

# THE NEW BUSH TELEGRAPH

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## Whose River Is It?

Terry Barratt  
Shoalhaven River Alliance

**I**N common with all river systems in southern Australia, the Shoalhaven River has been suffering from the long-term downturn in rainfall across a large part of the continent.

However, the Shoalhaven is somewhat different from other rivers in that it is close enough to the country's largest city to be considered as a handy source of water for its burgeoning population. Having exceeded the capacity of the Hawkesbury/ Nepean River system, Sydney is now turning to the Shoalhaven to help quench its unsustainable thirst. This is just one example of the growing ecological footprint of Sydney on resources beyond its boundaries.

It is not the drought that threatens the health of the river – it is the growing rate of extractions via a proposed tunnel across the Southern Highlands which will place the river permanently on tap to Sydney.

The Shoalhaven River Alliance was formed in February 2005 to fight for an environmental flow regime that would return the river to health. It has come to the view that this can only be achieved by abandonment of extractions from the river altogether and that this can be achieved through potable re-use.

The Government has turned a blind eye to this concept even though recent polls have demonstrated 80% support from the community. The Opposition has seen the light and brought forward a plan to make potable re-use a reality in addition to support for progressive reduction of the Shoalhaven River extractions. The Greens, while opposing the Shoalhaven transfers, have surprisingly criticised the Opposition's re-use plans and instead advocated a range of small-scale measures that fail to address the wasteful ocean dumping regime and the ongoing demands on the river.



PHOTO: Ron Doughton

Interestingly, the peak environment groups in Sydney support the Opposition's plans.

None of the parties have made the link between unsustainable population growth and the water crisis!

For the sake of the Shoalhaven River we need to keep the pressure on the politicians up to the State elections and on the Government thereafter, whoever they may be.

We must get the message across to them that anything that does not *reduce, recycle or reuse* water will get the thumbs down. ■

## The State Election

Patrick Thompson

**T**HE most likely result in the State election for the two electorates covering the Shoalhaven will be a return of Shelley Hancock (Liberal) as Member for South Coast and Matt Brown (Labor) as Member for Kiama.

Electorate boundaries have changed since the last State election. As a result voters living

north of the Shoalhaven River will now be in Kiama, whilst those to the south of the river will vote in South Coast.

Strong challenges are however expected. In Kiama, Ann Sudmalis is the Liberal Party candidate while Ben van der Wijngaart will represent the Greens. The South Coast will see Michelle Miran attempting to regain the seat for Labor which it lost in

the last State election. It was the only seat Labor lost in the last State poll.

Changing electoral boundaries and an increased vote by the Greens in Council elections is likely to see an increased vote for that party. The Greens candidate for the South Coast will be Amanda Findley.

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## EDITORIAL

IF the old political adage that oppositions don't win elections only governments loses them, is the case, then the Iemma Government faces a tough challenge in the forthcoming State election. Although starting clear favourites in the race for the polls, there are factors working against a return of a Labor government.

Firstly, history is on the side of the challenger. Rarely has a government been returned following the retirement of a long serving leader. Morris Iemma knows this and has been at pains to distinguish himself from his predecessor.

Secondly, there is the state of the NSW economy. Governments are hard to replace when an economy is doing well. The truth is NSW is struggling. Unemployment is high by national standards and our economy is close to recession. Whether voters will blame the State government for this state of affairs or will blame it on Canberra, remains to be seen.

Certainly a shake up in Macquarie Street is called for. Whether the Liberals are ready to govern is, however a question voters will need to consider. Opposition leaders always find it difficult to gain traction with an electorate and Peter Debnam is no exception. At times his leadership has been well short of the mark and the power of right wing factions with his party is worrying.

Politicians of both major parties are not popular with the voters. Increasingly, the people have been looking to independents and smaller parties to register their protest. There is a probability that independents will be returned in increasing numbers in the coming election. It is also possible that they will hold the balance of power, just as they did in 1995.

Both the major parties will hate this out come but it might be the best result for good government. If forced to sign a charter with the independents either a Iemma or Debnam led government would be made more accountable. Parliament may meet more frequently and not be the farce it has become. Open government is a good thing and is the best insurance at curbing excesses of power. It also gives oppositions purpose whilst keeping governments of their mettle.



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## LETTERS

### Bomaderry Creek Bushland Under Threat

Many readers of the NBT will be familiar with the past battles to save this marvellous piece of urban bushland. For those not familiar with the Bushland, I invite you to get a copy of the Bomaderry Creek Bushland Walks book from the Nowra Visitor Centre and go for a walk there.

Council has for many years proposed a housing carve-up of the Bushland and a through road linking the suburbs of North Nowra and Bomaderry.

Many years of lobbying and a successful court case led to declaration in December 2001 of 81ha of the Bushland as the Bomaderry Creek Regional Park.

Success and victory at last – or so we thought!

In recent years Council has gained the support for the road from the Labor Member for Kiama Matt Brown. Revocation by Act of Parliament of part of the Park is required as well as no alternative road route being available. But there is an alternative available – West Cambewarra Road!

These facts do not appear to be of any concern to Matt Brown. He appears to believe that support of Council is a vote-winner.

Mr Brown has also ignored a petition, signed by 1013 North Nowra residents, opposing any roads through the Bushland.

The Liberal candidate for Kiama, Ann Sudmalis, also supports Council and has, without any supporting evidence, questioned the legitimacy of the petition.

The Kiama Greens are opposed to roads through the Park and to residential carve up of the Bushland. They support addition of the rest of the Bushland to the Regional Park.

The creation of a 250ha Regional Park in the middle of a growing urban landscape would be a valuable asset for locals and visitors alike.

This proposal needs a strong expression of community support. You are urged to let Mr Brown, Ms Sudmalis and their parties know what you think of their position.

For more information or clarification.

#### Terry Barratt

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### NBT - A Retrospective.

Wonderful to see NBT re emerge after a long break.

Inspired by the prospect of a new issue, I went to search out earlier issues at the Nowra library. As I flicked through the various issues I realised I was viewing a snapshot of 20 years of environmental activism – Jervis Bay, the Welcome Reef Dam on the upper Shoalhaven River, Bomaderry Creek, ocean outfalls and many other issues – all wins in recent history. Other issues such as the RAN use of Beecroft and the Heritage Estates remain unresolved, but the overall impression from reviewing back issues was: "We have made a difference and awareness has changed."

