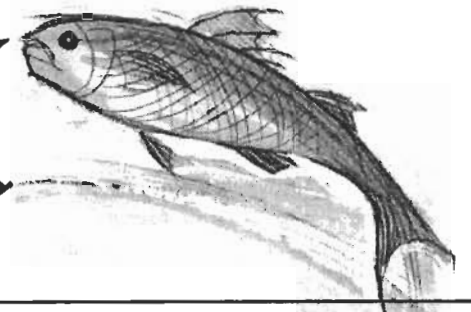


Mullet Mail



NEWS & VIEWS OF DANGAR ISLAND RESIDENTS

#15

February 2004

Join the League!

Hypocrisy or Democracy

When the head of the BBC resigns because a journalist didn't check his facts for a news story, what should a President or PM do when they don't check their facts for a war?? Since declaring victory over terrorism in Iraq, there have been more deaths by terrorism than before the victory. So what does victory mean? These and other local and world events underline how fortunate we are in our little part of the world, where so little seems to happen.

How true. So little happens.

Many have been wondering what happened to the new jetty and the pedestrian precinct and community vehicle issues. The answer seems to be not much. Council staff seems to be under siege and Councillors are in permanent caretaker mode. Since April/May last year, in expectation of a September election, Council snuggled down to "Caretaker" mode, not wanting to make decisions that the incoming Council will have to deal with (why not you may ask).

But then Council Elections were deferred til March, with a new election procedure. The result of this was another six months of caretaking – so we now have almost a year of nothing happening.

The new procedures just mentioned for Local Government elections, designed ostensibly to avoid 'tablecloth' ballot papers, means that only those who can demonstrate legitimate support before the election, can run. (Is this putting the cart before the horse?).

The impact of this is that 'one issue candidates' will not get in, unless it's a really big issue.

All this just happens to benefit the established political parties to the exclusion of true independents – who have traditionally made up the bulk of councillors in most Councils.

Given that Hornsby Shire residents in both Federal and State elections generally vote Liberal, we can now probably expect to see that reflected in the

Plant indigenous and save water.

This year the Dangar Island Bushcare Group will be meeting on the second Saturday of every month at 9.30am, at the seat at the junction of Riverview, Riverview and Riverview. Everybody is welcome, come along and help take care of our 'beautiful Island paradise' – you will learn about the native plants of the Island and how to identify and deal with weeds.



Recent arrivals might be interested in a booklet we have, listing the indigenous trees, shrubs and herbs and ground covers, that is plants local to Dangar Island – this is a great help when planning your garden.

Contact **Heather** or **Terry Dorrrough** 9985 7729 or **Anne Mahony** 9985 8287 for a copy – it costs only \$2.50

PS Did you know that our Blackbutt trees are special to Dangar? – have a look next time you're coming over the water. ed.



of true independents – who have traditionally made up the bulk of councillors in most Councils.

Given that Hornsby Shire residents in both Federal and State elections generally vote Liberal, we can now probably expect to see that reflected in the new council.

However, if the electorate was to revolt against what could be seen as a takeover of Local Government, by the major parties, who would benefit?

It would have to be a very strong independent, or an established group who can represent these independent issues.

My money is on the Greens.

All of this leads to the need for our local area to have an effective representative or two, on the new Council.

Who wants to stand for Council to represent us??

This year's League priorities are

- **Complete the Pedestrian Precinct /Community Vehicle projects**
- **Ditto the Disabled Jetty**
- **Find out exactly what Sydney Water are proposing**
(with a special prize for anyone who can find the words 'Recycling' or 'Total Water Cycle' in SW's glossy brochure)
- **and identify if the SW proposals will result in a river cleaner than it is now.**
- **Start the revision of the Dangar Island Building code (the DCP)**

A Story of Red Tape

The red tape round the tree beside the ferry shed is Council's response to the request to repair the historic stone seawall adjacent, which is being eroded by the tide.

There is no evidence of the wall cracking, heaving, or moving at all – the top course of stone just needs reinstating to stop the roots being eroded.

But a little bird tells me that Council staff prefer to think the tree is affecting the wall so it's all solved by chopping down the tree!!

