was a site given free by the State Government to the Italian community. The developers had not sold enough units so they refused to do the fitout of the new Council Central Library and the Italian Cultural Centre – the whole reason for the site. Leichhardt Council was then being charged \$1450 per week rent for a library that did not exist.

## **And of course the Third Runway..**

There is a more detailed report under Botany (p14-15) but ISV supported the residents whose lives were being shattered by the threat and then the actuality of two parallel runways north-south directly across the inner city. ISV supported Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils and the anti-aircraft noise coalitions.



*The bay walk on Blackwattle Bay looking over to the Anzac Bridge (Edition106/2006)*

# Urban Environment

**I**nnersydney Voice has always been concerned

itself with the big environmental issues long before involvement in environmental issues became a mainstream activity. Regional Council has also always involved itself in broader issues than social services. Environment was one of the eight social goals in the UWASIS classification system that has been used throughout the life of Inner Sydney Voice.

## Big environmental issues

Inner Sydney Voice addressed environmental issues from several different perspectives. Major environmental issues on a global scale were raised, such as the use of nuclear power and in particular the treatment of radioactive waste (Edition 11/1979 & 86/1999). We also supported our neighbours in Sutherland in their fight over the lack of safety procedures in the old and deteriorating Lucas Heights nuclear reactor and their fight to prevent the construction of a new facility in the middle of an urban area (Edition 90/2000).

Regional Council was an important player in the campaign to remove lead from petrol (Editions 11/1979 & 69/1994), focusing on the impact of lead pollution on children, with the result that laws were passed to remove lead from petrol.

## The urban environment

As a member of the Sydney Urban Environment Coalition, Regional Council involved itself with environmental issues that impacted on city residents, thus distinguishing itself from wilderness and forest issues. The Urban Environment Coalition wanted city residents to have clean air, clean water, uncontaminated soils, open space and low noise levels. One Sydney-wide environmental issue that resulted in articles was smog from vehicle emissions that started on the highways into the city and drifted to the south west (Edition 26).



## Connection to other social issues

Articles in Inner Voice show that the organisation understood the connection between the environment and other important social issues - and the subsequent transfer of costs from industry to human services. Air pollutants in smog had a direct impact on health such as asthma in children (Editions 11/1979 & 17/1980) and workers exposure to noise and carcinogens in factories (Edition 13/1980) that related to both health and employment.

## Impact on Inner and Eastern Sydney

Regional Council's main approach to environmental issues was quite correctly, the impact on the inner Sydney region that it covered. On this battleground, Regional Council took on the state government, industry and at times, local councils. It was heavily involved with the Botany Bay Sub-Region Community Advisory Committee, where it reported on the workings of the Dept of Planning, such as the approval of huge new LPG storage being constructed by ICI (Edition 17/1980), being especially concerned with the lack of emergency plans in case of an explosion (LPG is highly combustible).

Other environmental problems were caused by sand mining at Kurnell (Edition 69) and the plight of wetlands around Botany Bay.

*"Sydney's largest freshwater wetland system is an environmental mess with out-of-control weeds and blue-green algae blooms every year since 1991. It looked like this situation would be remedied when a taskforce was set up the early 90s to manage its future, but the final report has been held up for two years. Now the Water Board has been corporatised and the Wetland's future is unclear"* (Edition 70/1994).

## Tunnels, Roads and Freeways

As the city grew, the push to construct new roads, freeways and tunnels grew apace - there was the Eastern Distributor, the harbour tunnel, the M2, M5, M6 East and cross city tunnel (94/2002).





Malabar Headland



## Recent developments

Of course, now, the environment is 'the' topic of this millenium.

The interconnectedness of the environment to all other aspects of life and to the very survival of life on this planet is well established. The only questions remaining is how much we need to do and how quickly. The lessons learnt from the writings in Inner Sydney Voice over the last 30 years are that we need to strengthen local communities so they can take action in and about their local environment – prevent industry from ruining the soil, air and

roads, save local remaining pockets of bushland and take up local greenhouse saving in initiatives such as community gardens, community transport, recycling and growing trees.

## Is it a Fact?

This feature of Inner Sydney Voice over the years has provided Regional Council with a way to deal with some of the outrageous happenings without making a statement – we are only asking a question after all!



and the need for parks to make a locality a pleasant place to live (Edition 109/2007).

On a larger scale, the sale of Prince Henry hospital at Malabar, opened up parts of the area for redevelopment and the previously protected Malabar Headland, controlled by the Commonwealth, became subject to either neglect or possible development. Calls for the site to be transferred to the NSW government and made into a national park were falling on deaf ears (Edition 102/2005).

## Waterloo incinerator

This icon of air pollution (and visual pollution) in inner Sydney has been a symbol of all that Regional Council has been fighting for in relation to our environment. The incinerator has ceased spewing a cocktail of toxic chemicals over the residents of Zetland for several years now, and is finally gone, to be replaced by a new commercial and residential centre – Green Square. The sad thing is that it probably ceased operating as a result of becoming costly and obsolete rather than any campaign by local resident action groups.

## Parks and bushland

From time to time, Inner Sydney Voice emphasised the importance of open space, especially small parks and small pockets of bushland. One such spot was the fight to save Glebe Gulley in Randwick, the only remaining rainforest in Sydney (Edition 11/1980). Later editions pleaded for the preservation of the small parks in the Inner Sydney such as Perry Park (Edition 71/1995), the campaign for Green Ban Parks in Erskineville (Edition 70 /1994) and lately the signage that pollute parks visually (Edition 108/2007) plus the concept of City of Villages

## is it A Fact

■ that the newly merged BP and Amoco have quietly decided not to proceed with a plant in Sydney's west that would have produced 20 megawatts of solar panels per year?

■ that these panels would have been enough to power 20,000 homes, reducing greenhouse gases by 6 – 8 million tonnes?

■ that the Total Environment Centre deplored the action and called on the NSW government

to redouble its efforts to gain a leading market position in renewables?

■ that the company asked the Total Environment Centre to retract the release?



## pictorial: iSV Through The years

*Bondipav.....Edition 104/2006. This building on the beach at Bondi has seen countless changes of use over the 30 years.*



*Sue and Jack...  
Edition 105/2006.  
Sue Rosen gave the  
2006 Marg Barry  
Lecture – “We never  
had a hotbed of  
Crime” She is with  
Jack Munday, one  
of the architects of  
Green Bans, and a  
strong supporter of  
Regional Council.*



*Reflective.....Edition  
101/2005. One of the  
tenants on the Northcott  
Estate in Surry Hills.*



*Friends.....Just two friends on a park bench*



*Is this an advert for Bill Poster  
himself outside Newtown Town Hall?*

