

## SOUTH WEST ENVIRO. CENTRE INC.

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The Director  
Standing Committee on State Development  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

STATE DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE

29 JAN 2004

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Dear Sir/Madam

### **RE: Inquiry into Port Infrastructure in NSW**

South West Enviro Centre Inc. is a not-for-profit voluntary, community-based organization which has an interest in environmental impacts on the south western suburbs of Sydney.

After five years of operation, our members, who comprise a number of community based groups and individuals, have challenged a number of significant development proposals with very little success.

We have come to the conclusion that individual developments are too often approved as a discrete operation, without any consideration given to cumulative environmental impacts. The local community is told of each individual development, but they and the wider community are never informed of the likely environmental impacts. Over time, a picture is revealed of the wider impacts, too late for any negative impacts to be corrected.

This leads us to the conclusion that sound overall planning for large changes in land-use just doesn't happen.

An example of this has been the conversion of unused railway land at Chullora for industrial development. Within the bounds of this enclave we see very large traffic-generating businesses and industries thrown together with no consideration of the wider impacts on surrounding arterial and even residential roads.

Thousands of heavy vehicles carrying vast loads have been added to the normally heavy traffic on the Hume Highway, Rookwood Road/Stacey Street and Centenary Drive/Roberts Road since these new developments have come on-line, with more yet to come. The Hume Highway, in particular, is crumbling under the impact, yet very little has been done to facilitate the intensive re-development of the area.

COMMUNITY NETWORKING FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

The proposed expansion of Port Botany is not a discrete development. Its expansion will result in a massive increase in heavy vehicle and freight-rail traffic, not only in the environs of Botany, but also in the south western suburbs of Sydney. A crucial component of the Port Botany expansion will be the expansion of rail-freight handling facilities at Chullora and nearby Enfield, bringing with it even more heavy vehicle traffic to the south western suburbs, the dumping ground for unwanted, undesirable and hazardous developments.

The M5 motorway and all the major arterial roads are already choked with heavy vehicles – so all this extra traffic will be forced onto local roads to the detriment of these roads, their users and the residents, who will suffer the further degrading of air quality and the noise of 24 hour heavy vehicle activity. Perhaps the overall plan is to chase all the residents out of these suburbs and leave them entirely to industry and traffic. It's no wonder people are already leaving the area in droves, if they can afford it.

It is obvious to us that the expansion of Port Botany and the related expansion of Chullora and Enfield would be a disaster for much of Sydney. The solution is to 'share the load' by up-grading Port Newcastle and/or Port Kembla. Existing freight handling facilities adjacent to the Sydney Orbital should also be upgraded.


These fairly localized concerns are exacerbated by the fact that the further expansion of Port Botany, as proposed, could sound the death knell for Botany Bay itself. The Bay continues to suffer from previous invasive developments around the bay, such as shipping facilities, airport expansion and removal of sand dunes, each of which has caused structural and environmental damage to the bay.

Commercial fishing has been banned in Botany Bay, not necessarily because of over-fishing, but more likely because of the loss of sea-grass beds and other habitat areas through dredging and other industrial and residential development as well as through increased pollution from storm-water run-off.

With no natural habitat for fish and no food source, the fish, the prawns, the dolphins and the wading birds are unlikely to ever return to Botany Bay. The Bay will be so deficient in natural resources that we might as well reclaim the whole lot for development.

This Legislative Inquiry must conclude that all future port expansion should take place outside of Sydney if the natural resource values of Botany Bay are to have any sort of future.

Yours faithfully



Irene Jones  
Secretary