NBT began in 1986. At that time it was the combined monthly

newsletter of various organisations such as the Shoalhaven Bushwalkers, Jervis Bay Protection Committee, Shoalhaven Conservation Society, Shoalhaven and Milton-Ulladulla People for Peace.

It was established to "share encouragement, support and expertise among the many groups with similar or related interests and ideals" As well as articles of interest it also had details of each groups meetings and activities and contact details. The initially monthly publication was mailed out and payment levied against each group according to the membership. With May Leatch as the driving force, it was a delightful publication. May did most of the work on her trusty typewriter, cutting and pasting up each page, often adding little hand drawn sketches and maps.

As the nature and needs of the various groups changed, NBT developed a wider readership and a list of individual subscribers.

When I took over from May in 1991 the NBT was a bimonthly. Even with a computer, I soon discovered the time involved in putting together a 16 page magazine was huge. Thankfully I was assisted by many including ever faithful Sue Prescott who could produce a magical sketch to illustrate even the driest article and Alec Sourdin and Bede Sunter who helped enormously with editing and compilation.

Others contributed articles, sourced advertisers, kept the mailing list and collated and mailed out each issue - a wonderful volunteer effort and a lot of fun... but barely sustainable as peoples lives became more complex and busy.



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In 1997 (issue 77) Sandra Lee took over as NBT's first modestly paid editor and continued until Issue 93. Issue 94 was produced in 2005 with the assistance of Brenda and David Duffy, and now with issue 95, Pat Thompson, publisher of Envirobook and longtime member of the Colong Foundation, has taken on the challenge.

Good luck Pat, thank you for picking up the baton and ensuring the continuity of NBT – and if you ever waver in your endeavour – go to the Nowra Library and be reminded of what NBT has been part of to date!

**Ev Pettigrew**  
NBT Editor 1991-1997

P.S. The library collection begins at Issue 5. If anyone has any copies of issues 1-4 I am sure they would appreciate these to complete their collection.

## COMMENT

### Iraq

Dennis Argall

**I**N 2003 great numbers of us came out on the streets to campaign against the war beginning in Iraq.

Why did we fall silent? I certainly felt after a year or so that the prospect of any human voice shifting high policy was gone. Nothing could be changed.

I shifted my efforts to trying to do something positive about the world at a human level, as discussed in what I write about [nabuur.com](http://nabuur.com) in this issue.

We are left now with the terrible consequences of having invaded Iraq, surely the most dreadful

strategic decision in the history of Australian government. I was interested to hear a former United States Ambassador to Israel describe it recently as the greatest strategic error in American history.

It does matter that we get our armed forces out of Iraq soon. Then, because we have been there in an invading force and as part of a colonial occupation force, we will have to make major contributions by non-military means to Iraq's recovery. We are all, as Australian voters, like the James Hardie shareholders whose company pissed on ordinary people. We should pay for a long time.

I recently met a senior Jesuit, with wide church and charitable responsibilities in Cambodia, helping Cambodians recover from their long war. He said that when he listened to the news from Iraq, he could see that Iraq's situation was now 30 years behind Cambodia's present situation.

We could be angry. But getting angry with the people who got us into this mess doesn't break out of the politics of fear and insecurity on which our war-happy government has thrived.

If government claims a right to go to war 'pre-emptively' because it believes it is 'in the right' what message does this send to our homes and neighbour-

hoods? What we do at international policy level and what we do in our private lives is one fabric.

My good neighbour says to me of politicians: "But they are all the same, aren't they?" Lots of people are saying it — lots of truth in it, in terms of the aggressive conduct and divisive, competitive behaviour of political 'leaders'.

So I invite my neighbour's sons to engage with community politics, to form a youth forum to lobby for things kids need around here. Maybe they will. Maybe we can save democracy if young people find it a positive process, not a tussle between remote and angry leaders. ■

# The State Election

continued from page 1

LOCAL issues are always important in contributing to 'swings' that can make a difference on polling day. Perusing candidates' literature and asking candidates what they see as the most important issues is a useful way to gain some knowledge of what to expect. Water, law and order, sustainable development, employment, the environment and climate change, as well as health and transport are some of the major issues that affect us.

Judging by the Newsletter from **Shelley Hancock**, law and order is the number one issue. It seems she is 'extremely concerned that over the last decade, there has been an increase in assaults, vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the Shoalhaven'. One wonders when 'law and order' will ever be achieved but it is not likely while 'fear' is such a useful vote garner.

The Government is promising yet more police and major public works include spending large sums on new jails at Kempsey, Wellington and Nowra. The Opposition are not against this, nor the redevelopment of Goulburn, Broken Hill, Junee and Kirkconnell jails. It is part of boosting jobs in country and coastal NSW. Perhaps, we would all do well to remember that NSW was after all founded as a penal colony.

In an interview with the *Bush Tele*, **Michelle Miran**, says sustainable development is the number one issue for her with employment ranking second. With unemployment in the Nowra/Bomaderry area running at 12.8% according to the December Quarter statistics, we certainly need something. If building a jail,



TOP TO BOTTOM: Shelley Hancock, Amanda Findley and Michelle Miran

the Stockland developments in Nowra and Vincentia and plans for the development of Huskisson village centre are to go ahead, we are certainly in for a development boom. Ulladulla/Milton and Sussex Inlet are also set to grow

rapidly with a number of key developments on the drawing boards. The question is do these proposals represent sustainable development?

One of the problems with the term 'sustainable development' is that it means different things to different people. It's a term politicians enjoy using. Like 'economic rationalism' it is not very rational in practice. In the run up to the State election we need to think very carefully about what we want for our community.

The environment we live in and want for the future is critical to us all. The character of the Shoalhaven is that it is not currently over populated or over developed. The next decade will bring increasing pressure. Other coastal communities have grown significantly faster than our region, often at the expense of the environment. Many of these regions in spite of their growth remain economically depressed.

The proposed Stockland development at Vincentia is an example of significant environmental change. Under controversial planning laws, Minister Sartor, has determined this development may proceed. Under the South Coast Regional Strategy the Minister says there are to be no more villages or towns but the Stockland development is not included. The Greens have always opposed the proposal and to her credit Labor's Michelle Miran has spoken out against it.