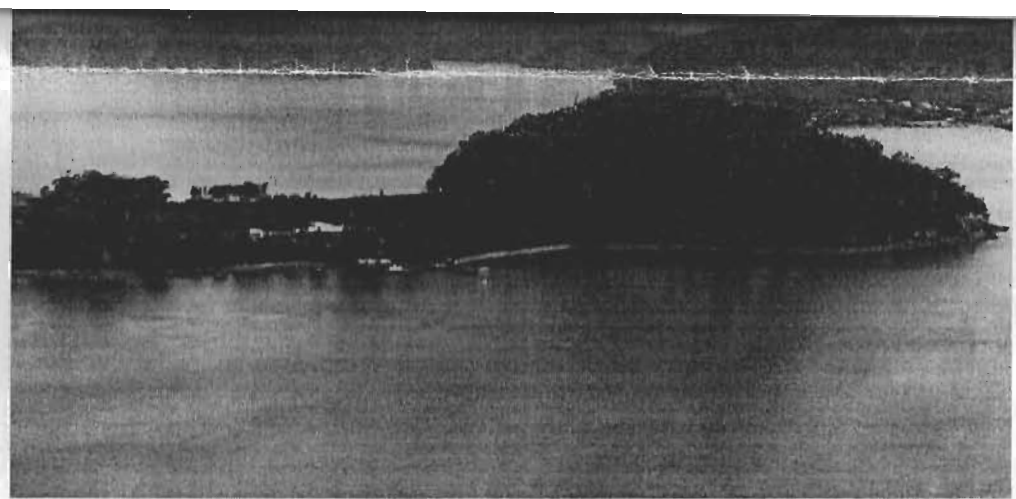
It seems that 'facts' need to be checked locally as well as globally.

Here we go again. Watch this space.

League Committee meetings are currently on the first Wednesday of each month at the Hall.

The next General Meeting is in early Autumn – dates will be advertised – see you there.

Ron Barelle
EL PRESIDENTE



Alluvium to include historical photographic exhibition

The Easter 'Alluvium' event this year is planned to include a display of historical local photographs, like the one above of Dangar Island, taken before its subdivision. If you have any pictures you would like to contribute, contact Manfred or Neil. It is intended that mounted copies will be for sale for a reasonable price, proceeds to the League and/or Hall. Advance orders welcome.



A little less talk . . .

Yes, they've been slow, but to answer everyone's questions on matters pedestrian, Garry Kennedy from Traffic branch at Hornsby Council said today that a single sign will shortly be erected at the public wharf. This will mark the beginning of the 6 month transition closure period. 'Warnings will be given during the transition, but even so, repeated failure to comply will result in fines.' he explained. Garry cited unregistered and/or unpermitted vehicles/drivers, speeding, and driving or parking in undesignated areas as examples of non-compliance. A similar sign will be erected in Parsley Bay.

Jenny for PP

Dangar Island Hall update:

Community Halls within Hornsby Shire are managed by 377 committees. The current Dangar Island Hall Committee was elected at the Hall AGM which was held in September 2003. Members of the committee are:

President –
Sue Baxter (tel 9985 7803)

Booking Officer/Treasurer –
Michelle Rumsey (tel 9985 8331)

Secretary –
Chabela Torres (tel 9985 7905)

Please make use of our Hall. Check the Hall notice board for hiring details.

Chabela





Letters to the editor

Dear Sir,

Reference article M.M. August 2003 'Toilet flush.'

If the author was to 'bite the bullet' and use the correct size toilet pan and cistern designed for a septic system there would be no reason to further pollute the output by adding 'lead' weights in the cistern.

Yours Sincerely
John A. Monk
11 Grantham Cres.

Broken Glass Danger

Over the Christmas holidays, a person unknown, put a great deal of broken glass in the sand on Bradleys Beach (the south beach). This was of great concern to the residents whose houses it was in front of. They can think of no reason why someone would do this. **This is a completely selfish act and I hope the person who did it will think twice before they do it again.** The incident has been reported to the Police.

I have also noticed some people are putting their empty glass bottles in garbage bags into the dumpster bin next to the waiting shed. After speaking to one of the garbage men he told me that they have had their legs cut in the past with bottles that have been put into bags. Why not get hold of a fruit box or recycle bin and make it safe for our garbage men.

