

The People's National Park: Working-Class Environmental Campaigns on Sydney's Georges River, 1950-67

Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow*

The prevailing narrative of official and academic environmental histories has been that campaigns to protect native bushland and establish national parks were initiated by middle-class advocates of distant wildernesses. Yet in the 1950s in south western Sydney, working-class activists on the Georges River were demanding conservation for native bushland and accessible greenspace at the same time as they identified industrial pollution as a severe effect of postwar industrial development. In fact, these working-class campaigners identified conservation of native bushland through a national park as a key recognition of working people in the nation. This article argues this firstly by showing that the massive post war impact of industrialisation and population expansion on the working-class area of the Georges River not only increased pollution but at the same time rapidly decreased the area of native bushland there. Secondly, it uses oral history on the life stories of individual campaigners to trace how interaction with the local river and bushland environments shaped working-class identities, just as much as did employment and factory contexts. Thirdly, this article examines the core demands of the campaign, identifying how native bushland was used as a central emblem of working-class interests, in what became a definition of a 'national park' which was very different from the 'Yellowstone' model. Finally, the course of the campaign is followed through its wins and losses, showing how tensions were generated among the working-class campaigners as they tried to implement their goals of an accessible 'people's national park'.

How did the conservation movement in Australia begin? Who has sustained it? Today's urgent need to protect biodiversity has led to the search for answers these questions. The initiators are often seen as scientists or professionals during the mid-twentieth century who demanded protection for isolated and beautiful environments said to be untouched 'wilderness' like the Blue Mountains in New South Wales or the Little Desert in Victoria.¹ Their models were the 'national park' as they understood it to exist at Yellowstone in the United States or in the Royal National Park in Australia, a view even then coloured by hindsight.² This narrative of national parks as 'pristine' wilderness areas saved by middle-class campaigners has been continually reproduced: not only in recent histories of the 'founding' of Australia's environmental movement, but also in the public relations material of current national park managers in each country.³

There has been some recognition of working-class environmental justice campaigns initiated in the 1970s against industrial pollution like Love Canal in the USA and Le Fevre in Port Adelaide, Australia.⁴ But there has seldom been an awareness of working-class interest in conserving natural environments. The NSW Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) acted in 1973 to save native vegetation at Kelly's Bush in Hunter's Hill but this innovation occurred because a middle-class residents' group, in a middle-class Sydney suburb, called on the activist BLF for help to save the parkland.⁵ There has been little, if any, discussion about working-class

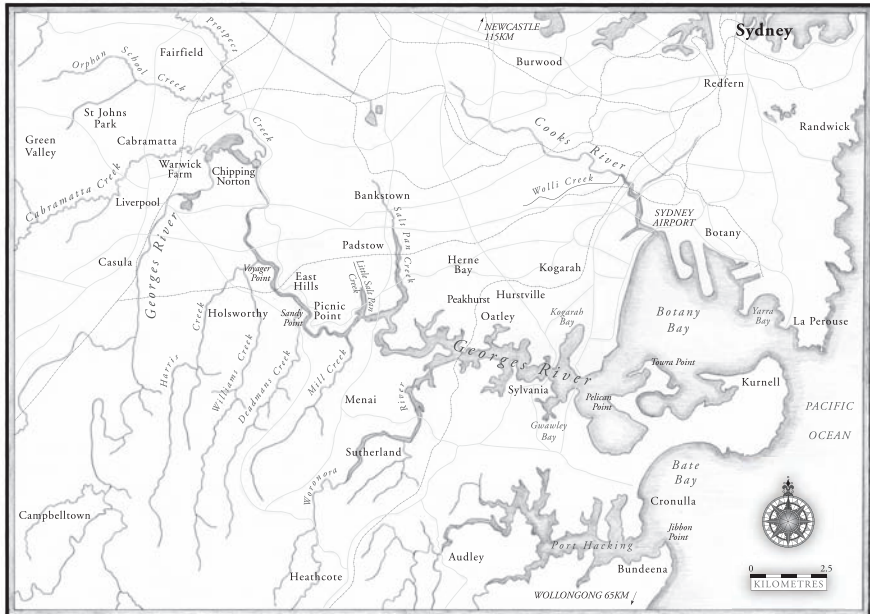
communities taking action before the 1970s on their own behalf to protect the living, natural environments around them, as opposed to the built environments.

The history of Sydney's Georges River tells us a different story, about working people acting in the 1950s to protect native bushland by arguing that it was central to working-class identity – and because of that, it should be central to the nation. This article will follow this story firstly by reviewing the massive post war impact of industrialisation and population expansion on the Georges River, which shows that while industrial pollution increased, there was at the same time a rapid decrease in the area of native bushland and open green space available there. Secondly, it will look closely at the life stories of individual campaigners, to trace how interaction with the local river and bushland environments shaped working-class identities, just as much as did employment and factory contexts.⁶ Thirdly, the article will examine the core demands of the campaign, identifying how the bushland was used as a central emblem of working-class interests, in what became a definition of a 'national park' which was very different from the 'Yellowstone' model. Finally, we will trace the course of the campaign, to see how its wins and losses opened up tensions between the campaigners about how to implement their goals of an accessible 'people's national park'.

