

# Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment

## 2011 President's Report

Today we celebrate our anniversary and it's with pleasure I present my 5th annual report as President of Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. We were formed as a result of a community summit on the status of the lagoon and catchment held in 2005.

Friends mission is to see the remaining bushland in the catchment permanently protected and remediation occur where necessary. As land values continue to rise, there are constant pressures to replace this bushland with urban development. If this occurs, it will have a catastrophic impact on the catchment and the lagoon itself, with ecosystems collapsing and the lagoon becoming even shallower than it is now.

The most logical way to protect the remaining land would be to extend Garigal National Park. The difficulty here is that National Parks & Wildlife Service see the conservation values as too low and the management issues as being too problematic.

The next best option is to turn the Crown land in the area, including the lagoon itself, into a State Park controlled by an independent trust – and we have campaigned aggressively for this over the past two years. At our Meet the Candidates Forum just before the State election in March, every candidate enthusiastically endorsed the concept. They pointed out that every day we delay risks the beautiful, tree-covered Crown Land at the western end of the lagoon passing into the hands of developers.

“Stop the developers” is the cry we hear all the time from our members, our supporters and the public at large.

We look forward to Macquarie Street making some history here!

It's been a very busy 12 months for Friends.

The \$1.9m Urban Sustainability Grant for creek remediation finished in April and through our involvement with the Project Reference Group we lobbied to ensure that all remaining funds were spent on the ground. Friends recruited House with No Steps to enable bush regeneration to continue on Middle Creek. We congratulate Warringah Council on securing grants that will enable more work to be done through to next year on both Middle and Deep Creeks.

More good news: work on the Narrabeen Lagoon Walkway or multi-use trail is nearing completion. We salute Jim Somerville for his efforts in bringing this project to life.

Not enough progress has been made on the dredging of the lagoon. We keep applying the pressure.

Submissions have been prepared on your behalf covering the Lagoon Plan of Management, the Frenchs Forest State Significant Site, seniors living at Red Hill, road kill on Wakehurst Parkway, mountain biking in Garigal National Park and many more.

Quarterly public forums like this one addressed a wide range of subjects from Aboriginal history to the need for improved public transport. Over 300 attended our Rally for Narrabeen State Park on November 22nd.

Our free community bushwalks, tag along tours and kayak trips, all run by committee members and very generously by Councillor Conny Harris, are in enormous demand and have significantly improved community awareness of the issues. In the next month and a half alone, we'll run six bushwalks, eco-paddles and tag along tours. Over 1,200 people have taken part in these since we launched the series in 2007. They are great fun. Talk to me tonight if you'd like to join us on one.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our Executive.

The committee has served you well – please stand Judith Bennett, Mary Armstrong, Jacqui Marlow, Phyll Morris, Ann Sharp, Jenny Wilson, Joy and Andy Gough not here tonight, Christine Hauptstein, Anthony Harris and Angus Gordon. We thank you all. Jenny, Joy and Andy are stepping down and we thank them most sincerely for their service.

We have some excellent new people standing for the committee - Diane Malnic as Treasurer and Sheryn von Scheverin. If you would like to help us with a one off assignment please talk to me. For instance you might like to run a membership recruitment drive for us, prepare a submission or to see whether there are some environmental grants out there that we should be applying for.

Our financial position remains strong, as you'll hear from Jenny. Our objective is to have \$20,000 or thereabouts invested so we can hire external consultants and lawyers in future, should these be required to defend the catchment. Our paid membership has grown to over 230.

Finally, I want to again acknowledge the enthusiasm and strong support of you, our members and supporters. We head into our 7th year in a very robust position, with clear objectives and strategies and an even stronger determination to achieve total environmental protection for Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment.

*Tony Carr – President  
August 22, 2011*