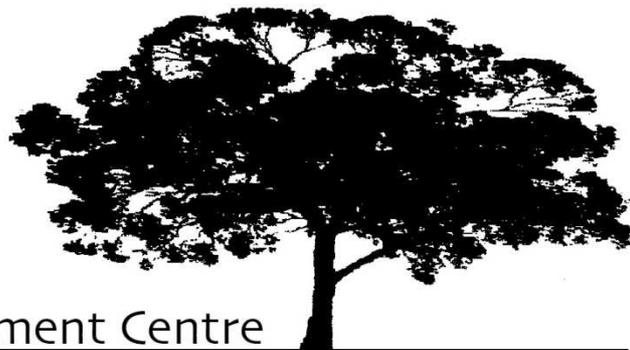


TREE

Tweed River Environmental Echo
Newsletter of The Caldera Environment Centre



Vol. 11, Issue 1 Autumn 2013

50c or free

E.P. HOPKINS

Hop.e devoted a lot of the last 30 years to conservation. With a background in both Architecture and Town Planning his appreciation of both landscape and the built environment was crucial to him. Over that time he and others contributed to major campaigns and submitted countless submissions on behalf of the Environment Centre. Despite the frustrations and seemingly intransigent position of Council he always thought it worthwhile to plug on. He had the clear eyed vision to advocate for 'ideal' results. Fortunately there were some successes that were really satisfying. About ten years ago he became interested in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program thinking that further international recognition might help protect the Caldera recognising that environmental protections can be at the whim of political expediency. Hopefully that baton will be picked up by others.



Closer to home composting toilets were another of his 'passions' reasoning that our reluctance to deal with our own waste was indicative of society's inability to confront uncomfortable realities and employ low tech sustainable solutions. As with all environmental issues he lived in hope that common sense and sound science would prevail over ego and vested interests.

Hop.e genuinely enjoyed exercising his imagination and intellect drafting letters, being his cheeky and provocative self, organising workshops, contemplating design issues and the camaraderie of being with people who shared his world view and concerns. If 'we're' not there representing the environment's interests even if the outcomes are negative then that built up momentum of the CEC could be lost so I think he'd be encouraging us to keep the doors open and the issues alive.

Cynthia Brook

EDITORIAL



Our organisation suffered a huge loss last September when our founder and beloved leader, Hop.e Hopkins, left this mortal coil. We would not exist without him, and his ethical, calm, determined commitment to our cause ensured we stayed largely free from sabotage and foolishness. As a kind of gift to us as he left, his passing has resulted in a rejuvenation for us. Old precious people have returned to help, and new, young ones have stepped up. We are stronger now than we have been for a long time, at least in terms of those who do the work. Our financial situation remains tenuous, and we are keenly looking for sponsors to ensure we keep going for another 24 years. Anything you can do to help will be greatly appreciated.

Overall though our spirits are high. Hop.e would be thrilled with our new councillor, Gary Bagnall, who believes urban houses should have composting toilets. This is something Hop was passionate about, the very basic truth that taking nutrients from the ground and essentially throwing them into the sea is not a viable option.

Another issue close to his heart was the biosphere project, and we now have a dedicated person, Brijia Robertson, taking time out from her Phd to ensure it goes ahead.

Hop.e did much with his life, including working tirelessly to protect our precious Tweed. His memory will flourish in our hearts and deeds.

Aside from our inner workings, things are not looking good. All levels of government are proving less than satisfactory, from the council's short-sighted Planning Laws, to the State government's tacky decision to allow shooters into National Parks (including ours!)

The Federal government has little more moral standing, given its position on asylum seekers, single parents and the Tarkine. Then there's the ever-looming threat of coal seam gas, which is proving yet again that it's the big profits running the show, not the will of the people.

Our political system is in disarray, with big money and big media ensuring the opinionated masses remain ill-informed and keen to work against their own best interests. It's laughably easy to convince people that climate change is a con and asylum seekers are to be feared and loathed.

A meanness has set in in the culture, and it's difficult to see a way through. All we can do is to continue to speak truth to power, and to not lose heart. The Tweed is more politically active now than ever: the Repco Rally raised a whole new breed of activists, and the CSG issue has galvanised the farming community to join them. United we stand.

Christine Moore

First thoughts on the NSW governments tougher restrictions on CSG – 20 Feb 2013

While all opponents of dangerous and environmentally damaging mining practices welcome stricter regulation by the NSW state government, we will have to pressure them to expand protection to all residents. Yesterday's announcement amounts to an admission that CSG mining has yet to prove that it can be done safely - and I doubt that it ever will. Surely the precautionary principle should hold for all areas, not only for 2 km around from urban centres, horse studs and wineries.

If CSG is dangerous for wine grapes, what about vegetables? If not safe for horses, what about cattle? If the health of citizens in large centres are to be protected, what about the residents of villages and rural dwellings? The CSG industry is another asbestos disaster

looming – only worse, as CSG pollutes our air, land and water. This announcement seems to be a recognition that the people don't want CSG mining and it may be a cynical attempt to split the opposition for political purposes. We really now need to lobby politicians of ALL persuasions to enforce a ban on all CSG activity until and unless it can be proven safe.

Please do all you can for this issue which unites all people of good will in our desire to secure a safe future for generations to come.

Sustainably, Sledge
NRG President

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

by Sam Dawson BAsC (Hons)

2012 was a tragic year for the CEC as Hop.e Hopkins passed away. Hop.e was the coordinator of the CEC since its inception in 1989, up until the present day. A memorial service was held for Hop.e in the Tyalgum Hall in September which was well attended by members of the community. At the memorial service, members of the CEC recited a poem written by Hop.e in 1989 as his tribute to Mt Nullum (slightly modified by Rhonda James):

*To the Morans
and even millionaire Morans
and all the hangers on and also rans.*

*Nullum Nullum Never Never
Nullum is my mother
Nullum is my shield
I know that she will never
Never never yield
Nullum Nullum Never Never
Thank you Hop.e*

This was particularly apt since the CEC was founded to stop this development.

The CEC has accomplished much over the past year and Hop.e provided his expert advice and input right up until the very end, attending meetings on the Tweed Council budget and community heritage in the months before his death. I was always grateful for any assistance and insight that Hop.e could provide and I continue to be amazed at the depth of knowledge and level of commitment that he had for the environment.