The Georges is a large freshwater river in south west Sydney which becomes tidal salt water as it sweeps from western Sydney to Botany Bay. It flows past towns like Liverpool, Fairfield, Bankstown, Lakemba, Canterbury and Hurstville along its densely populated northern shores, and the Sutherland Shire stretched along its southern banks. While there were high populations, there was still much bushland surviving along the river because much of its surroundings were unsuitable for any European farming. The river cuts through Hawkesbury sandstone in many areas, with tall angophoras and gums rising up steep escarpments, standing guard over sandy beaches or salt marsh and mangrove-fringed foreshores. As well as the continuing Aboriginal population, the area was largely peopled by Irish settlers, although groups of Europeans had come into the farming areas in the 1880s, and by the later twentieth century there were increasing numbers of Pacific, Asian and Middle Eastern migrants.

It was along the middle reaches of this river in the 1950s that an activist group of campaigners, largely from the Anglo-Irish community, successfully defended their bushland environment. Yet although their victory was real enough in the 1960s, it did not survive into later decades. Their Georges River National Park – won at great cost – was recognised only between 1961 and 1967 and then it was practically erased from the record. The title was later re-inscribed onto the same parklands in 1991, but this new park was administered entirely by the state government. From the park agency's current website, we learn that the Georges River National Park began its life as a national park only in 1992, after the state took control.⁷ Its earlier life – as the first Georges River National Park – has become officially invisible. But it lives on in scattered documents and the undercurrents of local people's memories. When brought together, these can still tell an important story about working-class activists and their goals of defending their bush and river environments by making them into a national park for the people.

Also often silenced has been the Aboriginal story about their continuing life on this urban, industrial river.⁸ There was an articulate network of Aboriginal activists



The Georges River

Map by Cartographer Ian Faulkner <www.ianfaulknerillustrator.com>

in the 1920s and 1930s, who expressed strong views about the significance of the river environment not only for themselves but for their white neighbours.⁹ But the 1950s was a period of particular turmoil for the Georges River Aboriginal communities, as economic and then governmental interventions forced displacement until the 1960s.¹⁰ The presence of Aboriginal people was at times invoked by working-class river campaigners and the memories of Aboriginal people confirm those of the Anglo-Irish residents about the changes to the river's ecology and water quality. Yet during the years when the working-class environmentalists had found their voice, there were few Aboriginal people available on the river to take part in the campaign to save the river's parklands.

The 1950s: Building a New City at the Expense of Working-Class Environments

In the climate of post-war optimism, both federal and state governments began planning for a new, industrialised and 'modern' Australia. The impact of these post-war changes was to fall disproportionately on the Georges and Cooks Rivers, making these working-class environments pay the heaviest costs for the modernising of the city. These costs were not only in rising pollution of the environment but also in loss of accessible native bushland.

The key instrument to build this 'modern' city was the County of Cumberland Plan, which mapped out the zones across Sydney which would determine the type of development possible in each. Subdivision was not to occur in the areas zoned as 'Green Belt'. In the middle Georges River, this included the substantial bushlands around Herne Bay, Salt Pan Creek, Padstow and Picnic Point. A small amount this land was already in public ownership, but most was the sandstone or marshy land

which, although privately owned, had not been subdivided. Some of that had been turned into commercial 'pleasure grounds' which drew huge crowds from across Sydney from the 1880s through to the 1930s by advertising a mixture of elements such as playgrounds, picnic areas, dance floors, tea rooms and bars with native bushland and shorelines for a 'bush' experience.¹¹ Other privately owned properties had never been farmed or subdivided. Left as 'bush', these areas had long been criss-crossed with tracks because they had been used freely by surrounding working-class and Aboriginal residents, for all manner of activities, from hunting, gambling, running chickens, and gathering wildflowers through to illicit sex and drinking. These lands had made no profit for their owners, but instead had long functioned as de facto 'Commons'.¹²

All this was changing by the end of the war. Family economies were becoming less dependent on the informal sector of backyard gardens, so house blocks on infertile sandstone land were becoming more attractive for buyers. Furthermore, even in the early 1950s, the increases in population which the government was planning were being directed into the south western suburbs in Hurstville, Bankstown and Liverpool, making subdivision of even infertile land ever more profitable. So the threat to the County of Cumberland's proposed Green Belt along the Georges River was not the new alienation of land currently held as public Crown land, of which there was very little on the northern bank of the Georges River. Instead, the real threat lay in the sale for subdivision of what was already freehold land. Private owners could now put up this previously unwanted bushland for lucrative sale as residential land if only the weak restrictions of the County of Cumberland green belt zoning could be lifted.¹³

