

President's message June 2010

Valley Watch is undergoing a committee position change. A big thank you goes out to Ronny Lopez for taking on the unenviable role of secretary. Thank you also to Cath Clark for all her service and time as secretary for the past couple years.

Ian Tiley had ten compelling reasons as to why CVC should reject the McDonalds DA. Sue Hughes agreed but the majority of the councillors used the fear of Land and Environment Court to approve the development. Both Councillors Comben and McKenna gave lengthy speeches for the approval of McDonalds. Many residents of Yamba got a rude shock to discover the voice of the people has no bearing in the eyes of their council. We are left with little option other than to vote with our feet and never step into the "family restaurant". A group has been formed in town called "No McDonalds in Yamba" to continue the push. They may print more great t-shirts and bumper stickers for sale in the near future to help spread the word. Valley Watch committee has decided to take a backseat role yet plan to still be supportive through brainstorming and using our market stall for the purpose of education and marketing.

VW members attended onsite meetings and did deputations for the James Creek Concrete Batching Plant and McDonalds. James Creek has an extensive history dating back to the 1970s which include a L&E court case and involvement of VW. Council had to decide if it constituted a "designated development" which would then require the developer to do an independent EIS. Councillors Tiley, Comben, Hughes, Dinham and Howe voted it did in fact constitute one due to the proximity to the wetland and waterway and Councillors McKenna, Simmons and Toms moved it did not. A win for the valley.

There were other items on the agenda at the council meeting which interested VW. The gallery emptied after the McDonalds decision and the fun began! Considering Council only meets in Maclean every other month it is very entertaining and I encourage anyone with an interest to come along and help us "keep them honest".

The special meeting, which was held in Yamba at the community hall resulted in our newly drafted Constitution and a Climate Change position being adopted. Thank you to those who were able to come for your attendance.

After deciding we need more R&R we held our first committee lunch and sailing adventure. Thanks to Ronny and David Lopez! We all agree it was well worth the time out getting to know each other better and having lots of laughs. First mate Ros Woodward handled sails professionally while David directed the inexperienced crew!

Athena