Thank you to everyone who has helped out the CEC this year as a volunteer, member or interested observer. The CEC is a volunteer organisation and can only operate with the goodwill and energy that its members provide. So thank you for all the people who have contributed over the past 12 months to help the CEC to be an environmental champion. A special thank you is due to Kim Hollingsworth who after many tireless years of effort has resigned from her position in early 2012.

2013 marks a new beginning for the CEC; we have new members, new executive and new challenges! As the new coordinator for the CEC I would like to take this opportunity to introduce

myself to you and describe some of the current projects and activities that the CEC is engaged with. I have been the secretary for the CEC since 2006 and have been involved in many campaigns, committees and protests in that time, beginning with the 2007 Rocky Cutting Dam proposal. What inspired me to get involved in local environmental issues was the development of the recent suburban sprawl of Sovereign Heights. The particular instances that motivated me there was when in 2006 the remnant wetland was bulldozed and halved in area and then the threatened species occurring on the site, Davidson Plums, were dug up and translocated to a new area. Looking at the fallen melaleuca trees of the wetland, while not forest giants or an iconic species like a Koala, I had an epiphany: In the 21st century the ecological crisis continues unabated and continues with tacit approval of government and society. Where money is concerned, the environment is exploitable and laws will be revised to permit destruction (Special Events legislation anyone?) The logical conclusion is as inescapable and as obvious as the problem; if I don't stand up and speak out about this issue, then who else will?

What happened in 2012

McDonalds was approved in Murwillumbah in January 2012 (fortunately the development hasn't started yet) and a film night was held screening 'the Economics of Happiness' which the CEC was proud to sponsor. This was used to raise money to start a new group that could take on the challenge of opposing the unwanted "restaurant".

In partnership with Northern Rivers Guardians (NRG) the CEC hosted two waterwise workshops in the lead up to the Tweed Council elections. These waterwise workshops were designed to educate the public (and senior council planners) that alternative technologies are available, economical, and effective. Our leaders (bureaucratic and elected) just have to decide to do something sustainable instead of writing and talking

about it and slyly waiting for the right political conditions to build a new dam.

Despite inclement weather the CEC's annual World Environment Day Celebration in June was a great success (thank you Craig McHale).

October saw the Lock the Gate Alliance "Rock the Gate" concert in Murwillumbah, organised by Michael and Julie McNamara of the Tweed LTGA. The event was the culmination of a year-long effort by local LGA volunteers who conducted a thorough survey of the region which reported that about 95% of respondents oppose Coal Seam Gas mining in the Tweed.

Campaigns and Issues for 2013

One of the most serious challenges facing the environment this year will be the push by the NSW government to abolish Environmental zones ('E' zones) from Local Environmental Plans on the North Coast. This is the latest in a long line of what can only be described as exploitative redefinitions of the word 'environment' by industry and farmers and the politicians who serve them. If successful, the removal of Environmental zones means that there will be no effective protection for the natural environment at a local government level. When seen in the context of a federal government whose idea of environmental protection is an ineffectual tax regime and weakened legislation (The feds are in the process of disassembling the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, as it is too much "Green Tape" for industrialists such as BHP to deal with) and a state government who wants to reopen Duck Season and shooting in National Parks (not to forget all the CSG developments), the push to remove 'E' zones will mean that there is effectively no protection for the environment at any level of government. The CEC has been assisting the community with information sessions and regular updates about the LEP review on our website: www.calderaenvironmentcentre.org

CSG – Communities stand strongly against the invasion

Recent community blockades against the invasion of the Northern Rivers by CSG company Metgasco show the strength of feeling and community resolve against this dirty and destructive industry.

At Glenugie, south of Grafton, a local community blockade held up work at the Metgasco drilling site for 47 days before the NSW government sent in the riot squad to break the blockade so Metgasco could get its trucks onsite.



On 7 January the heart was ripped out of a community but not its resolve.

18 arrests – 18 heroes (and heroines).

Julie and I were there when the police broke up the blockade at Glenugie. We were encouraged to see that, while the community was pushed aside, it was not defeated. Protests were resumed within hours, the blockade was re-established by the next day and has been maintained since with great impact on Metgasco's operations.

The support from communities right across the Northern Rivers, and beyond, has been amazing.

Further arrests ensued including one related to what will, no doubt, become an icon of the protests against CSG in the Northern Rivers, the Traumatron.

A blockade has also been in operation at Doubtful Creek, between Casino and Kyogle, where Metgasco plan to drill next. On 7 February massed police were again sent in to break the blockade and enforce Metgasco's access opportunities. This was done despite over 90% of local residents opposing CSG in their area!

The blockade continues at Doubtful Creek. Get out there if you can.

These, and other, ongoing community actions against CSG are having an impact.

Federal MPs prepared to stand up against CSG have, until now, been very scarce. Janelle Saffin, the Member for Page, has been one of the few to take a stand with her community.

Other Federal MPs are starting to come out against CSG, including Member for Richmond Justine Elliot and Nationals candidate in Page Kevin Hogan.

Bob Katter has introduced an amendment to the EPBC Act that would make it an offence, with fines of \$200,000 for individuals and \$2 million for corporations, to drill through water aquifers in pursuit of CSG.

The Federal government has, until recently, parroted the mantra that CSG is a state issue and claimed they have no power to act. This has never been the case.

Tony Windsor has forced them to consider including water as a trigger for the EPBC Act but they need to go much further by including other triggers for the Act such as health impacts, air quality, fugitive emissions, cumulative impact and community health impacts.

The Commonwealth can also intervene under the Export Controls Act by imposing conditions on the processes involved in the industry if they want to export the gas. And let's face it, most CSG being extracted is for export.

The state government and the CSG companies are on notice:



We will oppose the imposition of this industry on the northern River Gate by gate, Road by road, Community by community.

For more information on the campaign against Coal and CSG go to the Lock the Gate Alliance website (www.lockthegate.org.au) or CSG Free Northern Rivers website (www.csffreenorthernrivers.org).

By Michael McNamara

Photographs courtesy of Marie Cameron

Environmental defenders under attack: why funding must be restored

by Amelia Thorpe

Between 2008 and 2011, Amelia was a director at the Environmental Defenders Office.

With a new planning system about to be introduced in NSW, the need for an independent, specialist public interest environmental and planning law centre is greater than ever.