The County of Cumberland held only the temporary power to propose green belt zones, which needed local council ratification in each case to have permanent standing.¹⁴ In practice, this meant that lobbying began immediately the Plan was ratified.¹⁵ By 1957, the councils had conceded to the pressure and the freeze on subdivision in the Padstow and East Hills areas was lifted, much to the delight of the local Progress Association.¹⁶ While the overall district remained staunchly 'Labor voting', this Progress Association reaction reflected the interests of rising sectors of the local population eager to foster land sales and 'respectable' suburban development.

The green belt zones along the Georges River were being reduced, but the zoning which allowed factories to be built there was expanding. This was because factories could not be built on land zoned as 'residential only' and these decisions were open to heavy influence because they had to be ratified at State Government level. From the 1940s to the 1960s, the vast majority of the 'residential only' zones approved were those proposed in the North Shore and Eastern Suburbs, where wealthier and higher status interest groups could exert more pressure on State government parties. Those zones proposed in less politically powerful areas of the Cooks and the Georges Rivers areas were most often rejected. Fewer 'residential only' zones in the south west meant that the new factories were concentrated there.¹⁷ From 1945 to 1965, the proportion of all factories located in the inner city declined from over 68 per cent to 32 per cent, while those in the 'South' region – predominantly Bankstown – increased from nine per cent to 20 per cent, an increase greater than in any other area. This led to major industrial pollution in the south west, affecting the air, soil and river waters, and to

severe health hazards for local residents.¹⁸ When industrial pollution in all Sydney rivers was finally measured in 1971, it was found that Georges River came second only to the Cooks River in toxicity level and, given its far higher population and longer length, this poisoned river affected more people than any other river in the city.¹⁹

Finally, the population growth of the city, with a rising birth rate and migration from rural areas as well as from overseas, proved to be far higher than expected. By 1954, the increase in Sydney's population was already double that predicted in 1948.²⁰ From 1946 to 1961, the Bankstown and adjacent Fairfield local government areas, already densely settled, had the greatest absolute increase in population across the whole of Sydney, a rise of over 160,000 people or 240 per cent. Sutherland, with a much larger area on the southern side of the river, also rose steeply, adding 82,562 people to rise by 282 per cent, although with less densely packed results. Only these three districts, all on the Georges River, faced such a massive rise in real numbers.²¹

So public housing services, such as curbing, guttering, public transport, parkland and even public schooling fell far behind the rate at which people were dumped onto the hostels and estates along the river. The government's main anxiety about water, particularly after a prolonged drought from 1936 to 1942, was about providing adequate piped water for these thousands of new houses. Capital works of the Water Board therefore focused on water storage and, in particular, dam building, which was continuous from 1918 to 1960. There was far less focus on the disposal of liquid wastes and particularly on sewage systems.²²

Although plans had been well advanced in 1911 to provide sewage across the city, warfare and then Depression had blocked any progress. The disproportionate 1950s increases in population and house construction along the Georges River meant that sewage infrastructure there fell ever further behind.²³ By 1959, Bankstown Municipality had the lowest rate of houses connected to a sewage system, at 31 per cent, of any major residential area in Sydney.²⁴ This major backlog in sewage networking meant that alternatives were used, such as continued or expanded use of septic tanks. Often, however, the expansion of housing into previously non-residential areas meant that such temporary septic disposal systems were being located in unsuitable ground. This led to frequent overflows and runoff which found its way into rivers and, even more directly, to the dumping of raw or minimally treated sewage in rivers.²⁵

By every measure the working-class environments of the Georges River area came off worst – although sometimes jockeying with the Cooks River for the wooden spoon. There were more factories and so more unregulated industrial pollution, more and more incoming people and so more pressure to build houses on scarce land and less sewage infrastructure than anywhere else in the city and so the worst runoff into the river. In short, the heaviest environmental cost of Sydney's post-war modernisation, in both pollution and in land lost, was paid by the Georges River.

Who Were the Environmental Advocates in 1950?

It is hardly surprising that there was a movement which protested against this impact. Yet in this large and complex population, with many people under high economic and social pressure, there were contradictory voices. We have seen the Progress Association support for the ending of the Green Zones. Who demanded protection for the local environment?

It was the people who actually lived along the river and whose lives interacted most directly with the undeveloped bushlands on the shores, who campaigned most strongly against subdivision for either factories or homes. They feared – rightly – that the council would not hold out against the development lobby and so they had been gathering support locally and at state level for a decade.

