

## **President's Message – April 2010.**

Along with our ongoing concerns, Valley Watch has been hard at work preparing a submission regarding the draft LEP. By request, Clarence Valley Council held an informational meeting for VW members on March 11<sup>th</sup>. They supplied participants with hard copies of the 126 page document, a CD of accompanying maps, as well as presenting an overview while answering many questions. This was well attended and very much appreciated by all.

The Local Environment Plan uses a State Template and will stand as our statutory planning instrument for possibly the next twenty years. It was vital VW spend the many hours to thoroughly scrutinize this document. Ultimately when looking at protecting the environment and amenity of our backyard we need to do so at a planning level. I am grateful to our dedicated, skilled and knowledgeable LEP subcommittee for the time they willingly put in, and I feel hopeful CVC will adopt most of the changes and additions we have suggested. One funny (but not so funny) item in need of attention was CVC proposal to allow two resident sex workers per dwelling in the majority of zones, even forests, without consent! I did not realise the need was so great - or could this be a diversion from more important issues?

The Environmental Defenders Office been given the green light by VW to pursue a Freedom of Information application to Council for release of files regarding the approval of the sixty lot subdivision in Gulmarrad. The cost to VW is \$180.00 which we felt was money well spent. Andrew Baker had 28 days to appeal our request for an environmental report he submitted to Councillors the week before the Council meeting. During the debate Councillors repeatedly referred to this document and many of them seemed to base much of their 5-4 decision to approve on this report. We have since been informed the applicant would not release this document. Helen will continue pursuing this via the EDO. In addition there is a "deferred commencement" of works on the subject property. I received a phone call in the middle of the week from an adjoining resident that two machines and a stump grinder were working all day Sunday. Helen and I drove out to investigate and photograph and you could clearly see the "work" along with two small bulldozers. We made the appropriate phone calls to Council who responded by saying there was no evidence of works having been carried out!! Later we discovered a request to stop work had in fact been made. Hair pulling stuff!

This month saw many decisions between meetings. Thank goodness for email. McDonald's DA in Yamba was one such decision. A quorum was established to have our logo alongside the Chamber of Commerce for a petition against a Maccas in Yamba. McDonalds comes with environmental, aesthetic and social concerns and although it is not our core business many felt strongly enough to take an active stand. Yamba Chamber of Commerce called a public meeting in Yamba for concerned residents. Three Councillors, the media and over 150 people attended and the feeling was cohesive. VW committee agreed our involvement was good public relations and helpful to the cause. Our logo and name was used in two full page ads in the Review.

We have been fortunate to receive a limited edition canvas print "Juvenile Delinquents" featuring five Emu faces. We will be raffling this valuable work of art so please come to the markets or contact VW to be in the lucky draw! Thank you Kerry Cranney for this generous gift.

I thought it would be fun if possible to include some acronyms each month.

EDO – Environmental Defenders Office, LEP – Local Environment Plan, FOI – Freedom of Information, DECCW or DECC – Department of Climate Change and Water, APZ – Asset

Protection Zone

See you at the markets! Athena Batcheldor