The environment is the issue that is ultimately the most important. Neither Liberal

## Put a Green Watchdog in the NSW Parliament



The Greens  
**Amanda Findley**  
"Rescue the Future"

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nor Labor has much to say on the subject. The Liberals want to increase the use of ethanol-blended fuels to reduce emissions and improve air quality. This sounds like being good for local business. Only the Greens are taking climate change seriously. True they are not going to be in government but they propose targets of 20% renewable energy by 2012 and 50% by 2020. This is planning for the future. Business is asking for it and it makes sense. It is needed to set policy framework.

Public transport continues to be a neglected issue. It is easy enough to complain when not in government and maintenance is costly without much to show for your investment. It is hard to see the Liberals doing much more, as they have long favoured private transport

over public. In any case, what is needed is some thinking outside of the square. Climate change makes it an imperative for radical change. Carbon costs should herald the arrival of the electric car and vastly improved public transport should be part of the solution.

Health is an issue of concern for us all. Increasingly this is becoming a Federal issue and needs to be as State budgets simply can't manage the costs. Labor under Iemma has significantly increased spending on mental health but Shelley Hancock is right to call for mental health beds for Shoalhaven Hospital. If we are going to build a jail then the nexus between mental health and prison populations needs to be recognised and provision made. ■

*The environment we live in and want for the future is critical to us all... The next decade will bring increasing pressure.*

# Where are the Warriors?

Maureen Webb

WITH the sad passing in 2006 of Steve Irwin, the famed 'Crocodile Hunter', came outpourings of grief. It was grief for the loss of a good man but also for someone who battled for wildlife. Many people stood up to be counted, donating money for his Wildlife Warriors work to continue. This was to help protect wildlife and it seemed that Australians believed that work was important and wildlife was worthy of protection.

One may think with existing legislation and policies in place, when large development proposals are mooted and wildlife threatened, protection would be assured. One would assume that with input from our National Parks and Wildlife Service and/or other agencies

both Federal and State, loss of wildlife or habitat would not be permitted.

It is perplexing then to find a development such as that proposed by Stockland, for the Vincentia Cross Roads site, can have the slightest chance of being approved or be permitted to continue on its path of approval/destruction.

The application, which went to the State government's Dept of Planning in 2006, was for over 604 home sites plus a major shopping complex complete with car parking areas. The application did not take into consideration the extra 150 plus residences planned for the future.

When a development is set to impact on threatened fauna or flora, hands are thrown in the air, complaints are made and the offending development might be altered or compro-

mises made. (It doesn't appear total refusal is often given and not often our wildlife wins.) This is of course when there are one, two or maybe three Threatened Species found on a development site.

But wait! Here we have not just one, two or three Threatened Species. No this sensitive coastal bushland site supports thirty three Threatened Species (yes 33), plus others not on any protection listing.

And did our NPWS and other government agencies become our Wildlife Warriors and stop the destruction of their habitat? Not on your Nelly!

Mr Frank Sartor, Minister for Planning announced in early February 2007 that State government departments have signed off on the Stockland development. Signed off? How is this possible?

Stockland have altered and

made changes but protection of 33 Threatened Species makes it difficult, even impossible to ensure the level of protection needed and our wildlife is in danger.

This is not the end of the Stockland saga. The Federal government has the final say. It recently accepted submissions on Stockland's proposals to ameliorate known impacts which are threatening those species listed under the Commonwealth's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act). The Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH), Canberra will now study these submissions and liaise with Stockland before making a determination.

Will the Commonwealth's DEH be our Wildlife Warriors? The coming months should give us the answer. It would have been a wonderful act if more

local people had become warriors and stood up proclaiming loudly that our wildlife was important and should be supported and protected. Many good people fought against this proposal but where is the full public outrage for the losses of wildlife proposed by this development. Do Australians care or does a shopping centre override all.

There were many other issues associated with the Vincentia proposal, but at this stage the Federal govt (DEH) was dealing only with those Threatened Species listed under the Commonwealth Act. The issues need to be looked at for the community.

Issues such as: traffic; roads; community facilities; medical facilities; threats to bushland/wetland/marshland/grasslands; waters of Jervis Bay; threatened flora; local shops ... and the list goes on. ■

# Agapanthus: Garden pet or environmental pest?

Gerard Proust

I'VE often been asked, 'Can I grow *Agapanthus* and still be serious about the environment?' It's not as easy a question as it sounds, as it's hard for people to truly grasp the devastating effect that weeds have on native plants and animals; even people who understand and genuinely care about the environment.

The Shoalhaven is a special part of an extremely unique country. The country has developed in isolation from the rest of the world for over 50 million years. Most of our plants and animals are unlike their counterparts elsewhere. A staggering 93% of our frogs, an astounding 89% of reptiles, 85% of our flowering plants and 84% of our terrestrial mammals are uniquely Australian and do not occur naturally anywhere else (SEAC 1996).

However, the last 200 years have seen major changes to our natural ecosystems through a staggering array of destructive habits, which are still taking

place today. The list of these threats is a sad indictment of our colonial heritage and approach to stewardship of the land. They range from habitat clearing, changed fire regimes, weed invasions and feral animal to pollution, salinity and urban development.

■ A third of all mammal extinctions last century were in Australia.

■ There are more threatened species of amphibians and reptiles here than any other country.

■ Salinity has devoured 2.2 million hectares

■ 27 million hectares have been swamped by the over 2500 exotic species (CRC2005)

The two greatest threats to Australia's plants and animals are land clearing and invasive plants. The first one should be self evident in its source and prevention. The second threat: invasive plants, is a complicated and emotive issue. Up against more than 20 000 Australian native plants are in excess of 2500 introduced species that are invading different ecosystems

(ABS2004). The Sydney region has new weeds being introduced into bushland at the rate of four to five a year! (Beadle1986)

These plants are introduced for a variety of reasons; either as ornamental plants, pasture plants, rehabilitation plants or fodder plants. Despite having their supporters, there appears to be no scientific basis for any argument in favour of species introduction; just an old fashioned mentality inherited from colonial days: "I want it, I like it, so I should be able to have it!".

Two examples of plants being grown as ornamentals strictly for human aesthetic values that have had catastrophic effects on our country are Bridal Creeper or Baby Smilax (*Asparagus asparagoides*) and Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*).

Bridal Creeper first appeared in Australia in WA in 1870 as an ornamental plant. It now has spread from north of Perth around to Tasmania and up to SE Queensland and has become one of the 20 Weeds of National Significance (Unfortunately

only two states have banned these plants from sale). This plant is considered an extreme threat to biodiversity and is prevalent throughout the Shoalhaven.