For nearly 30 years, the Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) NSW has been the only provider of specialist public interest environmental law advice in NSW. Yet now, precisely when it is needed most, the future of the organisation is in doubt.

The NSW Energy Minister Chris Hatcher has criticised EDO NSW, accusing the organisation of socialism. Meanwhile, the Attorney-General Greg Smith is reviewing its funding under the Public Purpose Fund (PPF). After nearly 15 years of triennial PPF grants, and despite support from the Trustees, EDO NSW's most recent grant was for just three months, and its dollar value cut by a quarter.

But if the new planning system is to live up to Planning Minister Brad Hazzard's promises of "focusing on the public interest" and "placing people and their choices at the heart of planning decisions about their future", it is imperative that secure funding for EDO NSW be restored.

Among the many contributions EDO NSW has made to planning and environmental law since 1985, two are particularly relevant.

Firstly, the government's stated intention of increasing public participation in planning, and especially in strategic planning, are unlikely to succeed without an independent, public interest planning and environmental law centre. As the government has repeatedly acknowledged, it is notoriously difficult to get the public to engage early in the planning process.

It takes considerable time and expertise to understand planning documents and the implications of abstract planning proposals for particular sites, and considerable skills and commitment to participate meaningfully in their development.

The proposals in the planning green paper to provide more information in plain English and online are useful first steps, but will not be enough. EDO NSW plays a major role in the current system, with staff at the Planning Department and in local councils regularly referring members of the public to EDO NSW for assistance.

EDO NSW offers free legal advice over its telephone enquiry line (answering around 1500 calls in 2011). It also conducts workshops for community members (over 30 each year), produces plain English publications, briefing notes and submission guides, and each week sends an electronic bulletin including information on current planning proposals and ways community members can contribute to these. With a greater focus on public participation, the need for services such as these will increase under the new system.

Secondly, as the new legislation comes to be implemented, there will be a need not just for EDO NSW legal outreach and advice, but for its solicitors. Introduction of new laws consistently generates litigation as courts are asked to interpret their meaning, and specialist lawyers play a crucial role in this process.

Since 1985, EDO NSW lawyers have played a very significant role in the interpretation of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the 150+ amendments made to it since its enactment in 1979. Well beyond their value for particular clients, specialist planning and environmental lawyers bring considerable benefits to the system as a whole.

The ability of all participants in the planning system – developers, businesses, farmers, households and public authorities – to understand and comply with their obligations on issues such as biodiversity conservation, coastal protection and heritage owes much to the work of solicitors from EDO NSW. Judges from the Land and Environment Court have regularly recognised the important role played by lawyers from EDO NSW in developing the law in NSW.

EDO NSW's mission is "to promote the public interest and improve environmental outcomes through the informed use of the law". Given the strong similarities between this and the oft-expressed objectives of current planning reforms, it is hard to understand why the government is now considering de-funding EDO NSW.

If the government is unhappy with aspects of EDO NSW's work, a more appropriate response would be to include a definition of the public interest in the new legislation – a significant gap in the current Act filled in quite different ways by different judges. Instead of closing down an organisation that has made such a valuable contribution to planning and environmental law in NSW.

ARCHETYPE

I once said to Hop.e that I saw him as the archetypal environment centre co-ordinator. In that, I meant he was the pattern and I could see none better. He carried, in my opinion, a rare combination of gifts.

He knew how to step back yet not be reticent in putting his own gifts forward. He had succeeded in a remarkable balancing act, rare in white fella society, where in this latter, there is the tendency to subordinate or lead, and the balancing of these two is minimally subscribed.

Hop.e and I sometimes discussed how much activity should be given to the communication of environmental ideas and how much to their practice. The balance in this was critical for without the practice, discoveries could not be made that became part of communication. It was my privilege some times to become part of Hop.e and family's household where every step was taken with the environment in mind, despite living in the midst of a highly materialistic society, and being obliged, to a major extent, as we all find, to do things it's way. I am still fascinated by his insistence on writing with pencil and eraser, while I cling to the permanence of my words with pen and white-out. He showed the possibility of a myriad ways by which one could rebel quietly against the imposition of technocracy.

We were "criminals" together; outlaws. We questioned the legitimacy of policy from what was then called the Department of Soil Conservation as Groundsel bush volunteered to hold soil in soil slip areas. We were punished, both of us felt not for our reticence in removing Groundsel, but because we questioned a system that favoured what grew on top of soil more than soil itself.

Hop.e carried, too, a deep respect for the Australianess of his environment. This, he particularly practised in his love of and understanding of, the uniqueness and irreplaceability of the dense hardiness of native hardwoods and their ability to grow in less favourable conditions. I was a journeyman carpenter and shared that respect and had gathered some knowledge of the timber I worked with, but it was he who drew my attention more to the physical characteristics of each species; that they were not just "mixed Australian hardwoods".

Perhaps the major gift he imparted to me personally was his equanimity. I have functioned with a permanent frown, now wrinkle-tattooed at my third-eye centre. To me, a materialist society is something more to be endured, but Hop.e appeared to role-model a quiet satisfaction and contentment in doing his part step by step without major discontent. He showed me this was possible.

He knew with an incredible intimacy, what our society has forgotten, that egalitarianism, equalitarianism; the idea that one *Homo sapiens* is not better than another, and the path is to search for each person's contributing gifts, rather than take each other down with competitiveness. I will always be grateful that he supported and encouraged my gifts, even though my particular gifts were sometimes "off the page".

In Hop.e we were given a mould. That mould like native ecosystems is not static. The mould changes with the experiences and contributions of people, so that each of us becomes the archetype, like Hop.e, of our contributions to the environment. Hop.e indeed!

With respect and gratefulness of his friendship, Geoff Dawe.

CAPTAIN SAGE

ARIES

Employment prospects aren't looking too good, but isn't that how you like it most of the time?

TAURUS

I'm worried about you, Taurus. One day it's crumpets loaded with butter, the next it's an ultra-health diet. Where's the middle ground?

GEMINI

Amazing how easy it is to forget to water the garden weeks after heavy rain, so take this as a quiet reminder.

CANCER

I can't believe it's 2013 either. It seems we are constantly living in times that used to be in the realms of science fiction.

LEO

If you are serious about romance, try setting your sights higher than takeaway pizza.