Concerned Resident



BEACH SHOP BONANZA

The DIFB would like to thank the Island children for their wonderful effort in raising \$175.00 for the Dangar Island Fire Brigade by holding a 'Beach Shop' during the school holidays. The children involved were: Tilly Horman, Jani Degotardi, Mikki Degotardi, Ellen Brown, Fergus Brown, Clair Brown, Zoe Goid, Saxon Goid and Madeline Jenkins.

They attended the January meeting of the Fire Brigade to present their donation, and the attached photo was taken.

Regards,
Georgia Lynn-Robinson
(Secretary, Dangar Island Fire Brigade)



The Specialist

HOT TIP OF THE MONTH

Know Your Fire Danger Meter

The fire danger meter indicates the status of the fire danger in the Hornsby Shire at any given time. When the meter is at very high or extreme, residents should begin to implement their fire danger plan. This means residents should ensure fuel is cleared around their houses and so on (more on this . . . next issue). If the meter is on extreme, a total fire ban is in force. This means:

Campfires, solid fuel barbecues, ovens and kettles are prohibited,

Gas or electric barbecues may be used provided they are on residential property, within 20m of the house and under the direct control of an adult. The ground within 3m of the BBQ must be cleared of all materials that could burn, and a continuous supply of water must be available.



CLASSIFIEDS

CABIN AVAILABLE

Suit single person or couple. 0402 997 598

DANCE CLASSES FOR KIDS

6-12 year olds. probably Mondays \$5 in Hall with Monique. phone to register your interest 0403 344 489

LESSONS

Available to teach adults and children, individual and in groups, the following: **SINGING** [beginners and intermediate; repertoire and freeing the voice]; **PIANO**. [beginners and grades 1, 2 & 3], **DIDGERIDOO**; **BOTANICAL DRAWING & WATERCOLOUR**.

PLEASE CONTACT: Jo Truman on 9985 8065 or 9985 7578 or email ju_truman@hotmail.com

ORGANIC FRUIT & VEGS

Delicious, kind to the environment, and delivered fortnightly to Dangar Island – or weekly if there is enough interest. Boxes start at \$25. Phone Cathy or Bill 02 43761124

YOGA

Tuesdays 7-8pm in Hall and Saturdays 9-10am [brekky @ shop after] – bring a mat, wear loose cloths and wait till after for your dinner! Donation, 50% to Hall funds. ph. 9985 7060

Classifieds which are relevant to the community are invited for the next **Bullet Mail**. Commercial classifieds are \$10 for a display ad, \$5 for a listing; private by donation. [will be spent on production of MM]

Please note that the views of contributors do not necessarily reflect that of the editor or publisher.

This newsletter is produced under the auspices of the Dangar Island League. The League's role is to create a link between the

and make it safe for our garbage men.

Concerned Resident

Canine hegemony

I've been thinking of starting a pet-body count column in the Mullet Mail, as the chook, duck, rabbit, guinea pig and cat deaths, mount on Dangar Island, due to violent dog attacks. In our family alone, such deaths have been numerous and the ensuing losses significant. I know other grieved residents have shared the same experience/s. Dogs and their owners enjoy enormous liberties here. A peek at the NSW companion animals act reveals that in the 'real' world dogs are prohibited, even on a leash:

within 10 metres of children's playground equipment or outdoor picnic areas.

around public bathing areas

And that dog owners can be fined if their dog:

**continually makes a noise
is habitually at large
repeatedly defecates on public or private property
causes damage to other peoples property [read pets and enclosures]
is not on a lead in a public place.**

[from Companion Animals Fact Sheet, Environmental Education and Compliance Team, Hornsby Shire Council]

I'm all for liberty, as much as possible in fact; but combined with a sense of responsibility, compassion, fairness and respect, please. Anne Truman, dog owner herself made an appeal in the last Mullet, to fellow responsible dog owners to come together to proactively tackle issues of dog control. Her number is 9985 7578.

Jenny S.

The Specialist

The latest instalment of Sydney Water 'community process' and obfuscations is available at the shop. Make sure you pick up a copy and read it. A surprising new feature of the proposal is 1.3ha of north-facing grass, including a proposed Council run footy pitch, at the Old Dairy with NO proposal to use the so-called high-quality effluent for irrigation/disposal. SW often uses lack of suitable land for effluent disposal as a reason to rule out alternative solutions, and here they are creating suitable land and not using it for effluent disposal.