Dutchman's Pipe is a much admired but seemingly innocuous exotic ornamental. Its tale represents the potential of the popular ornamental on our unique environment. In 1870 the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera richmondia*) was reportedly very common in the streets of Brisbane. Today there are no known natural breeding sites between Nerang and Caboolture. The butterfly usually lays its eggs on two native vines (*Pararistolochia* spp.) but most have been lost due to coastal rainforest clearing.

Unfortunately, research has shown that the Birdwing Butterfly mistakes Dutchman's

Pipe for the native plant it usually lays its eggs on. The compounding problem is that the Dutchman Pipe has toxins that kill the emerging caterpillars that attempt to feed on it, causing serious ecological changes all the way up the food chain.

These two examples highlight the need to adopt the precautionary principle in dealing with plants that people want to grow. Also, individuals need to find about the plants they have on their land and take responsibility for land stewardship decisions.

So, to return to the question of growing *Agapanthus* and caring about the environment. These plants grow from rhizomes and seeds are being grown in more and more gardens. As a result they are becoming more common in bushland. A simple test to judge a plant's invasiveness is to try and dig it up; roots and all. Can this be done with *Agapanthus*? Can I grow *Agapanthus* and still be serious about the environment? Maybe you can do the test and judge for yourself: Yes, No, Maybe? ■

## Treading The Grapes

Patrick Thompson

SOON after arriving in the Shoalhaven as part of my sea change, I decided it was time that I started making my own wine. The sourcing of grapes at the local vineyards proved difficult but someone gave me the tip that there was a sign on the highway near Falls Creek offering wine grapes for sale. I called at the farm. 'No problem,' I was told 'Call back in a couple of weeks' and so I did.

Now Easter is the time for grapes but what I wasn't expecting when I went back to the farm was for a semi trailer full of them to roll in the gate after me. I only wanted half a dozen boxes. I helped with unloading, 1050 boxes, as I remember it. What amazed me was other cars began arriving and I learnt that upwards of a hundred other families would be calling to collect their wine grapes. I was not alone. There I was thinking I was a bit unusual in making my own wine.

Now Italians and folk from



many others lands have been making wine for a very long time so there is much we can learn from them. My tutor was my uncle who grew up in the Riverland, South Australia and who also went to agricultural college. He makes good wine, so I figured if I followed faithfully what he did, I could too. It is really pretty straight forward. Here's what I do.

Start with a few boxes of red grapes, say of Shiraz, Merlot, Grenache or whatever. Wine grapes cost less than \$20 a box and a box will make 8 to 10 litres. You then need suitable containers. I use the 25 litre beer making variety with an air-lock. You must keep the air out, as it is the enemy. Initially, with red grapes, air is not a problem for the first stage.

It is the first stage where the kids get involved. Your grapes need crushing and stomping on them is the age old method. Leaving the stems on is optional. I remove the stems but my uncle doesn't. When you have squashed your grapes leave them for a few days or even

up to a week. At this stage the fermenting process gets under way. The grape skins provide the natural yeast and they will tend to rise to the top inside the container. You need to push them down once or twice a day.

The second stage is when the pantyhose are needed. Now is the time you have to get rid of the skins and any stems. It is the skins that give the wine its colour, so the harder you squeeze, the blacker the wine. After squeezing the grapes your work has almost finished. It is that simple. Close off the outside air and your wine will go on boiling away, slowing progressively as the fermenting process abates. After a couple weeks it is a good idea to rack the wine. This means pouring your wine through a strainer so the lees, i.e. the dregs at the bottom of the barrel, are removed.

The final stage comes with the drinking. Around August is a good time to start. It will only get better as time goes by. There is no need for preservatives to be added. If you decide you want to keep some of the wine for years, you can add Tannisol, an anti oxidant or a sodium metabisulphite tablet, but this should not be added with red wine until after the fermentation process has finished. What I would recommend, however, is to make sure your containers are sterilised to start. It is only a safeguard as I think the alcohol is a pretty good preservative itself.

Now it is over to you and Easter is approaching. ■

## enviroscene Bernie Clarke

The impact of long periods of drought is obvious to most people but how many understand its impacts on waterways, be it a lake, river, estuary or ocean.

Seasonal rain plays an important role in maintaining oxygen levels in marine and freshwaters and keeps pollution levels down after the first cleansing downpour. Rains flush organic material and a variety of insects into the waters, which forms part of the food chain.

This cycle is reversed during a drought, resulting in high nutrient levels, algal blooms and in some cases eutrophic. Algal blooms reduce the dissolved oxygen content of the water to lethal levels. Algae use more oxygen than they produce.

The Sydney Water Board once used billions of litres of water from the Nepean Dam to break up an algal bloom in the Hawkesbury River during a hot dry spell and to improve the river's water quality by raising oxygen levels.

Several years ago, during a long hot dry spell about this time of the year, Jervis Bay erupted into a bloom of a milky turquoise colour. The bloom consisted of two types of algae, a dinoflagellate sp. (a single cell plant) and a diatom alga. The bloom was four times bigger than Sydney Harbour, to a depth of about five metres. Algae blooms inhibit photosynthesis and if it remains for a long period would have a detrimental effect on seagrasses.

The most toxic of algae is a form of marine plankton dinoflagellate, a unicellular aquatic organism, the common cause of 'red tides'. The release of toxins can kill of infect marine animals and humans eating such animals, particular shellfish. In one incident twenty six people died after ingesting shellfish containing the nerve toxin saxitoxin, found in one of the dinoflagellate algae. This happened during a drought when the water temperature was at an elevated level. There have been many large fish kills from suffocation caused by oxygen depletion in the water through the decomposition of an algal bloom. The decaying 'red tide' alga exudes toxins that can be harmful to humans breathing it.

Recent rains have given us a reprieve, with the welcome news Tallawarra Dam is overflowing. Our coastal waters have been revitalised and both freshwater and saltwater fishing will improve greatly.

Rains help stir prawns from their winter hibernation, a crustacean most fish are attracted to, thus excellent bait. We are in the middle of the prawning season. Of the twenty six species of prawns (PENAEIDAE) only three species are known to spend their juvenile life in the estuaries. Two species, king and school prawn go to sea to spawn, the other, greasyback, is the only specie in Australia that spends its life in the estuaries and coastal lakes, except when a flood may carry some into ocean waters.

