



## VALLEY WATCH INC

P.O. BOX 637, YAMBA 2464

valleywatchinc@gmail.com Phone 0488 979 196

Creating a sustainable future

## Valley Watch keeps up the pressure

Following the AGM in September there was a brief lull with three of the Committee overseas and school holidays as well. However Valley Watch has recently been busy keeping up the pressure on three fronts.

### 1. Flying foxes in Maclean

Valley Watch was approached for a letter of support for a proposal from Billie Roberts that would monitor flying-fox movements using solar-powered transmitters. The project would

- Enhance understanding of the roosting and foraging behaviours of flying-foxes
- Involve students directly in threatened species conservation
- Assist in dispelling myths about flying-foxes.

Valley Watch has several of its members on the Flying-Fox Working Group. They have been frustrated by the grandstanding of certain politicians and the way the Working Group's Management Strategy has been ignored, including the so-called "habitat modification" at the school.

It is pleasing therefore to see efforts to counter the negative image of flying foxes by both Billie Roberts and staff of the Office of Environment and Heritage. The Valley Watch letter of support concluded by saying:



"Habitat modification" at Maclean High School

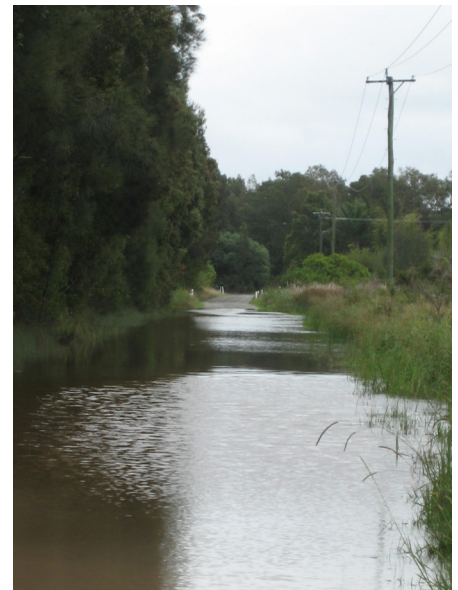
*Valley Watch is also very supportive of the proposal to involve students in the project. Given the negative public image that has been created in Maclean and at the High School, we believe it is vital that students and the wider community come to an understanding of the role and behaviour of these animals.*

*To date there have been no educational programs within the school, something the Flying-Fox Management Strategy identified as a priority. This project has the potential to remedy this deficiency and to make a long-term positive contribution to conserving and co-existing with the flying-fox population in Maclean and beyond.*

### 2. West Yamba

Valley Watch has long campaigned against the development of West Yamba because its is prone to flooding, and filling it to prevent homes being inundated will only make matters worse in Yamba.

Helen Tyas Tunggal noticed last week that a 25 lot subdivision was proposed for the area. She attended last Friday's committee meeting armed with facts and figures and on Saturday she, Ros and Carolyn prepared a submission to Council pointing out the deficiencies in the proposal. The objection was lodged with CVC on Monday November 7.



Sullivans Lane, West Yamba after rain (not floods!), March 2007

### Your Committee

<b>President:</b>	Gary Whale
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Athena Batcheldor
<b>Secretary:</b>	Ronwyn Lopez
<b>Treasurer:</b>	David Lopez
<b>Committee:</b>	Gary Brisbane Carolyn Jeckeln Imelda Jennings Barbara Whale Ros Woodward

### 3. Coal Seam Gas Mining

Six months ago in May, Valley Watch formally joined the Lock the Gate Alliance, and in the May newsletter I drew your attention to the problems associated with Coal Seam Gas mining. Since then it has become a major political issue in Queensland and here in New South Wales.

At the last few markets we have had a great display from Ros Woodward at the Valley Watch stall which has drawn a lot of interest. So at the November committee meeting we decided to wind up the Emu petition which has been running for over a year and start a new petition asking the NSW Parliament to

- call a Royal Commission into all impacts of CSG mining;
- implement a moratorium on CSG mining until the outcome of the Royal Commission; and
- ban the extraction technique known as hydraulic fracturing or “fracking”.

The whole CSG question has taken on a fresh relevance with the coming Clarence by-election. The previous member, Steve Cansdell, was an outspoken supporter of CSG, but what do the current crop of candidates think?

Well you can find out on Monday 14th at a **Meet the Candidates** forum organised by the Yamba Chamber of Commerce. It will be held at the Yamba Bowling Club commencing at 6.00 pm. At least six of the eight candidates have said they will attend and they will each have six minutes to speak before questions from the audience.

I strongly encourage you to attend. They say we get the politicians we deserve, so come along and let them know what you expect of the successful candidate.

By the way, do you even know who’s standing? This is the list of candidates as they will appear on the ballot paper (and where they come from):

- Wade Walker (Waterview Heights) INDEPENDENT
- Peter Ellem (Wooloweyah) COUNTRY LABOR
- Stewart Scott-Irving (Old Bar) INDEPENDENT
- David Robinson (Tuckombil) AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS
- Bethany Camac (Glenreagh) CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (Fred Nile Group)
- Chris Gulaptis (Maclean) NATIONALS
- Clinton Mead (Bradbury) OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTY
- Janet Cavanaugh (Whiporie) THE GREENS

“Where is Bradbury?”, I hear you ask. It’s near Camden, south of Sydney. And while I’m at it, Tuckombil is between Wollongbar and Teven (near Ballina) and Old Bar is at the mouth of the Manning River near Taree.

#### The future of Bimblebox

Bimblebox Nature Refuge shows what can happen with CSG mining in allegedly protected areas. Well known billionaire mining magnate Clive Palmer's company, Waratah Coal, is planning an open cut mine on the Refuge near Alpha, east of Longreach. The Refuge covers 8000 hectares – half of it will become an open-cut mine, the other half will be mined underground.

The amazing thing is that this land was made into a Nature Refuge by its owner, Paola Cassoni, in the belief that it would protect the land forever. It was recognised by both the Federal and Queensland governments to be “an excellent example of uncleared woodland”.

The Federal Government contributed over \$300,000 towards the purchase of the property on the condition that it was preserved **in perpetuity**. It has become a well recognised site for research into sustainable grazing practices, fire management and woodland bird surveys.

The Queensland Government says on its website that a nature refuge is perpetual on freehold land, attached to the land title, and binds successive owners of the land.

Waratah Coal is proposing to offset the damage to Bimblebox by setting aside a similar sized area elsewhere in Queensland – a suggestion the Capricorn Conservation Council calls “bizarre” because Bimblebox is home to a nationally endangered bird, the Black-throated Finch.

I doubt that the “offset” area proposed will have any Black-throated Finches. But if Palmer’s proposal goes ahead, Bimblebox won’t have any either. All it will have is noisy miners!



Black-throated Finch

Come and see us at the market and be sure to sign our CSG petition. It really is encouraging for us when you stop by.

*Gary*