VIRGO

Come on, Virgo, time to get out of Rutville. May I suggest an impulsive night out for starters?

LIBRA

Being full of questions is probably better than being full of answers. Or am I just trying to excuse my ignorance?

SCORPIO

Take your health in hand, Scorpio. It's the most valuable thing you have right now.

SAGITTARIUS

Yes, yes, you may as well leave the lawnmowing another week. The only thing that will suffer is your own high standards.

CAPRICORN

Ice cream after guacamole is all very well, but please allow a gap in between.

AQUARIUS

Good times are just around the corner, so come on, shake a leg and get yourself to that corner now.

PISCES

I'd like to help you, Pisces, but this time you'll have to sort out your own mess.

The environment issues we should be hearing about at this election

by Ian Lowe

The forthcoming Australian election will be a critical one for the environment.

The most urgent issue is climate change. We are already seeing the social, economic and environmental impacts of about one degree increase in average temperature.

The possible impacts of two degrees are frightening enough, but we face the possibility of even greater increases if the world fails to take concerted action.

As the worst polluter per person in the developed world and a major exporter of fossil fuels, we have a critical responsibility.

It is crucial for the next government to take considered advice from the Climate Commission on the scientific basis for our reduction targets. While it is a step in the right direction to have a modest charge on polluters, the initial level is too small to make the sort of difference that is needed by itself. There are too many concessions to polluters, too many exemptions from the charge.

We should be urgently phasing out all subsidies of fossil fuel supply and use. These don't even make economic sense and are environmentally disastrous.

We need concerted programs to promote renewables and to improve the efficiency of turning energy into the goods and services we use. The Howard government's National Framework for Energy Efficiency showed we could cut pollution by 30% using measures that pay for themselves within four years.

This is not low-hanging fruit, it is fruit lying on the ground. These changes provide economic benefits as well as slowing climate change.

Urgent attention needs to be given to urban transport. The carbon charge does not apply to transport fuels, and successive governments have failed to modernise public transport, so more and more commuters are driving longer distances in large and inefficient cars. Even the US government now has serious targets for improving vehicle efficiency. We should be moving rapidly to reflect world's best practice, rather than continuing to be a dumping ground for out-of-date technology.

Recognising that we now contribute more to the problem of climate change through our fossil fuel exports than all domestic energy use put together, we have a responsibility to take action. It is just irresponsible to be encouraging expansion of fossil fuel exports for short-term economic gain, especially as most of the companies benefiting from that expansion are not even Australian.

There are other serious environmental issues that should be addressed by the next government – and considered by voters when we help to choose that government.

A tentative start has been made to restore the health of our greatest river system, the Murray-Darling, but the momentum of reform needs to be continued and accelerated. The Tasmanian forest agreement is still not secure, the Great Barrier Reef is under increasing pressure both from activities onshore in Queensland and frightening numbers of freight vessels, and we are still losing our unique biodiversity.

We hear ridiculous calls to wind back "green tape", dishonestly suggesting that over-zealous environmental regulation is impeding economic development. That campaign has led to some state governments doing a Great Leap Backwards, as when Queensland moved to scrap Wild Rivers protection in the Channel country and Victoria tried to let cattle back into the Alpine national park. These examples show how critical it is for the Commonwealth government to maintain its capacity and political will to hold short-sighted state governments to account.

While it is obviously important for the Australian government to have responsible environmental policies, it is even more important to address the driving forces that are causing environmental degradation. The first independent national report on the state of the environment stated that population growth and lifestyle choices, including increasing consumption, are behind the environmental problems.

We urgently need a national government that has a vision for a future sustainable Australia, rather than the irresponsible headlong pursuit of growth. We know that growth cannot continue for ever in a finite system.

We should have a national conversation now about the trade-off between population and quality of life. Survey after survey shows that the community understand we are losing socially and environmentally through the short-sighted obsession with growth. We should be aiming to stabilise the population by reducing immigration levels, as well as introducing policies to limit consumption to levels that can be maintained.

The current approach is funding our material consumption by destroying our natural resources, effectively stealing from our own children. That is morally indefensible and doesn't even make economic sense. We need a government that will act responsibly to secure our future!

These are the critical issues which will determine our future, but most political candidates are either blissfully unaware of them or totally reluctant to discuss them. The 2010 election was dominated by personality politics, economic trivia and mud-slinging. We are entitled to demand more from those who aspire to lead us.

Environmental Protection Zoning under Threat in Tweed

Tweed Shire has recently exhibited the draft Tweed LEP 2012 for community comment. The document overlooked the inclusion of sound technical information and mapping and amendments to the new template format previously adopted by Council when drafting the Tweed LEP 2010.

The Tweed community response to exclusion of Environmental Protection zones (E zones) in the west of the shire in 2010 was over 400 submissions during the public exhibition period. Council then made a decision to revise the draft 2010 LEP. After two years of intensive work to update the document and vegetation mapping and prepare the associated DCP the draft 2012 LEP was exhibited. Again the community response was overwhelming with 1500 submissions, the majority being in favour of E zones.

Prior to the exhibition period the state government intervened with the process on the far north coast. Brad Hazzard, the NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure announced that all E zones would be removed from LEPs in the five northern shires being Tweed, Byron, Lismore, Kyogle and Ballina Shire.

As a result of this intervention Tweed planners chose to remain with the E zoning of the out-dated LEP 2000, the result being the exclusion of 1200 hectares of native vegetation including Koala habitat on the Tweed Coast. These areas had been supported by extensive scientific assessment and stakeholder consultation proposed in the draft 2010 document and updated over the past two years.

The state government intervention was instigated because some landowners lobbied local members Thomas George and Don Page. They expressed concerns that environmental zones are being applied to rural and agricultural land without evidence of the environmental significance of the land, thus these zones unfairly limit existing agricultural and rural activities.