The rebate on rainwater tanks now goes until mid 2005. I got my cheque for \$550 about 4 months from putting in my form. Take a look at <sydneywater.com.au> for the details.

Islanders have come up with some great ideas for rainwater storage, including Bill Lynn-Robinson's; to use 1200L pontoon floats lying on the ground under his deck. No stand to build, no UV breakdown of the plastic, modular, transportable.

Water restrictions are going to be a fact of life now, and garden watering is always going to be the first to be restricted. Hence a lot of us have begun thinking about a rain tank for garden watering, but think for a minute. Garden watering is the most inefficient use of a rain tank - you need most water when you have least and vice versa. The best way to use a rain tank is for a low-level, continuous application that is independent of the weather - clothes washing, dunny flushing and kitchen.

Jona



Screening on the last Saturday every month

Membership just \$10 for the whole year!

28th February

ANNUAL COCKTAIL NIGHT Chicago

New membership year starts here . . join the fun . . buy a party ticket. Advance tickets available.

10th April

Pirates of the Caribbean

Screening @ Fire Brigade Shed
Fire Brigade fundraiser

24th April

Vertigo

Screening @ hall

Guest programmers welcome.

cybele
www.difs.net

This newsletter is produced under the auspices of the Dangar Island League. The League's role is to create a link between the community and Council or other Government bodies, where decision-making may affect our community. The League gives the community a collective voice, and creates structure for issues to be addressed. Come to meetings to raise an issue and/or form a sub-committee. Meetings are held in the community hall on a regular basis.

Current positions are held by the following residents:

- PRESIDENT:** Ron Barrelle
- Vice President:** Michael Dean
- Secretary:** Wally Bower
- Treasurer:** Jonathon Sykes
- Committee:** Jenny Shanley
Leyla Moncelet
Ross Marshall
- Public officer:** Wally Bower
- Community berthing:** Michael D.
Karen Gilbert
Ron, Daylan & Lars
- PP & community vehicle:** Jenny S.
Wendy McMurdo
Jonathon & Ron
- Island utilities:** Michael D.
Jonathon, Leyla
Ron, Wendy, Jenny
- Mullet Mail:** Jenny S.
Phillip Holland
Karen, Heather
- Fundraising:** Neil Renfree
Ron, Karen
Ross Spence
Manfred Merl

Contributions to the Mullet Mail are welcome and can be left at the shop. If possible, please include digital word or text document on floppy disk. Alternatively, email to <counterdesign@optusnet.com.au.> Please note that the views of contributors do not necessarily reflect that of the publisher.

or

A Cleaner River? Developers\$ Picnic

SUBSIDISE PUMP OUT NOW!

SEEKING ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE LOWER HAWKESBURY RIVER

What's this about, then?

In 2000, in response to the Priority Sewerage Program (PSP), Sydney Water (SW) released its plans for their preferred scheme for sewage treatment for Brooklyn and Dangar Island; a plant at the Old Dairy site, with an outfall in the River, at the road bridge.

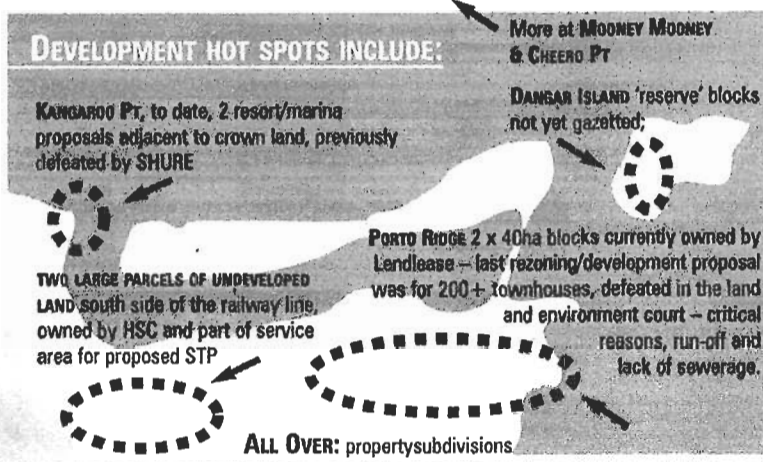
SW selected the scheme from a range of options investigated which also included enhanced on-site (best backyard infrastructure and practice); transfer to an existing sewage treatment plant (STP) (at Hornsby Heights); and effluent re-use (as part of another system).¹

Since then, SW have been purportedly improving their plan, but **no details have been released**. Mooney Mooney and Cheero Pt have taken an interest, and Gosford Council is now involved.