Prawns rise from their winter hibernation on an ebb tide in the dark of the moon. Add nine days to the date of the previous full moon for the dark.

During a good season, estuary prawning may extend to May.

NEXT ISSUE: Rigs and bait and why flathead can't bite you off, the fishing line of course.



# Nabuur, a virtual neighbourhood

**I**N 2004 it seemed to me increasingly difficult to make a dint in our government's war-focused foreign policy. So I went exploring for things that could be done people-to-people for a better world.

I discovered the United Nations had a place on the web for recruiting 'on-line volunteers' - <http://www.unv.org>

Via that I discovered an extraordinary new concept at [www.nabuur.com](http://www.nabuur.com) - you can

find a long 'discussion' I had in 2005 with the Nabuur founder if you look at the home page of my web site [www.aplaceof.info](http://www.aplaceof.info) for reference to Nabuur. You will see also that Nabuur is supported by the Clinton Foundation.

The basic concept is simple, though the execution is proving quite difficult. A community anywhere in the developing world may put forward an 'issue' it wants solved. Nabuur provides a web

site and a trained volunteer facilitator, and a community of 'virtual neighbours' join in to solve the problem. The project focus remains what the locals want.

Now in early 2007 there are 158 Nabuur 'villages' in 23 countries, with 8445 neighbours registered. Quite a few Australians.

The number of villages is ready to grow rapidly, as the idea catches on, but we are at critical and complex stages now in getting 'success'.

Sometimes I have been able to give nabuur projects quite a few hours a week, at other times very little. Along the way I have been profoundly affected by developing close friendship with people far away, via the internet, from home. I have also learned enormously from the difficulties of communication of ideas over distances between cultures.

You sit here, and they sit over there, when they have a little money for the internet, and when they are not down with malaria...

Right now I am heavily committed to two projects in Africa whose success, if we can secure that, will help us

'write a book' - in one form or another - for how to succeed.

Fred, in Uganda, leads a group of young people finding life in a refugee camp. The big question: can you have a life if you have been a boy soldier or a sex slave to an insurgent army or members of your family have been killed in front of you? The practical task? - set up an internet cafe in town to give us work skills, to give us income for other projects - real self help.

You can find Fred on his bike at my home page. We've got the donated computers, they should have arrived by the time this is published. Now the hard work begins - a real business plan, staff training, policies on dealing with customers to build a quality service niche, rules for money management, etc. The young women have a drama group raising a little money with gender plays. Young men have a small cattle herd. Next a grain mill... It would be great to have your help, your time, your ideas and imagination. Like me, you will be stretched!

Flory, on the border of the Congo and Burundi, where in the past decade more people have been killed in war than



Fred Obala is coordinating community organisations in Uganda, as well as building his own.

A teacher's seminar in Burundi on how to build 'nonkilling society' programs into their teaching.



any other war since WWII - he just wants to build a Nonkilling Society'. Oh, and yes, to achieve self-sufficiency for his school for war orphans. Right now, we are breaking the school project down into packages that can be worked on effectively.

You can help with that too!  
[dennisargall@exemail.com](mailto:dennisargall@exemail.com)  
[www.aplaceof.info](http://www.aplaceof.info)  
 PO Box 2205 Tomerong NSW 2540 ■

## WARNING on WARMING It's worse than you thought!

A terrifying diagnosis

A "jury" of 2500 of the world's scientists has summed up six years work by warning that if greenhouse gas emissions aren't greatly reduced **COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD**

Monthly community Markets:

Jenni, I will give you hard copy table to include here.

**BUSKERS IN DEMAND**

A request has come from Kate Robson inviting buskers to the Tomerong Markets. Sounds like a great idea to add some colour and interest to what is already an interesting market day. It could read well on your CV, 'I started my professional life busking at Tomerong' or 'I got my first big break after my talent was recognised in Tomerong.'

**COMING EVENTS**

SEED CONFERENCE SAVERS

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Seed Savers' Conference and the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network Conference will be held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2007. Website [www.ceres.org.au](http://www.ceres.org.au) Ceres is the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies

**MUSIC FESTIVAL**

World class performers including Yvonne Kenny, Geoffrey Tozer, Ian Munro and Slava Grigoryan will be among performers at 'Arts in the Valley' over the weekend of April 20-22. For details: [www.artsinthevalley.net.au](http://www.artsinthevalley.net.au) or call 4465 2126 by 2020, humanity will suffer catastrophic climate change.

Their verdict, delivered in a 1200-page report on 2 February 2007, put an end to the complacency of *climate change deniers* who for years have been saying "the jury is still out". On the contrary, this "jury" of 2500 is saying, **Act at once to drastically slow the global warming process.**

No time to lose. Barely 15 years to change the rooted habits of governments, industry, and individuals.

Realism, not alarmism  
 In another, quite independent Report, the British Government's

top authority, Sir Nicholas Stern, former Chief Economist of the World Bank, backs up the urgency by calling for action "on the scale of two World Wars and the Great Depression".

He confirms what the 2500 scientists are saying: it is human/industrial/governmental behaviour that is to blame for the accelerating climate change - our billion belching vehicles, our belching power plants, our often energy-wasting industries and many, many other emitters of the carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases which swirl into the air (the atmosphere) and capture the sun's heat, thus over-warming our planet Earth.

The scientists are conservative

Far from the 2500 Scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) being alarmist, they reluctantly agreed to scale down their warning because of pressure from China, Saudi Arabia and a very few other major polluters. They wanted to achieve unanimity - which was achieved. All countries have signed the declaration.

But it was unanimity at a price. The call for urgent action should have been more strident. Many scientists argued there is a grave danger of "tipping points"

plunging the Planet's atmosphere into unstoppable deterioration at any time, though no one can say exactly when. Three of such possible tipping points are:

■ **SOILS.** As they warm, soils are less able to absorb and hold CO<sub>2</sub>.

■ **OCEANS.** As they warm, oceans too are less able to hold CO<sub>2</sub>.

■ **PERMAFROST.** Siberia's million square kilometres of peat, frozen for thousands of years, is unfreezing and releasing vast quantities of methane, which is 20-times as potent as CO<sub>2</sub>.

These are a big three of Nature's "carbon sinks" that have so far absorbed CO<sub>2</sub>, methane

and lesser gases, keeping Planet Earth from over-warming. Trees are a fourth.

Can breakneck growth be slowed?