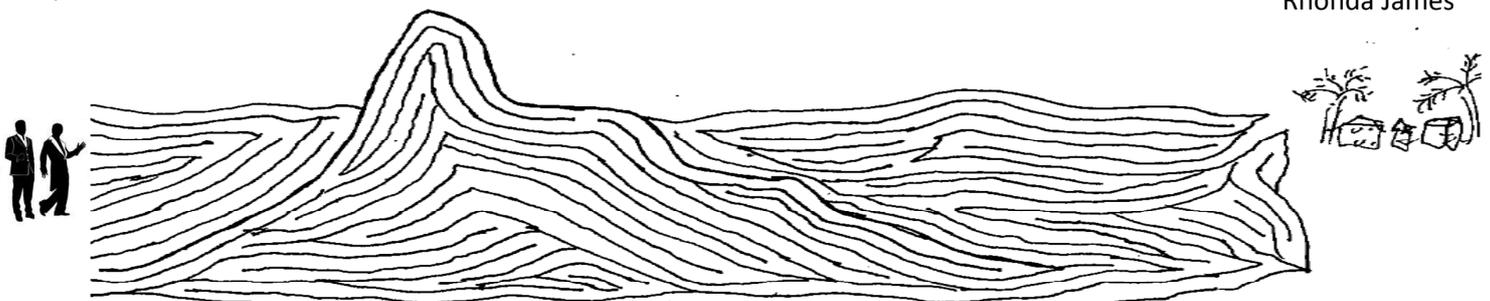
Clearly this is not the case in Tweed. Additional E zones which should be included are over areas of native vegetation throughout the shire. The areas are mapped in the Biodiversity overlay included with the draft LEP 2012. As well as the areas on the coast the upper catchment locations such as Byrill Creek should have been included.

The state government review included community "drop in" sessions held in each of the five shires. The consultants, Parsons Brinckerhoff, commissioned by the state government to undertake the review held sessions in Murwillumbah at the end of February. The consultants were supported by officers from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The main focus of the interviews was to talk to individuals who had concerns about E zoning on their properties. While meetings in other shires were dominated by often hostile property owners who considered their "farming or development rights" were compromised by E zoning there appears to have been a different attitude in the Tweed.

Feedback from those who attended is that there was an excellent representation from landholders and community members in support of E zonings. Many of our members and supporters not only had the opportunity to voice their concerns at the "drop in" but to also have a chat and a cuppa while waiting their turn to be interviewed.

CEC has provided information and community meetings throughout the LEP exhibition and review period to keep members, other groups and the community updated and informed. This information and updates is available on the CEC website.

Rhonda James



U.N.E.S.C.O. officials are on their way to Murwillumbah to announce the dedication of the Tweed Valley as a Biosphere Reserve. Can you help them get there?

“TWEED E ZONES PERSPECTIVE” FOR THE REVIEW PANEL MURWILLUMBAH

25th FEB 2013

- Each shire has its own unique landforms, biodiversity, environmental conservation areas, and urban growth areas and as such should be considered individually, rather than lumped together in a NSW generic plan that essentially puts forward “one suit fits all”
- If E2 & E3 zones are removed from the 5 local government areas in the Northern Rivers, the question is, are there appropriate environment protection standards then in NSW?
In particular to areas of Endangered Ecological Communities and habitat for threatened Species listed under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act) and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).
- As these 5 shires contain some of the most highly biodiverse areas, and world heritage listed areas in Australia, they actually deserve to have a higher environmental protection, rather than remove it.
- As the removal of the E zones are based on farmers lobbying their local National Party Members, it is worth noting that there is no evidence that the application of environment zoning to land reduces the value of their land. In fact, the role that areas of native bushland play to increase the fertility of adjacent farmland by hosting species beneficial to crop and pasture productivity is well understood.

Tweed Shire

- Much of the Council research, records & planning for environmental conservation zones in the Draft Tweed LEP 2012, initially drawn up in 2010 has now been abandoned by Tweed Council with a “roll over” of LEP 2000 to now fit in with NSW Governments threat of removal of E zones.
- Landholders & residents in Tweed Shire support E-zones in Tweed Shire as shown by approximately 1100 submissions to Council on the recent Draft LEP 2012 and 450 to the Draft LEP 2010 of which the overwhelming majority favoured inclusion of E zones.

- It is doubtful now, in using NSW government policy guidelines, that the Tweed Draft LEP 2012 provides appropriate environment protection standards within our internationally recognised bio diverse shire..
- 1200 ha of highly significant areas of native vegetation on the Tweed Coast, that was proposed to be protected in 2010, has NOT been included in the Tweed Draft LEP 2012 due to the removal of E zones.
- Due to the vulnerable status of Koalas they deserve the very best in protection & warrant E2 zoning. Documented Koala habitat areas both on the Tweed Coast, (Wooyung, Pottsville, Cabarita) and in the western areas of the shire (Byrrill Creek, Mt Chowan, Hopkins Creek) should be included.
- Documented Wildlife corridors linking National Parks, conservation areas, & private land should be dedicated as E2 zones. Corridors include: Cudgen, Byrrill Creek, Tweed Border Ranges/Mt Clunie, Billinudgel/Mooball, Limpinwood & Couchy Creek areas
- Land that is a Buffer zone to our national Parks should be classified E2
- Land that is scenic steep escarpments should also be classified E2
- The level of environmental protection on other significant areas in Tweed has been reduced from E2 to E3 zoning, with minimal protection on the land use table. In addition areas currently protected by way of Tree Preservation Orders within the Tweed LEP have decreased by about 10000ha

The Byrrill Creek Area, according to the Tweed Land Zoning Map is zoned primarily RU2, yet a large percentage of the area is designated in the Terrestrial Biodiversity Map 007 which refers to Clause 7.8 in the Draft LEP: **“7.8 Terrestrial biodiversity [local]”**

- 1) *The objective of this clause is to maintain terrestrial biodiversity by:*
 - a) *protecting native fauna and flora, and,*
 - b) *protecting the ecological processes necessary for their continued existence and*
 - c) *encouraging the conservation and recovery of native fauna and flora and their habitats.*
- 2) *This clause applies to land identified as “Biodiversity” on the Terrestrial Biodiversity Map.”*

It is noted that some small areas within the Byrrill Creek area have been documented within the Tweed Draft LEP 2012 as E3 zones and I believe that this should be increased to an E2 zone..

To see the colour version of this map, go to www.calderaenvironmentcentre.org and open the latest TREE mag.

BORDER RANGES RAINFOREST BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010 REGIONAL FAUNA & CLIMATE CHANGE CORRIDORS



Provided by Shane Ruming DECCW Coffs Harbour, with thanks.

