

Valley Watch – President’s Message May 2010

Valley Watch committee members are preparing for the upcoming committee council meeting in Maclean. There are many items on the agenda for consideration but our main focus is on the concrete batching plant in James Creek and McDonalds DA in Yamba. The Lawrence subdivision above the wetlands and the Yamba Hotel expansion will be decided by a regional panel due to the new State Governments attempt to “streamline” process so our lobby efforts need to reach up out and in different directions. A fantastic VW submission has gone to relevant parties i.e. local, state, and national, regarding Lawrence and I urge everyone to at send a note to our member Janelle Saffin who is passionate about wetlands in Australia and seems more than willing to help if she sees people are defiantly passionate about this issue.

What was a to be a fringe role for Valley Watch, McDonalds has become a heated issue with most of the town rallying behind the Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Yamba and Valley Watch who are opposing the DA. VW is focusing on planning issues that provide our strongest defence. VW endorsed an advertisement opposing McDonalds and it has been a positive effort combining our energies on this matter.

James Creek Batching plant, which also sits above a beautiful wetland and is only meters from the creek, has a multitude of concerns. Valley Watch was instrumental two years ago when we began the process of taking council to court over approving what we knew was an inappropriate development. Much to our relief Boral and Cemex took the reins and won in the Land and Environment court costing council over \$96,000.00. The point was made quite clear the fear of the L&E court goes both ways. The problem is they won on a technicality and the courts ruled the development is still “operational” even though it has been defunct for nearly twenty years. The CVC staff recommends approval as they see themselves as caught between a rock and a hard place. Council is required to determine if this is a designated development and if it is they will knock it back. The decision goes to council along with McDonalds on May 18th. VW will attend the onsite meetings, committee meetings, where deputations will be given and the full council meeting.

On a brighter note Valley Watch held a wonderful “picnic” at Ashby hall where over 20 members celebrated and honoured our founding members. Guest speaker Rod Wright enlightened us with a background talk on the Council’s Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy. Valley Watch has had input throughout the process and this document is on display. We **must** write to council and encourage them to adopt this much-needed document.

At times we can feel pretty powerless in the face of local and state government. It is at these times we need to push for the rights of the people and the animals that share our planet with even greater declaration. It is more important now than ever Valley Watch network and liase with other organizations and government bodies so our voices will be heard.

ASS – Acid Sulphate Soil, CVCC – Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition, NPA – National Parks Association, NPWS – New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, SEPP 14 - the aim of this policy is to ensure that the coastal wetlands are preserved and protected in the environmental and economic interests of the State.