Requests to SW for increased transparency, better and sustainable environmental solutions and more community involvement have met with little response.

Adding fuel to the fire, Hornsby Shire Council (HSC) recently adopted SW's latest recommendations in a **confidential session**. Why the secrecy? **This issue must be discussed openly**, so that we can **participate** in decisions affecting our local community.

Brooklyn's **inflated pump out costs**, are **currently under investigation**. Meanwhile grey water reuse is discouraged. Things aren't looking good.



Flush & Forget

In Aug. 2003, **FLUSH & FORGET #1** was produced by the Dangar Island League and SHURE, both locally based non-profit organisations which have come together on this issue.

This edition of **FLUSH & FORGET** will argue that SW's proposed STP on the Lower Hawkesbury will **not result in a cleaner River**. And of further concern; that the push for and implementation of an STP will allow for a **rapid and major increase in residential and commercial developments**.

Cleaner River?

On-site practices may not be perfect, but nor is an STP. The current **low-level discharges** from malfunctioning individual sources will be replaced by major discharge points which are **designed to overflow**³ and have the potential to **seriously pollute**.

Stormwater run-off, which is polluted in developed areas, will still flow, **untreated, into the River**. Pollution will **increase along with increased development**.⁴

SW optimistically predict (in theory) a net improvement in water quality but do not appear to **account for increases in population, development or water usage** – all proven consequences of sewerage 'upgrades'.

Conversely, commercial arm of SW, Australian Water Technology in review of the proposed 2000 STP, [EIS app I, 7/32] suggest that SW's

MORE >>

Produced by the **Dangar Island League** and **Save Hawkesbury's Unique River Environment Inc.**

to promote discussion and participation in the community around the issues raised by the Priority Sewerage Program as we believe a standard centralised sewage system is **not the answer**.



modelled discharges for wet weather show no improvement in water quality ('unlikely to affect environmental value') and go on to predict a deterioration with:

'During dry weather . . . discharges of pathogens' may affect the suitability of waters for production of edible seafood and recreation amenity . . . (and) may pose a risk to the aquatic ecosystem'

AWT identifies that **current water quality is ok** for swimming all the time; and for oysters most of the time.

The 'INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTHY OYSTERS AND HEALTHY RIVERS' (titled 'Oysters') FINAL REPORT [Healthy Rivers Commission 3/2003] recommends **no new sewerage discharge or overflows** near oyster growing areas. It also recommends **severely limiting development.**

Developers\$ Picnic

'In the event of Brooklyn and Dangar Island being connected to a sewage system, it could be expected that additional pressure may be applied for increased development.'

Cameron Holt
then Manager, Planning Branch HSC
letter to resident 8/2000

'We are aware that the construction of a sewage treatment plant will change the character and culture of the area and will likely result in increased urban development'

SW representative
Workshop, Dangar Island 8/2000

'It is important that planning authorities keep a close watch on the development capacity of these backlog areas to ensure that provision of reticulated sewerage will not encourage unsustainable development'

James Cox
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
News Release, 7/1997

THE HORNSBY TOURISM PLANNING PROVISION REVIEW, FINAL REPORT reveals a **developers' dream** in centralised waste treatment as the report makes frequent references to opportunities after sewerage, along the lines of:

'significant expansion of tourism in these areas cannot be sustained without the provision of modern sewer reticulation,' and

'The river settlements . . . are subject to a number of environmental constraints . . . This should be alleviated . . . when 'the sewer is connected in 2005.'

The ultimate objective of the Report: to **adjust Council's planning controls** ⁷ so that they 'support suitable and 'sustainable' ⁸ tourism development'.

There is also **commercial vested interest** in the projected \$16 million STP capital costs.

The latest update to residents from Sydney Water, and new player Gosford City Council offers up this fishy platitude:

'one local STP and one discharge point . . . provides for real improvements to be made to the environmentally sensitive lower Hawkesbury . . .'

What benefits?