These were not middle-class professionals like Myles Dunphy, so often credited with initiating the Australian environmental movement, and who was living on the same river, downstream at Oatley.²⁶ Dunphy was focussed, at this same time, on campaigning for the declaration of ‘primitive’ national parks and protected areas in places away from the city, like the Blue Mountains.²⁷ Instead, the people trying to save the bushland and foreshores along the Georges River were working people, some recently among the unemployed in the Depression, and all struggling to make a living in the factories and small businesses just getting re-established along the river. Most had been living close to the river, in or close to the undeveloped bushland on its sandy soils or marshy bends. The shifts in development of the city marked a new phase in the dynamic relationship between city and nature, and people on the river could see the spaces they valued being lost – closed up and engulfed by encroaching factories, roads or houses.

City Working Lives Entangled with Nature

Tracing campaigners’ life stories gives an insight into motives and alliances beyond collective labels like ‘working class’ and gives an insight into how these river communities engaged with the environment. One example is George Jacobsen, a key advocate for the parklands.²⁸ He had grown up in the 1920s on other rivers, the Parramatta in the west and then the Cooks at Earlwood, before he moved to East Hills on the Georges River as a young married man in the Depression. A cabinet maker by trade, George was on the dole in the 1930s, sometimes hunting and skinning rabbits in the Blue Mountains to keep his family going. His father William had bought a number of blocks on the northern side of the river. George and Minnie started to build a corrugated iron hut, squatting on Crown Land on the southern side. When timber getters moved into this area, George floated the hut across the river, iron sheet by iron sheet, in an example of the tenacity which shaped his life. He and Minnie rebuilt the hut, with a hardwood frame beneath the corrugated iron, an earthen floor, a fuel stove and whitewashed hessian bag walls. They lived right next to East Hills Park, little more than a stretch of dust in those years, across which they walked to get their water from the council tap. Their children, Kevin, Col, Keith and Carol, were born around the years of World War II. The brothers were better known later on as Col Joye and the Joy Boys. The family grew up with music: in the tin house with the mud floor, they always had a piano. Neighbours remember hearing its tinkling sounds floating across the water.²⁹

Once George was back in work, he was too busy to spend any time fishing. He worked six days a week in factories as a cabinet maker close to the city, then quit in a dispute with the bosses over conditions for the younger hands and went out on his own, keeping his small, local factory afloat by training greyhounds for neighbours. It was the greyhound training which took him to the bush tracks each day. But the kids were on the river all the time when they were young. Carol remembers the pool at East Hills Park, a netted tidal enclosure in the river, where the small, local

community gathered on the intolerable nights in summer when it was too hot to lie on the sheets, too hot to sleep. The river's innumerable jellyfish used to hang, smelly and dying, on the nets on bad days at low tide, but it was where they all learnt to swim. The boys recall fishing, catching crabs – 'the big mangrove muddies' Col says – and prawning in the creek. George's link to the bush was his dogs and his dedication to the parks: Kevin remembers walking his father's racing greyhounds each day, which always meant watering the kikuyu runners George had planted so carefully in the dust to coax the Park into life. The boys learnt from George's father how to shoot birds and rabbits. Col remembers his grandfather as a hard, solitary man, an old railway worker and staunch unionist who had held solid for the union on a three-year strike. William treated people as rogues until they had proved themselves to be otherwise. He never allowed the boys to hunt without reminding them about Aboriginal approaches to the bush:

The mad whitefellas'll end up ruining the world ... You have to look at what the blackfellas did, the way they treated the land. If you catch a bird and kill it, you've got to eat it, no matter what.³⁰

Underlying everything, his family felt that George was committed to the *people* of East Hills.³¹ George wasn't alone in this; he was one of many in these working-class suburbs who were trying to make a community for themselves and their children out of the rubble left after the Depression and the War. This working-class area was Australian Labor Party (ALP) territory. The Depression's iconic Labor Premier Jack Lang had come from and continued to live in the area. From local government up to the federal seats, there were solid voting patterns supporting the Left, returning the ALP at all levels, but arising from a population which included many active socialists and communists. Despite ideological differences, which were to deepen over the years, all of the left groups expressed their commitments in community terms, to people. Kevin Jacobsen argues that the Labor Party in those days 'used to talk about the local community. It wasn't politics, politics, politics. It was 'What could be done for East Hills?'' His brother Col explains:

Dad was a good community person no matter what. He made sure people got to vote. Made sure that the buses turned up to take people to the booths, for as long as I can remember. I mean, he wanted them to vote for the Labor Party, but just the same, regardless of how they voted, he said, 'as long as they get a chance to vote!'³²