Today's "terrifying diagnosis" worsens when one looks a little further ahead - not a century hence, but say to 2050, which is only as far forward as we were back in the 1960s... Time flies.

□ **By 2050** today's 6 billion will be 10 billion people.

□ The UN's International Energy Agency estimates energy demand will then be twice today's.

□ Breakneck industrial growth in China, India, Brazil, Mexico, etc. will have put huge strains on

## Shelley Hancock MP Member for South Coast Working for South Coast



*"Please come in and see me - it will be a pleasure to help"*

Shop 2, 24 Berry Street, Nowra • Ph: 4423 4822  
 PO Box 1002, Nowra NSW 2541 • Fx: 4422 8159

## TWO CULTURES KV and EAST TIMOR

Chris Nobel

Kangaroo Valley is a wonderful place to live and it's not just because of its fogs, cold winters, and challenging mountain roads! Its beauty is widely acclaimed and offers an excellent holiday destination. But its real appeal lies in the community. This is a community which holds disparate views and values and yet manages to co-habit with relative harmony and respect. There are the usual Church, Environment, Craft & Sports clubs which are active and productive. But the KV also boasts an unusual group which was formed from a feeling of despair and outrage over the treatment of the East Timorese people during the time of the referendum for Independence in 1999.

The group consists of a loose-knit gathering of interested people and has steadfastly remained informal and independent. Most members of the group have travelled to East Timor where they have visited the Valley's sister village called Remexio. There have been numerous projects and one of the major outcomes of the formation of the group has been the developing networks. There are many such support groups now operating and we help each other by sharing information and contacts. A number of singers from the Choir Ana murak were billeted in K.V and some have subsequently spent 3 - 6mths living with families in K.V. Keith Bell from Bell's Sewing Machines in Nowra made a dream come true after a short trip to East Timor in 2002. He met a young man who showed promise in the skill of repairing machines and a year later gave him the opportunity to spend 3 months in the Shoalhaven, learning the skills that would enable young Aleixo to return to his country and earn a living independently. He has subsequently built a house/shop from which he and his family make clothes and repair machines.

We have remained in close contact with our East Timorese friends and an added bonus to the whole experience is that the relationships within the group itself have developed into close friendships. When Martin Wesley-Smith was commissioned to compose a piece for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra to commemorate the Independence and continuing struggle of East Timor, the group organised to attend the Premier performance in Hobart without his knowledge. Peter, his twin brother had written the lyrics and was equally surprised (and we hope delighted) by our unexpected presence at this exceptional evening.

## SHOALHAVEN SEED SAVERS "Help Us Grow"

SHOALHAVEN Seed Savers are currently looking for new members. Since forming in 2005, Shoalhaven Seed Savers have been involved in a range of workshops spreading the word about the importance of seed saving and how to go about it.

The group has had a regular stall at the Tomerong market where seeds and information are

given away for free. The overall aim of the group is to educate the general public about seed saving and to gradually develop a Shoalhaven strain of locally grown fruit and vegetable varieties by collecting seeds from various crops each season and redistributing them throughout the area via members. It is hoped that more people will get involved by becoming members

and contribute some seed from their harvest each year building up the supply of seed that is then redistributed into the gardening community.

In doing so, varieties grown will be further adapted to local conditions and therefore more successful in our region. If you have seed that you wish to contribute or if you would like to join you can do so at the Seed Savers stall at Tomerong Market, the third Saturday of every month or contact the co-ordinator Gerard Proust for more information on 4443 6537 or pbs@shoalhaven.net.au

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# 1

## Michelle Miran

Authorised by V. Husted  
66 Ethel Street Sanctuary Point



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BRUNO AND MARIA

### MONTHLY COMMUNITY MARKETS

1ST FRIDAY	NOWRA UNITING CHURCH	BERRY & JUNCTION STS, NOWRA	CONTACT @ 4421 3740
1ST SATURDAY	MILTON VILLAGE MARKETS	SETTLEMENT COURTYARD, PRINCES HWY,	ALAN PEDDER @ 4455 3843
	LADY DENMAN MARKETS	WOOLLAMIA RD, HUSKISSON	BOB & MICHELLE SMITH @ 4443 3157
2ND SATURDAY	SUSSEX INLET FLEA MARKET	UNITING CHURCH, JACOBS DR, SUSSEX INLET	BILL HUNTER @ 4441 1546
3RD SATURDAY	TOMERONG VILLAGE MARKETS	SCHOOL OF ARTS, TOMERONG	KATE ROBSON @ 4443 9480
2ND SUNDAY	WHITE SANDS MARKET	SPORTING GROUNDS, HUSKISSON	BOB FINLAY @ 4441 8668 (B/H)
	COASTAL PATROL MARKETS	WASON STREET, ULLADULLA	
4TH SUNDAY	GREYHOUND TRACK MARKETS	NOWRA GREYHOUND TRACK, SOUTH NOWRA	GLENN MIDSON @ 4421 2332
	PYREE VILLAGE ARTS & CRAFT	GREENWELL POINT ROAD, PYREE	WENDY HARRIS @ 4446 5658

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Community notices in the New Bush Telegraph are FREE.

Send information about your community event to The Editor, PO Box 2210, TOMERONG NSW 2540 or email to pat@envirobook.com.au

# A Walk To Remember

*(or how the Budawangs chewed me up and spat me out!)*

Richard Bates

HAVING planned an extended walk in the Budawangs for a long time, I finally managed to organise a date in mid-May for a party of 6 friends, all experienced Budawangs walkers and very keen to get out there. Having made numerous day and overnight walks into the wilderness area between Nerriga and Milton, I had long wanted to explore deeper and further and chose a route that would take us into the park at Wog Wog Creek on the Mongarlowe Road, through to the heart of the mountains - *Monolith Valley* - and bring us out at Endrick River near Nerriga 4 days later.

We all had 2 months to get fit and our training weather was South Coast perfection - the balmy weather just went on and on and I spent almost as much time swimming and snorkelling around our stunning coastline as I did walking. I went for extended walks several times a week and got pack-fit while the weather remained perfect for weeks on end. Wouldn't you know it, a few days before the walk the weather turned and the day before it was still raining but the forecast looked quite good so off we went on a drizzly day but in high spirits.