Is this really the 'local solution' that we want? The pressure is on. There is a significant risk that **this proposal is a Trojan horse full of developers**, disguised as the gift of 'flush and forget' and a cleaner River.

The simplest way to meet the PSP project's environmental objectives and an **essential way** to 'reduce environmental degradation' is to **cap development** at current levels.

Join us in the demand for **effective planning controls**, (to prevent unacceptable scale, density and category of development) together with a **genuine environmental sewage management system**. This strategy will **sustain the ecology of the River, conserve Sydney's water supply, protect traditional commercial activities, and maintain the quality of life in local communities**, into the future.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dangar Islanders expressed a preference for on-site disposal (EIS and HSC report). 3 of 5 of the SOJl signatories, HSC, DUAP and the now expunged HNCM Trust all preferred transferring to an existing STP, on environmental grounds. The main impediment to this option was the RTA not supporting it (EIS p3-29). Brooklyn's preference for a 'local solution' aligns with SW. We believe partial re-use should be incorporated into the final strategy.
2. Sewerage systems commonly have designed overflow points which act as safety valves to stop sewage from backing up when a sewer is overloaded (in wet weather), a pipe is blocked, or there is a problem at a sewage pumping station. Overflows discharge at planned locations, usually the nearest natural waterway or stormwater drain. (from EPA) The 2000 EIS shows ten of these points, around Dangar Island, and at creek lines behind Brooklyn township, as well as the major dispersal point under the bridge. SW say they now have a better system which will reduce the number of overflows. Note that with an STP all the townships' effluent (at whatever level of treatment) will discharge directly into the River. Other consequences of the STP include: noise, impact of construction, odour, loss of public amenity, visual pollution, increase in traffic, upfront and ongoing cost to consumers and dependence on a payment demanding authority, which in the current climate is likely to become completely privatised.
3. 'Improved sewerage management can result in improved stormwater quality by removing a pollutant source' says the EIS. 'It may also cause a deterioration . . . through encouraging increased development. Urban stormwater usually contains a range of pollutants including animal wastes, garden fertilisers and oil and metals'.
4. Bacteria and viruses - discharges also affect ph levels, salinity and deplete oxygen; and contain suspended solids, and nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and f. coliforms.
5. The report presumes a fait accompli. In reality, there are still major hurdles to cross before construction begins, and at this stage 2010 looks like a more credible time frame. Don't hold your breath.
6. This process has already begun with a push for unlimited bed and breakfasts.
7. It is hoped that what is meant is 'ecologically sustainable' after the term 'ecologically sustainable development' coined in Rio de Janeiro and since adopted by HSC as a principle of decision making; but could just as easily mean 'commercially sustainable'. (see earlier quote!)

Australian Water Technologies, IMPACT OF DISCHARGES TO THE HAWKESBURY RIVER FROM A PROPOSED STP FOR BROOKLYN & DANGAR ISLAND, Report 2/2000 appendix I EIS PSP for Brooklyn & DI for SW 3/2000
Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Trust, LETTER TO THE PSP, 15/8/2000
HSC, EXECUTIVE MANAGER'S REPORT No. EN 44/00 COMMENTS ON . . . THE EIS FOR BROOKLYN & DANGAR ISLAND, 9/8/2000

Sources

STOP PRESS:
THE HAMLET TOWNSHIP OF BUNDEENA, LAST PSP RECIPIENTS OF UNWANTED SW SEWERAGE SOLUTION IS NOW FIGHTING TOWNHOUSE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL [ABC STATELINE 10/03]

NEXT ISSUE:
WHERE DO YOU WANT IT? - ON THE LAND OR IN THE WATER? A PROPOSAL FOR ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE SEWAGE & WATER CYCLE MANAGEMENT. ALSO, WHAT SEWERAGE WILL COST US.

Register your support with SHURE or League c/- PO Dangar Island NSW 2083 ph. 9986 7486, fax. 9986 7142 email globe4@dx.com.au www.murdo@town.com.au

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW, News RELEASE 7/1997 from <www.ipart.nsw.gov.au> 4/10/2003
Parsons Brinckerhoff, HORNSBY TOURISM PLANNING PROVISIONS REVIEW FINAL REPORT, for HSC 2/2003
SMEC, PRIORITY SEWERAGE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, for SWC 3/2000
http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au