The family's social life revolved around the river swimming pool, the cricket club and the football club, all of which George had played a big role in establishing. Minnie and other mothers sewed the uniforms and organised the fundraising, and fathers trained and managed the games, all of which generated a social focus for an ever-widening community network. Their efforts were fulfilling and enjoyable, but edged with anxiety. A recurrent fear among the general public in Australia in these years was that youth, particularly young working-class men, were losing direction in the affluent post-war period, with moral panics about juvenile delinquency and rock and roll fuelled in the Cold War atmosphere and contributing to community unease.³³ Organised team sports, and therefore the infrastructure like playing fields and club houses to support them, were a solution which was within the reach of

suburban communities as they tried to restore a sense of meaning to the post war generation. This was one of the elements in the platforms of all the local political parties, including the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) which had a strong focus on local communities and particularly on support for parks and healthy living environments. The CPA had a recreation camp site at Minto, near Liverpool, and held its anniversary picnic at Gunnamatta Bay in the area in 1945, celebrating with family snaps, local bands and calls for more parks for the people. In an even more defiant spectacle, its International Youth Festival was opened at Hollywood Park on the Georges River, just upstream of East Hills, in 1952.³⁴

By the end of the war, committees had already been set up on the Georges River to rebuild the area. The pre-war Progress Associations, often the only body speaking for local communities, had diversified, reflecting growing populations and multiplying interests. One of these new bodies was the Parks Committee, of which George was initially a member, aimed at gaining more small parks across the area. But an even more energetic group was the Picnic Point Regatta Association (PPRA), formed largely by people living close to the river and aimed at saving and extending the lands available to the community on the river banks for swimming races, rowing carnivals and the large picnics which continued to be a highlight of community life. One member, Alf Stills, had lived in nearby Bankstown and spent his childhood prawning and fishing in the river. He joined the struggling PPRA in 1950 with his wife Eileen, from the Jeffreys family who had grown up on the southern bank of the river, just opposite East Hills.³⁵ As secretary, Alf nursed the PPRA back to life, leading a membership drive and building up its strength in the early 1950s. The PPRA then launched a series of demands to save river land which locals had expected would be established as parkland under the County of Cumberland Plan but which was coming under threat from factory and residential development. Alf and Eileen were, like George, people whose everyday lives entangled their sense of working-class identity with time spent in bushland and on the river.

George joined the PPRA in 1956, motivated by fears about the impact of housing on the sandstone bush and river foreshores. He threw his energies into the campaigning, pestering the local ALP politicians to respond to PPRA demands. Carol recalls:

I'm telling you my father was on the phone every second night to Joe Kelly [ALP State Parliament member] ... Joe's going to do this and Joe's going to do that! My mother said, 'For Christ sake, will you leave him alone. You're persecuting the poor bugger'.

And Col:

They'd ring me up and say, 'Get your old man off our back!' He used to drive them mad. George didn't ring up for something for *us*, he always rang up for somebody else. He rang up *for* somebody!³⁶

Why Local People Wanted a *National* Park in 1961

To save the river and its foreshores from residential development, the PPRA argued that all the parks along the river should not only be protected from subdivision, but should be declared a *national* park. There was, at that time, no state legislation to define or manage national parks, although there had been parks designated as

'national' for 80 years in Australia by then and there was wide popular knowledge of the idea being put into practice in America and Canada.³⁷ The goals of the PPRA, stated as early as 1949, show that this group had a very different idea from other models of what a national park should be.³⁸

There were four main grounds on which the PPRA based its claim that their parklands deserved the status of 'national'. Firstly the group saw the land as 'public', that is, it was to be saved for and used by 'the people'. This had a particular local salience as so much of the bushland, even that in private hands, had really been open to the local public. Just as important was the concept of 'the public', which had been a key one in the development of the 'national park' ideal in the United States, where such parks were a symbol of the new democratic forms of the liberal settler state. This Australian suburban community had had a turbulent working-class history, fighting evictions during the Depression with pitched battles and producing the locally celebrated Labor Premier Jack Lang, dismissed in 1932 after challenging the international financial institutions. So in this area, a 'national' park stood for the promise of democracy – of having working-class voices recognised at last, with a physical space to embody that voice. The symbolism of public ownership and access was frequently raised in phases like 'for the benefit of the people' in all the PPRA and early Trust literature. When the local custodianship of the park was threatened in 1967 and removed in 1991, the protests were all expressed in the language of 'the people', of the 'workers' or 'battlers' and 'the public'. This was a very concrete sense of the 'public' and the 'people': it was, first and foremost, *local* people who were understood to be 'the public', rather than any abstract, generalised and distant 'public'.

The locals' notion of a 'national park' was a class-based concept. This was not a top-down reformers' approach but a populist and local self-help, self-advancement, school-of-arts approach. In its emphasis on the 'youth of the district', it made very clear its assertion that '*we* are the public'. It was not parochial or isolationist; from the early days of the Pleasure Grounds, there had always been a strong awareness of the Georges River as an attraction for people from a wide area. But the concept of 'the national' was a confident assertion that '*we*', as the local working people, were part of the 'national' – and indeed embodied 'the national'. The concept also had unspoken exclusions: the Progress Associations had taken a role in forcing local Aboriginal people away from their residences during the 1920s and 1930s,³⁹ and although there were clear differences in outlook between the Progress Associations and the PPRA there can be little doubt that the PPRA's vision of 'the public' and 'the nation' was still monocultural.