The classification of much of the Byrrill Creek area should be altered to an E2 zoning to reflect this:

As the Byrrill Creek area has been:

1. Documented as a high conservation area by Council in numerous assessments over the past 10 years
2. Contains 3 Endangered Ecological Communities (Dr Steve Phillips, Biolink)
3. Was identified as a NRCMA Priority Implementation Area due to the high percentage of endangered species. Studies identified forty-two priority flora species and thirty seven conservation-priority fauna species.
4. Is a major Wildlife & Climate Change Corridor linking Mt Warning National Park with Mebbin National Park (Border Ranges Biodiversity Management Plan & Dr Steve Phillips, Biolink) SEE MAP
5. Provides buffer zones to the above National Parks and Wollumbin Conservation area
6. A large percentage of the area is also listed as steep land (Map 007-080) Clause 7.9 with objectives to protect scenic landscape values, soil susceptible to erosion, & sedimentation of waterways.
7. Both the northern ridges (buffering Wollumbin National Park) & the southern ridges (Mt Terragon) of the valley are known documented Koala Habitat areas.

(Tweed Council Vegetation Management Strategy 2004 includes maps of Koala sightings 1996-2004 in Byrrill Creek area)

As the habitat on the Tweed coast for koalas is rapidly being destroyed by urban expansion, it should be a priority to protect our koalas in the south western part of the shire.

The NSW Coalition's promise during their election campaign in March 2011 promised transparency, and more decisions to be placed with local government authorities, including local community consultation. This promise is not being upheld: the threat of removal of E zones in the Northern Rivers Councils of Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Lismore & Kyogle is in direct contradiction to this, the new planning reforms set out in the NSW Green Paper contradicts this, shooting in National Parks and CSG approvals in agricultural land & conservation areas are not decisions supported by the majority of the community. As a caretaker of NSW: of the environment, our land and its people the O'Farrell government has failed on every count.

By Joanna Gardner

Report from Eden Creek

by Scott Sledge, NRG President

Some say that the doubt has been removed from Doubtful Creek in Kyogle Shire and the sign at the entrance to the forest track says Eden Creek State Forest, so I'm calling it that. I rather like the idea we're saving Eden.

A lot has happened since the beginning on 10th January, when the Northern Rivers Guardians combined with Nimbin Environment Centre to establish a protectors' camp on private property near the site proposed for drilling by Metgasco.

The campaign shifted focus to the forest overlooking the area fenced for the drill pad and a vigil began there. Several times the protectors turned away Metgasco workers who came to prepare for a core well meant to test the area for its potential to supply coal seam gas (CSG).

Faced with the same prospect the people at Glenugie, south of Grafton, put up an almighty struggle, so those keen to protect Kyogle had to wait. A clever contraption called The Traumatron was used to impede the departure of the drill rig from Glenugie for a full day on Wednesday 6th February and an enormous police contingent (in excess of 75) escorted the rig onto the Eden Creek site.

Complaints about police brutality when the rig was forced in at Glenugie against the firm opposition of residents there seem to have resulted in a more restrained approach to handling the public here at Eden Creek. A few people were rough handled and the police showed where their priority lay when an ambulance was delayed while the convoy of trucks was escorted through a jeering crowd. The injured woman was made to wait, because Metgasco had enough political muscle (all that money spent lobbying state government wasn't wasted!).

Various attempts to impede the progress of the violator rig were made – including traffic jams at a bridge and at Booth's Road intersection – in an atmosphere of foreign invasion, especially when local farmers and Gittabul Origines started shouting "Shame" and "Leave this place." Resistance was inevitable and mostly symbolic because of the overwhelming force of police. Many questioned why our tax dollars were wasted forcing a destructive activity by a private company onto a peaceful population. Meanwhile thieves committed armed robberies in the area. Police refused to tell journalists how much money the task force had cost taxpayers.

Still, the police could not stay in large numbers and the protectors remained, every day obstructing the access to the drill site until enough police could be found to push the people aside. As soon as police left the blockade was renewed with vigils kept at Booth's Road and Eden Creek Forest entry gates. No business can thrive with such constant delays, and the drill program ended with less than inspiring results. What was announced as 3 wells planned in 4 weeks ended being 2 wells in 3 months! The stock market punished the upstart company by dropping ever lower and by the end of February Metgasco's share price was closing regularly below 10 cents, less than half its value when the drilling program started in November 2012. The pressure of investors not happy with CSG was evident when ANU announced on 26th February that they had sold off their entire 2.5 million shares in Metgasco. Sold at a loss, but hey, what's a few dollars compared to preserving a world fit to live in?

The main protectors' camp had to be moved to the roadside entrance to the forest gate, because Forests NSW decided to "close the forest" to the public. Now called the Forestry Corporation of NSW the staff still take orders from state government.

Many of the protectors were local landowners and they kept up a supply of water and food to the camp. A few severe rain periods tested the resolve of the hardy campers, but a rotation of volunteers kept spirits high and the planned mock funeral for the rig when it wanted to go back to Queensland on 26th February turned into a day-long celebration of courage for those willing to lock-on, to send a message that destructive mining practices will not be allowed in the Northern Rivers. It was nearly 5 PM when Police removed Ingo Merak from Nimbin and decided not to charge him, but then Gareth from Mullumbimby locked on to one of the trucks in the convoy. He was removed about 7 PM. Maybe because he had been unlawfully sprayed in the face with capsicum spray Gareth was released without charge. The remainder of the equipment, including the drill rig, have not ventured out and are still stuck in unfriendly country at the beginning of March.

Will Metgasco bring more drilling equipment into the Northern Rivers? I don't know, but if they do, I predict new struggles will result. We tell them, "Get a real job... one that doesn't earn you money at the expense of all the rest of us." This region is not for sale. We say to international companies: "There will be more jobs and sustainable profits from industries that provide renewable energy for a viable future." We will stand together as one people: farmers, environmentalists and the Original Australians to secure a future for our children and grandchildren. To these we say, "We won't let you down."

THE QUEST

At last year's World Environment Day festival there was a quest for the kids to complete, with a free tree for all successful questers. The questions were very interesting so we thought we would publish them here for your perusal, along with the answers.

Question 1. How much of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions is produced by the coal industry? (Renew Economy 17-5-12)

Answer: 38%

Question 2. How much would it cost each household if we switched to 100% renewable energy? (Energy Research Institute, University of Melbourne)

Answer: \$8 per week

Question 3. How much money does the federal government give to the coal industry each year? (Nature Conservation Council of NSW 18-4-12)

Answer: 4 billion dollars to mining industries, most of which goes to coal.

