

Mudgee District Environment Group - AGM Report May 2012

Di Omara - President

MDEG has had many changes in the last twelve months.

First and foremost I pay tribute to Jocelyn Hulme who was our Treasurer at the time of her death in July 2011. Jocelyn reached deep into the community with her involvement, knowledge and experience. She is sorely missed. Following her loss, members rallied and took over Jocelyn's responsibilities. In particular I would like to thank Ian McAdam for the extra work he took on. There were others. Thank you to all who answered the call.

We have adopted a new meeting format, having either a guest speaker or a business meeting on alternate months. Christine Cooke from Red Hill Environmental Education Centre spoke on The Regent Honeyeater Project and other initiatives. Allan Greer led a very stimulating and controversial discussion on environmental philosophy.

In September we held a public meeting on Renewable Energy Options for the Mid-Western Region, which included a presentation on behalf of Beyond Zero Emissions, and Ian McAdam's report on the solar thermal station proposal at Beryl.

Mining

The main focus this last year has naturally been with mining. Our region is under threat from several new mines and expansion of existing ones, mainly coal but also silver and gold. A network of new local organisations has been formed to fight these developments.

Following on from the revelation that Moolarben Coal Mine owned The Drip area, a major campaign was undertaken, including social media that resulted in almost 800 signatures and is still active. Over 200 submissions of objection to Moolarben Stage 2 Coal Expansion were sent to the Department of Planning.

Mudgee Mining - the **WHOLE** Story saw a rally and other activities that engaged maybe 200 people from Merriwa to Running Stream to Gulgong and beyond.

In October last year we celebrated a National Day of Action to Defend our Water, calling for a rethink on Cobbora Mine's rights to Cudgegong Water.

We contributed to the cost of the court case brought by the Hunter Environment Lobby against Ulan Coal Mine.

The Environmental Defenders Office gave a presentation regarding landholders' rights and mining leases.

Temporary workers accommodation units have been proposed at various locations in our region, to cater for the fly-in/fly-out labour force. We have written submissions and attended meetings to voice our objections to these proposals.

Adams Lead

Issues of funding and maintenance, the finalisation of the grant for a brochure and signage, and our progress towards opening up the site to the community will be dealt with in my later report on Adams Lead.

Other Campaigns and Submissions

- Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- Mudgee CBD Streetscape Trees Project
- Review of Travelling Stock Routes for LHPA
- MWRC Draft LEP
- MWRC Draft Temporary Workers' Accommodation Strategies
- Referral of proposed Mt Penny mine to the Federal Govt.
- Referral of proposed Macquarie River Pipeline to Orange also to Federal Govt.

In concluding my report I would like to thank Bev for all the work she does on the larger scale e.g. she addressed the Senate Committee on The Murray-Darling Basin Plan. She is an inspiration to us.

Thank you Bev and thank you to everyone who helps in our fight for a more sensible world.

Yours Di

Adams Lead Report

In 2010 Mid-Western Regional Council gave us \$1500 towards maintenance and weed control of this significant 3 hectare site in Gulgong, This enabled us to employ contractors but we could not match up to Council's expectations given the amount of funding. Council have not renewed the grant, instead keeping it for their use to slash the area to their satisfaction. So we are basically back to square one on this.

More positively, we are very proud to announce that the brochure of the site has been approved by the Adams Lead sub-committee of MDEG and we have a copy for you to look at. The interpretive signage for the site is still a work in progress and again, copies are here on display. We thank Simon Ferguson of Dunedoo Coolah Landcare for the enormous amount of work in obtaining funding, then designing the brochure and signage. It has been a bigger project than first thought. The completion of this sees a further step in our progress towards opening up the site as a community asset.

Activities we have had on site, involve a Walk and Talk day as part of the Nature Conservation Council's Festival of Nature; and working bees to clear privet and other weeds (woody or otherwise). Council have also done some poisoning of blackberries down there.

With involvement from new members of the MDEG we are making tentative moves towards a bush regeneration group. I have waited a long time for this. I do truly thank Berni Aquilina and John Clarke for their assistance. My thanks also to the other members of the Gulgong community who are starting to come forward. In July we are having 40 students from UTS in Sydney, "The Big Lift", who have offered to do work at Adams Lead. This will probably include the placement of the signage, weed control and propagation. We have a big year ahead of us.

Thank you