Secondly, its 'national' claim lay not only in its acquisition by and for the local people and 'the public' but also in the need to protect the land with the full power held by 'the nation'. The PPRA feared that the parklands would continue to be vulnerable to the demand to subdivide and sell off to ever more affluent home owners. The 'public' lands needed therefore to be protected in the most secure form of title and the PPRA believed this to lie in the designation of 'national'. The sustained interest in acting to save the foreshores from development was always stated in terms of ensuring the access of 'the people' for 'posterity'. The national park idea was not only then about a concept of 'the people' or the public, but about the most secure way to protect such a place, in the face of the intensifying encroachment of private development.

George Jacobsen demonstrated the other major anxiety of the PPRA members which was their increasing recognition that they needed to protect not just the bush areas of the landscape, but to protect the river as well. As an inner city factory worker then a struggling factory owner, George was acutely aware of the impact of industry on the environment. The rapidly increasing populations in these south western working-class suburbs found jobs in expanding industrial development, including not only wartime aircraft manufacturing but new factories to make garden fertiliser, pesticides and paint which, in turn, were each demanded by the owner-builder housing boom. Not only were house blocks being sold, but influxes of migrant workers and relocated inner city slum populations were being housed in hostels along the Georges River, at Herne Bay, East Hills and Villawood. The combined discharges from factories and the untreated effluent from the new housing and the rapidly expanding hostels were all contributing to major toxic and nutrient pollution of the river. Carol, the youngest in the family, remembers:

Dad was always *for* the bush, the water. I remember him right back, when we were really young, complaining about the factories, saying, 'There's a new factory up on the river, and it's going to be spewing all this stuff into the river! They're spilling all this shit; it's going to ruin the water. It'll all be polluted!' And because we were all young we didn't know! The boys would say, 'Look, don't tell anybody that! You'll bloody embarrass yourself by saying it's going to pollute the water,' not knowing that he was absolutely paranoid about it.

Col was very aware of George's frustration:

He always had an affinity with the river. For as long as I can remember, he said he's not going to let them kill our river! So he always stood up to keep the river clean. And that's when I heard of pollution. For years I never knew what it meant! You'd just nod your nut and go along with it! ... Talking about the environmental thing was one of his bugs. Where he got it from I don't know, because I don't know what he ever read. All he did was work six days a week!⁴⁰

A final undercurrent in the demand for 'national' protection may well have been the continuing desire among Anglo-Irish settlers to feel that they really 'belonged' in the environment, reflected in the assertiveness of local politics in claiming an unquestioned ownership over an imagined pristine land. Nevertheless, the most urgent threat in the 1960s was not to white settler Australian ownership but to public, local ownership, access and river safety, and it is in these terms that the parks were championed. In more recent years, the issue has reappeared, and now race and ethnicity have been dramatically foregrounded in a way that was not the case in the 1960s, when the cultural dominance of Anglo-Irish Australians in the area was taken for granted.

Thirdly and just as fervently held was the belief that this parkland deserved the 'national' designation because it was 'native' and 'primitive' bushland, not just any landscaped green space. The early documents of the PPRA and Trust make clear that 'saving the foreshores' meant conserving native vegetation and animals, and this was spelt out more clearly in the late 1960s. The first secretary of the new Trust, R.J. Stephens, explained:

Much of the land adjoining the river is already privately owned. This had limited the extent of the park to Crown land and frozen lands ... and because of their rugged character, the Trust will leave many of these areas in their native state.⁴¹

The eighth Trust Report explained that 'while some areas of parklands had been developed and others would be developed, the greater part would be left in its natural state'.⁴² The following year, the Trust explained further:

It must be realised that it was never intended for the Parklands to become a big picnic area but to protect and preserve the natural surroundings of the area not only for this but for future generations.⁴³

There was little awareness of the concept of 'ecosystems' among early local campaigners for the park.⁴⁴ In fact, there was a diverse and eclectic approach to what might be understood as 'native' or 'primitive' in the specific Georges River context.⁴⁵ It is clear, however, that for the PPRA the inclusion and protection of individual 'native' species of wildflowers, wallabies and possums among many others, was of defining importance in local conceptions of what a national park should be.⁴⁶ They believed, however, that this was a 'native' nature which could and should be enhanced to make 'the native' more accessible (by gathering plants from many different places to grow together), more impressive (by massing plants for example rather than planting them in the dispersed patterns in which they grew naturally) and more educational (with labels, like a botanical gardens). So it was consistent that the three floral reserves which the PPRA and Trust members established in and around the park should incorporate native flowering plants from Western Australia in order to impress visitors with the beauty of native blooms, rather than that only the ones endemic to the actual Sydney riverine environment. The approach to 'native' nature had at least something in common with the small, commercial Brereton's Zoo, remaining at the nearby Lambeth St Pleasure Grounds, with its goals of exhibiting and entertaining, but the PPRA focus remained on the 'national', 'native' flora, not on an aesthetic concept of entertaining by displaying exoticism or beauty from outside Australia.