Question 4. When will solar power cost the same in China as coal-fired power? (Climate Spectator 23-5-12)

Answer: 2014 -2018 (depending on whether private or industry)

Question 5. How much has the Queensland government given to the Coal Seam Gas and Coal industry in the past 5 years? (The Courier Mail, 16-3-12)

Answer: 7 billion dollars

Question 6. How much of Germany's power is generated by solar? (Clean Technica 25-5-12)

Answer: 12%

Question 7. How much of the power it takes to wash clothes is from heating the water? (Yahoo Voices 12-8-07)

Answer: 85 – 90%

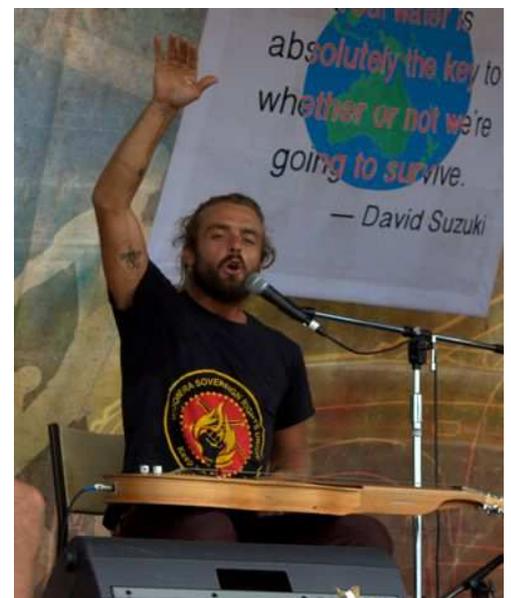
Question 8. How much energy can you save each day by turning off your computer each night and setting it to fast sleep mode? (National Geographic Kids)

Answer: 85%

Question 9. How much do Australian households pay for leaving all their appliances on standby? (The Border Mail 16-5-12)

Answer: Up to 950 million dollars.

Question 10. What can you do to help save electricity in your home?



REGULATING INDUSTRY

Industry can be seen as the offspring of both society and the individual. Industry is allowed to run around with minimal legal regulation of its products because it is assumed the market will be the regulator. This is called self-regulation. Individuals on the other hand are regulated in that they are for example, legally obliged to drive on a certain side of the road. If individuals had the same rights as industry, they would be able to have as many crashes as they liked on the wrong side of the road until they learnt to adjust.

The society has said an individual needs to drive on a certain side of the road for the safety of everyone. Why then, does the society not oblige industry to turn out certain products or product-standards for the safety of everyone?

Liberals say the individual has the right to develop herself to her maximum ability without the restriction imposed by a society. Why then do liberals support goals, armies and law? It is because maximising ability without social restriction is an ideal; a light on the hill; something to progress toward. Until there is the full achievement of this ideal, they say, there may have to be some structures in place to minimise the harmful effects of, let us say, those who are less evolved and who would make too much of a mess with no restriction on freedom.



Same with industry. It is not evolved. Worse than that it is amoral; it is not concerned per se whether its products are good or bad for individuals and society. It is only designed to draw energy (money) toward itself, so much so that whereas industry was originally created to serve people, now people are to serve industry! The proof of this is in built-in obsolescence or the making of products so they are purposefully discarded early. Every time one throws away an article because replacement parts are unavailable, overpriced or the original article is unrepairable one is engaged in the enslavement of humanity, not its liberation from monotonous work.

More factories have to be built, CO2 emissions rise, unnecessary human toil increases.

The market is not working in sending messages of environmental sustainability to industry because industry often conspires to rarely supply an alternative to built-in obsolescence or the “throw-away-society”. There is, for example, no bulk facility for engine oil that allows people to refill their plastic containers that would potentially reduce factory emissions for plastic container production. The major reason however, why the market is failing to send messages of sustainability, is that industry through its own – the media and advertising industries – indoctrinate the product choice of consumers. People think they are doing the right thing by supporting a “throw-away-society”. It provides more jobs they say.

And so it does. It supplies more jobs. But these are unnecessary jobs, and the whole point of industry was to reduce jobs and toil. Let’s make this clear. What people are generally wanting is a high standard of living for less work. Not more toil, less. What has actually happened with industry is that it has geared the people to accept unnecessary work, and many politicians pave this way with the mantra that it is all about jobs, jobs, jobs. Industry is working counter to the ideals of the Industrial Revolution which was to reduce human toil!

Leaving regulation of industry to the market has been like a dog chasing its tail. We expect individuals in the market place to make choices toward environmental sustainability, but the individuals are constantly indoctrinated to unsustainable choices by industry. Furthermore, generally speaking the more conservative political parties are, the more prepared they are to set the well-being of the society and individuals at a lower level than that of industry. It has been incorrectly assumed that materialism – the belief that ultimate comfort is provided by the collection of things on the outside of the body – will automatically see to the well-being of the individual and the society. It hasn’t and it doesn’t. It demonstrably leads to the ruination of the world.

Children when they first come into the world are amoral; they have no conception of right and wrong behaviour. Concepts of right and wrong are given by the parents and the wider society. The children are regulated. The same thing needs to apply to the amoral entity, industry. It requires regulation since it has *demonstrated* that it functions similar to a spoilt or licentious child, running around without boundaries, and more the ruler of the parents, society and the individual, than they are of it. Here is the worst of industry. The novelist Thomas Hardy suggests, “If a path to a better there be, it begins with a full look at the worst.”

By Geoff Dawe



Back in black. But Hop.e would like us to look on the bright side, so let's see what we can find.

According to Steve Chu, Nobel Prize winner and US Energy Secretary, "the price of photovoltaics dropped 80% in one year, and by 40% in another" (The Science Show, Radio National 16-12-12). I can back this up with personal experience: a few years ago solar panels cost around \$10 per watt. So a 95 watt panel would have been \$950. I recently bought one the same size for \$215, with a 20 year guarantee.

Add to that the huge investments going into renewables of all kinds, and their future looks bright. The main sticking point is batteries. For cars it would seem service stations with replacement batteries or recharging options could be the answer, and Better Place in Melbourne is leading the way. As of June last year electric car drivers can swing into the heart of Melbourne, park their car at Federation Square, and charge their battery by plugging into two new public charge spots.