For those of you not familiar with the Budawangs Wilderness Area - it is rough, remote walking and some of the most spectacularly beautiful country in the world. For me it ranks with the Himalayas and the Tasmanian Highlands for sheer spectacle, but you earn it! Tracks are often difficult to follow and sometimes overgrown or non-existent, the terrain is rugged, unless you want to carry the extra burden of a tent sleeping is under rock overhangs, there are creeks to cross, scrub to push through, steep and rough slopes strewn with obstacles to stagger up



PHOTO: Ron Doughton

and stagger down but the rewards are great. The isolation (we didn't see another soul out there), the vastness and awesome beauty of the landscape, the peace and quiet and the cooperative company of special friends bonded by the enterprise all make it an experience of joy and wonder that is quite unique.

So we left our cars at the exit and entry points and set off under overcast but clearing skies. We were all joyous at finally being off walking after all the preparation, the weather being our only concern.

The views were largely obscured by low cloud and eventually we climbed up into it and after 3 hours walking it started to rain. Now when you're faced with the reality of being out on a wet trail, in cloud and the day getting on you need a clear route, at least

in your head, to your campsite for the night. But we also dearly wanted to visit the Corang Arch - a truly spectacular rock formation just below the cliffline that is easily found IF you are on the right trail. Analysing both of our conflicting maps and guide book was of little help but fortunately we had several clear bushwalking heads in our group and we eventually found the arch just before it started to rain and we were able to shelter there and have our lunch.

Next day dawned bright and sunny to the lyrebird's call and the Yunga Lookout over the whole of the southern Budawangs kept us entranced for a bit too long. A long trek around Bibbenluke Mountain saw us heading down a steep ridge towards the massif surrounding *Monolith Valley*, a cave just outside the valley

being our second night's destination, when my right knee gave out on me - started to hurt then it was gone, just like that, in an hour. I staggered into the Mt Cole camping caves mid-afternoon where the others were waiting and we decided to stay there the night, only 20 minutes short of our intended destination but too late now to spend the afternoon exploring *Monolith Valley*, truly one of the special places on Earth - like the setting for *The Land That Time Forgot*, as we had planned. The others went for a bit of exploration while I rested and tried not to worry about the next day - we hadn't even covered half the distance of our walk yet and the next day was the tough one!

We had camped under a trickling waterfall yet awoke to the roar of a powerful cascade. You guessed it - it had rained in the night and was still raining. A hard decision had to be made - do the tough day with my bad knee getting soaked to the bone with yet another gruelling day ahead or cut it short and walk back out the way we had come, trying to get out in one day if my knee held up or camping

halfway in the same caves as the first night if not. We walked out.

It rained the whole morning, it was cold and the tracks were brooks and the brooks rivers but we were back at the *Burrumbeet Brook* caves for lunch.

My knee was painful but was holding up. My caring companions never let me be last on the trail and although I slowed them up a bit we kept up a good pace. We were cold and wet so decided on the forced march out, which we did, 19 kilometres through the mountains with full packs (although the others with much selfless compassion had shared some of my load to take some of the weight off my knee - thanks guys), arriving back at the car an hour after sunset in the moonlight, exhausted but exhilarated by what we had accomplished. It was tough but one of the best walks I've ever done and I enjoyed (nearly) every minute of it - none of us will ever forget it and what we proved ourselves capable of.

Above: Mount Tarn  
Left: Corang Arch

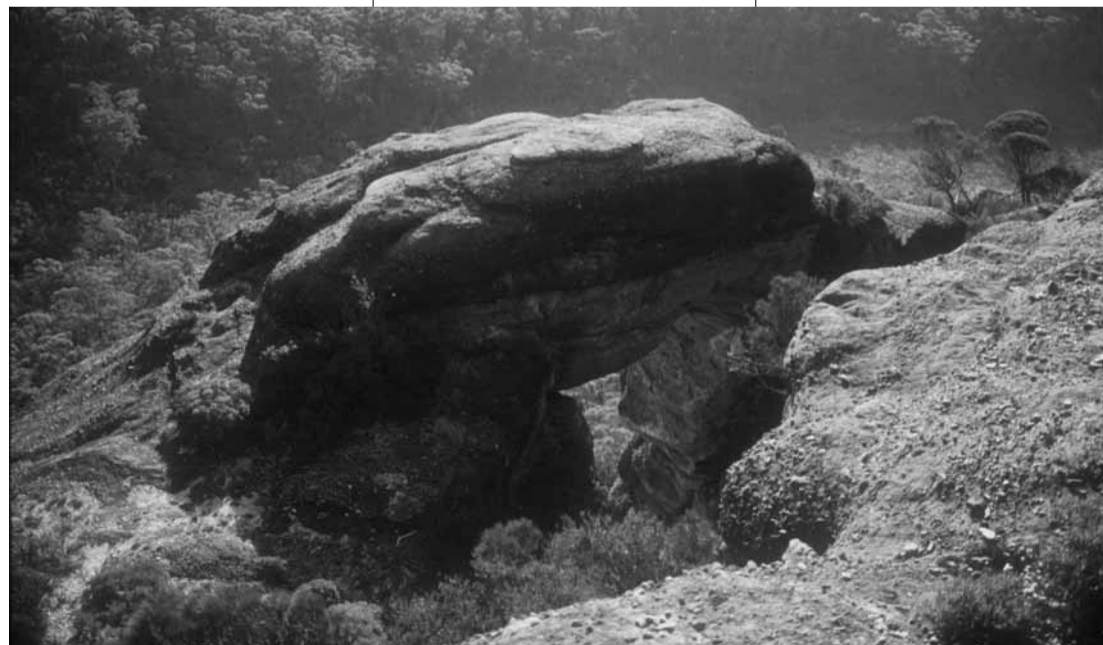


PHOTO: Ron Doughton

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

The Ulladulla & Districts Community Forum decided at their February meeting to seek the intervention of the Ombudsman in investigating a complaint against Shoalhaven City Council regarding its continued procrastination over its application for recognition as a Principal Consultative Body. It is believed that it has been delayed because of opposition from certain quarters of the business community.



The chemical used in Teflon and other non-stick coatings, may cause cancer and reproductive problems, according to the US Environmental Protection Authority.

The chemical, known as PFOA or perfluorooctanoic acid, is used in many water resistant products,

including non-stick cookware, microwave popcorn bags, carpets and upholstery.

The EPA has listed PFOA alongside well-known poisons such as mercury and lead, and is asking manufacturers, to stop using the chemical completely by 2015.

DuPont, which manufactures PFOA in the US agreed to the 2015 deadline for the releases of the chemical from its manufacturing plants, but has yet to decide on a complete phasing out of its use.