The final element in this popular conception of a 'national' park was recreation for youth, as a national goal and responsibility. This idea was a complex of beliefs about the importance of outdoor exercise and the Australian climate for health, but it also reflected an environmental nationalism, which assumed that if team sports and outdoor exercise took place in the surroundings of iconic Australian landscapes it would build the national identity. Underlying all of this was a rising national and a specifically local post-war anxiety about young people under the impact of modernity, particularly in the newer, working-class suburbs where many teenagers were growing up with few resources. The PPRA's first meetings gave voice to what was a widespread fear about teenage boys and the rise of juvenile delinquency.⁴⁷ So the wider educational role of native parklands, assumed across the whole Australian society, had an urgent and immediate edge for the residents of the new working-class suburbs of the Georges River, who were so troubled about the future of their children.⁴⁸

Overall, the national park campaigners had a fundamental expectation that the park would serve human purposes, in this combination of didactic, social and

national roles. This assumption of the instructive role of, and social benefits to be gained from, access to open spaces both for organised sports *and* for observation and appreciation of native bushland and animals was characteristic of the PPRA and of wider views at the time. The goal of this national park idea was to facilitate and encourage human activity, and the early campaigners saw no inconsistency in assuming that it was human needs and goals which should be paramount in the park's management.

This human-centred approach was a very different one from the ecologically centred approach which is currently dominant in most natural resource management agencies and particularly in National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is not so different, however, from the early conservation movement associated with Myles Dunphy and the bushwalkers of the mid-twentieth century, usually credited as the forerunners of the wilderness movements of the present day. Dunphy, too, had a human-centred approach in which supposedly pristine bush areas were to be protected, but neither for themselves alone nor to protect their biodiversity. Dunphy and several members of the Bushwalkers' Clubs he helped form believed protection should occur so that small numbers of sensitive human beings, those most attuned to the values of these 'primitive' or wilderness environments, might better appreciate them.⁴⁹

Campaign Battles: Winning and Losing

The PPRA called on the Bankstown, Hurstville and Sutherland Councils to defend the green belts set aside by the Cumberland County Council Plan, and to extend them wherever possible. There were some small wins, notably around the lower sections of River Road at Picnic Point, but the PPRA sustained a serious loss in their battle to save the Lewis Gordon lands.

The Lewis Gordon estate was one of the very few original granted estates which had never been subdivided so no development had occurred there. It had two sections. There was a large area of flat, sandy land high on the escarpment which the PPRA wanted to make into playing fields. A narrower stretch of waterfront land lay at the bottom of the escarpment cliff, west around the riverbank from Morgan's Creek and along Burrawang Reach to the entry of another small creek down a stony gully to join the main river at a point called the Anvil. The PPRA wanted to make all of this accessible as part of the new national park where native bushland could be enjoyed by and educate everyone. All the land had been turned over to the Commonwealth on the death of its owner and was being transferred to the County of Cumberland. The County was expected in due course to pass it on to Bankstown Council, which in turn had agreed to confirm it as public land and make it part of the park.

For eight years, the PPRA had lobbied for this land to become a national park. All the while, it had been fundraising and had begun work to build shelters and better facilities on the small areas it had been able to have confirmed as parklands like the East Hills Park. Late in 1959, however, just as they seemed on the brink of success, the PPRA received the news that the County was going to retain the upper land in order to build a huge electricity substation to service the rapidly escalating demand from the power-hungry 'all electric' homes proliferating across the region.⁵⁰ Bitterly disappointed, PPRA members consoled themselves that they had at least won the protection of the lower Lewis Gordon lands in perpetuity.

But there were real costs to this defeat. Because the PPRA had lost its goal of an expansive playing field on the upper Lewis Gordon land, it was forced to find the recreational land it needed – to save working-class teenagers from juvenile delinquency with sport – from the small amounts of river frontage land which it had won. This meant the PPRA was aggressive in its early 1960s planning to ‘reclaim’ the area on the lower Lewis Gordon lands. ‘Reclamation’ meant digging out the native but expanding mangroves which the local people had seen spreading along the banks and it meant filling in the stoney creeks with dredged sand to make grassy picnic areas. This was done with Anvil Creek, to which the PPRA gave a wholly fictional history when they named it ‘Cattle Duffers’ Flat’. While aimed at restoring the socially accessible nature of the river, which had been so well used across the nineteenth century, this ‘reclamation’ strategy generated tensions in the PPRA, as people like George grew uneasy with the destruction of native plants (even if invasive) and the invention of wholly imaginary new landscapes.⁵¹

Victory for the People's National Park 1961-67

Although defeated over the Lewis Gordon Estate, the PPRA achieved one of its key goals in February 1961 when the Minister for Lands announced that the whole stretch of parkland along the river was now to be declared a ‘national park’, one of only two urban areas dignified with such a designation.⁵² The Georges River National Parklands Trust was finally set up early in 1962 to manage the land. In its initial years it had broad representation from the community including two PPRA members, of whom George Jacobsen was one.