Better Place has installed the charge spots as part of the Victorian Government's three-year Electric Vehicle Trial, which runs through to mid-2014. Trial participants can charge for free throughout the length of the Trial, and the charge spots can also be used by electric car drivers with a Better Place subscription.

"The new charge spots at Federation Square are great news for electric cars drivers. They make it simple and convenient to top up your battery while you're enjoying everything Melbourne has to offer", said Ben Keneally, Head of Marketing and Strategy for Better Place.

"Plugging into a public network is one of the many benefits for electric car drivers. It's simple, convenient, and you can take pride in knowing that Better Place is charging your car with 100% renewable electricity, every time", Mr Keneally said.

The charge spots deliver between 20-25km of range per hour for a Mitsubishi i-MiEV or Nissan Leaf; the two brands of electric car currently zipping around Melbourne as part of the government trial.

Better Place, the leading electric car charge network, now has a total of 37 charge spots installed in and around Melbourne; with 94 charge spots installed nationally.

But there are also some intriguing advances in process with batteries. Tristan Simon, a PHD student at Deakin University in Victoria, is investigating zinc/air batteries (zinc metal at the negative terminal and oxygen at the positive terminal). This battery can store huge amounts of energy, but cannot be recharged. Tristan is working out how to get the zinc back out of the electrolyte, then we're away.

Another promising innovation is the sodium battery. Shahbazian-Yassar is working at Michigan Tech to try to iron out the wrinkles, primarily that sodium atoms are very big. Using a transmission electron microscope, Shahbazian-Yassar and his team can peer inside and see how a battery is charging and discharging at the atomic level. "We will study these fundamental reactions and find out what materials and electrodes will do a better job hosting the sodium." (www.sciencedaily.com). This technology is close and could revolutionise electric cars.

And we have to tell you about six very brave African Australians, who challenged the Victoria Police over constant harassment based on their race. After five years, the case has been settled out of court, with the men entitled to tell their story, and the Victoria Police agreeing to an inquiry into the way checks on people are conducted and into cross-cultural training. The public will be invited to participate. It is often difficult to prove racism, and unless racial profiling is prohibited by law, as in other countries, such a situation could happen again. But well done them (and their largely pro-bono lawyers) for braving such powers that be.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/no-one-should-be-stopped-by-police-just-because-theyre-black-20130218-2end5.html#ixzz2MKpq7SYq>

So cheer up and remember to idolise the inclemency.

.....Consuela

Caldera Environment Centre – Film Competition

The CEC would like to announce that it will be hosting a film competition this year as part of its annual World Environment Day celebration in June. The best films will be screened at the Regent Cinema in Murwillumbah on the weekend of World Environment Day (4-5th of June, to be confirmed), with the winning entries collecting a prize of a \$100 gift voucher at the CEC store; as well as having the prestigious honour of being the best film in the region this year.

Entries are open to everyone and the theme for the competition is “Your Environment”, and so can be about whatever ‘your environment’ means to you; whether it is your home environment, work environment, or the natural environment. Films may be animated, fiction or non-fiction so long as it considers the theme of “your environment” it will be eligible.

Of course all entries will need to be original and contain your own original material, they cannot contain copyrighted material (such as music) unless you have the copyright holders permission. The entry fee is \$10, with all profits going to the CEC. There will be two divisions, one for youth (under 18 years) and one for adults (over 18 years). All entries must include the entry fee and be submitted as a DVD in either .avi or .mp4 format. Films are to be no longer than 7 minutes in duration, including opening and closing credits.

Entries should be clearly addressed to: Sam Dawson, Caldera Environment Centre PO Box 5090, South Murwillumbah, 2484; or, may be handed in at the shop at 4 Queen Street Murwillumbah.

Entries start now and close on Friday 3rd of May 2013.

For further information contact Sam Dawson, phone 0266727765, or email dawsonsk@bigpond.com



Caldera Environment Centre Film Competition Entry Form

Name:..... Age:.....

Address:..... Contact Number:.....

Title of Film:.....

Synopsis:

.....

.....

.....

By entering the competition you agree that the film is your own original material and contains no unauthorised copyrighted material

Caldera Environment Centre now has an excellent website.
Please check it out, for all the latest news,
plus TREE magazines old and new.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Caldera Environment Centre meeting: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 5.30pm at the shop, 4 Queen St, Murwillumbah

Tweed Greens: 1st Wednesday, Imperial Hotel, Murwillumbah, 6pm

Tweed Climate Action Now: 2nd Thursday, Imperial Hotel, Murwillumbah, 6.30pm

Tweed Landcare: 3rd Wednesday, Imperial Hotel, 6pm

Friends of Wollumbin Chemical Free Landcare: 1st Saturday opp, Boulder Close, Kyogle Road, 8am

Tweed Bird Observers: go to their website for updates and events, www.tweedbirdobservers.wordpress.com

Farmer's Market: Every Wednesday, Murwillumbah Showgrounds, 7am – 11am

Earth Learning: for meetings, talks and events contact Adrienne on 66791439

Wollumbin BUG (bicycle users group): 4th Wednesday, Imperial Hotel

NRG (Northern Rivers Guardians): 3rd Saturday, Mavis's Kitchen, Mt. Warning Road, 1pm – 3pm

Tweed Valley Wildlife Carers: for information on meetings and events, go to www.tvwc.org.au

FILM COMPETITION

Enter your short film for the chance to win prizes and glory. The best entries will be screened at the Regent Cinema in June, as part of the World Environment Day Festival celebrations. Full information inside back page.

Caldera Environment Centre is now the place to bring your unwanted batteries for recycling. We will have a bin to put them in, and will regularly take them to the tip or to Battery World in Tweed Heads for recycling. Over 8,000 tonnes of batteries go into landfill each year, and you can help stop this foolish and dangerous waste.

If undelivered, please return to:
Caldera Environment Centre
PO Box 5090
South Murwillumbah 2484

The CEC is located at
4 Queen Street
Murwillumbah
Phone 6672 1121

Email tree@calderaenvironmentcentre.org

Opinions expressed in this publication may be those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the CEC or its members.

100% recycled postconsumer oxygen bleached paper