We no longer have the NSW Police Service! It is now to be known as the NSW Police Force. Do you remember the days when we had government departments? The origin of 'department' is French and means to give service. Sadly, service is out and 'force' and 'authority' is in favour. Does it say something about modern government?

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## DENDROBIUM

I found a dendrobium orchid today...

I walked the track by Tomerong Creek,  
Through a labyrinth of bracken fern  
To the wooded slopes of the spotted gum,  
I followed each twist and turn.

It's been three years now since the fires came through  
And some say the bush has come back.  
From a distance the trees all look leafy and green,  
And hide well their traces of black.

But the canopy's gone and the sunlight glare  
Has sprouted some renegade seeds.  
Black-wattle thickets stretch for the sky  
From out of a tangle of weeds.

Where crinolined toadstools once danced in the gloom  
And circled the leaf-littered floor,  
Now grows the bracken to shoulder high  
And it's just not the same anymore

Ah,...but I found a dendrobium orchid today  
Clinging tenaciously  
Arrayed in its clusters of greenish blooms  
In the fork of a fire-blackened tree.

There it was, suddenly, before my eyes.  
So long I'd been searching in vain.  
Though once prolific in this patch of bush,  
I doubted I'd see one again.

Was this a sign, a turning point?  
Would I soon see wild violets come back,  
Along with the moss and the maiden-hair  
That once bordered each side of this track?

One orchid survived the onslaught of flame  
But a far greater danger now loomed.  
I tried to blot out the bulldozer drone  
As I bent to breathe its perfume.

As I tried not to think of real estate signs  
And developers' clamour for land,  
There lingered the thought; maybe orchids once grew  
In the place where my own house now stands.

Yes, I found a dendrobium orchid today...

Bev Stewart 16.12.04

Bev's book, *Parodies, Poems and Piffle*, is available for \$10 phone 4443 5584

## BOOK REVIEW

# BURN

## The Epic Story of Bushfire in Australia

by Paul Collins ■ RRP \$35.00  
Published by Allen and Unwin

THE Shoalhaven has to date escaped a ravaging bushfire year. We are fortunate as drought is one of the key elements for a bad season. The other is the weather. Following a sharp hot spell pre-Christmas milder weather followed. Those in other areas, particularly in Victoria, were not so lucky.

Paul Collins is an historian. His book 'Burn' was published during 2006 and quickly sold out. A reprint is under consideration. Those interested in the subject will find his work an important one and the book is available through the Shoalhaven libraries.

The author rightly says that fire is a controversial subject in Australia and it is one that people hold very strong views about. The author is no exception. In his introduction he says, "We are yet to accept that fire is part of the very fabric of our continent.

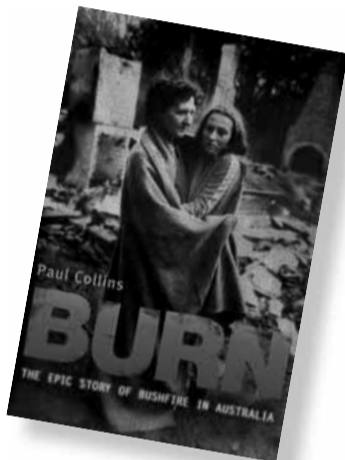
Australia would be completely different without it.' In his view 'fire should be seen as a positive force; it does not come to destroy but to sort things out, to probe our strength, and ultimately to renew.'

As a historian Collins has relied on a vast number of sources to bring us an account of the worst bushfires from the 1851 Black Thursday fire, the 1939 Black Friday fires to the Canberra inferno of 2003 and many other serious bushfires experienced throughout regional Australia. His work is thorough (over 400 pages) and makes interesting and compassionate reading, but it is in the last part of the book, 'The Great Fire Debates' that the author endeavours to answer the question: To burn or not to burn?

The evolution of the landscape with the emergence of the dominant species of Eucalyptus

and Acacia are central to the story of fire in Australia and were dominant long before the arrival of Aborigines. It is what happened after Aborigines began arriving that the debate begins. Collins argues persuasively that whilst Aborigines used fire, they did not go about torching the country the way many of the scholars have suggested. He shows the real pyromania followed the arrival of the post-1788 settlers.

It is in the modern context that Collins advances the interesting view that it is the pro-development lobby who like to support the fire-stick farming



theories. 'Their argument is that if we can recover the Aboriginal way of 'managing the landscape' we will find a convergence of modern theories of land-clearing and regular burning with pre-European Aboriginal fire regimes.'

'There are those,' according to Collins, 'who are imbued with a zealot-like doggedness to conquer and subdue the continent by any means available in order to promote an ideology of 'development'. Many of these people seem to almost hate nature. Developmental mania has degraded the landscape. After almost 220 years of this kind of assault the time has come for a serious rethink of how we relate to the continent. And rethinking our relationship to fire will be an integral part of that process.'

Certainly, Collins is an advocate for nature. He points out that aside from the effects of constant an excessive burning

with its resulting loss of topsoil, the landscape has further been altered by settlement and clearing. Soils are then less able to retain moisture and this has been compounded by the compacting effect of hard-hoofed animals. The introduction of feral plants and animal pests and the loss of native small animals has also been a factor in making the landscape vulnerable to fire. He cites the examples of the loss of such animals as bettongs, bandicoots and bilbies, once common to the Australian bush, and their role in breaking down vegetative matter.

In 'Burn', the author also embraces deeper ecological, spiritual and philosophical questions. 'Perhaps,' he writes, 'the time has come for a few of us to speak about the rights of other sentient beings, the landscape and the natural world itself.' Paul Collin's contribution is certainly useful and what we can say is that whilst fire remains endemic to Australia, and it looks likely to be more significant with global warming, then the debate will continue.

■ Patrick Thompson

## reflection

**Fascism is more of a natural state than democracy. To assume blithely that we can export democracy into any country we choose can serve paradoxically to encourage more fascism at home and abroad.**

**Democracy is a state of grace that is attained only by those countries who have a host of individuals not only ready to enjoy freedom but to undergo the heavy labor of maintaining it.**

■ Norman Mailer

# Matt Brown MP



Matt Brown MP and members of the community announce funding for rehabilitation work along Bomaderry Creek.

*Listens and Delivers!*

*Working for Bomaderry and North Nowra*



Authorised by J. Taylor, ALP, 2 Spain St Nth Nowra.