A notable achievement of the Trust was to continue to exert local pressure to expand the public land included in the Georges River Parklands, although it was an arduous process, with land added only fragment by fragment.⁵³ Yet ultimately the Trust had come close to doubling the area of the Parklands, from 426 acres (approximately 173 hectares) in 1961 to 785 acres (326 hectares) in 1991.⁵⁴ Its plans had always extended further, to ambitious ‘improvements’ to make the land they had gained as accessible as possible to local people, including the contentious dredging of the river. It was a source of scarce funds for the ‘improvements’ because the sand was in demand for the housing boom, but the practice was laden with value judgements of ‘cleaning’ the river from siltation and making it more ‘natural’. And its damage to the riverbed brought increasingly bitter complaints from local, working-class fishermen.⁵⁵

For all the PPRA goals of protecting ‘the natural’, there was very little real environmental protection which the title ‘national park’ could offer. In months of the declaration of the national park, in April 1962, the Public Health Officer for Bankstown Council, Kevin Howard, was so shocked by the emerging data the Council was gathering on the toxicity of the Georges River that he took the unprecedented step of closing the river to swimming.⁵⁶ Soon after, a special report by the Public Health Department chemist, Government Analyst Ernest Ogg, in June 1962, confirmed widespread, severe pollution, arising from the unsewered subdivisions and government military bases and hostels, but also from the proliferating factories.⁵⁷ Eventually the Trust had to take away the shark-proof netting around the enclosures to convince people they were no longer allowed to swim. The Trust added its strong support to local government and resident demands for the government to fulfil

its promises and complete a major expansion of the sewage system and treatment process, to replace the old night soil carts and flows of untreated sewage into the river. Other than that, however, it could only lamely suggest the construction of a freshwater artificial swimming pool near the polluted Georges River to offer a safe place to swim.⁵⁸ The Georges River continued to be one of the most polluted waterways in the state until well into the 1980s.

Even so, the popular use of the national park area kept on increasing. The Trust argued that despite the severe problems with the river water's quality, visitor numbers were expanding because of the improvements they had been able to make to the amenities like running water, shelter sheds, barbeques and toilet blocks. Increased numbers of people were using Fitzpatrick Park, according to 1965 Annual Report, which documented over 2,000 people who were regularly using the park on busy days. Many companies used the national park complex to hold their works picnic days or their Christmas party for employees' children. De Havilland Aircraft Industry held regular Christmas parties in the Georges River national park during the 1960s⁵⁹ and Kelloggs, the food company based in Botany, used the park regularly in this way, even organising a helicopter landing in 1982 to bring Santa Claus to the picnic.⁶⁰ Both privately and in these large, corporate and collective gatherings, the national park was embedded as a prominent experience and a memory for local people.

Government Rejection 1967: This is Not a National Park

Yet it was known as a national park for only six years. In 1967 the NSW Government passed its first National Parks and Wildlife Act which established the National Parks and Wildlife Service and formalised a hierarchy of parks with the designation of only some as 'national'.⁶¹ The Georges River was not on the list. The legislation enshrined 16 parks as 'national' in its new order, while 54 other parks were given the less imposing title of 'State Park' or nature reserve. There were three national parks in some proximity to the urban centre: Ku-ring-gai Chase and the Royal, along with the Blue Mountains National Park marking the far western limit.⁶²

The explanation given by the government for demoting the Georges River from 'national park' to 'state park' was that the: 'accepted world concept of National Parks was that they embraced spacious land areas'.⁶³ The smallest of the 12 newly recognised national parks was 15,400 acres, the smallest of the existing 54 State Parks was 1,310 acres, while Georges River National Park was as yet only 426 acres. Even with its still unsecured Lewis Gordon addition, it was only ever going to be about 700 acres.⁶⁴

The local reaction was shock. 'Bill Will Strip Park of Status' and 'Georges River Parkland Fights for Existence' screamed the headlines in the *St George Leader* and the *Bankstown Torch*. But the National Park reverted to a State Park in 1967 and then was demoted again to a 'State Recreation Area' in 1982. The Government intervened further in the structure of the Trust, reducing the number of local community representatives and then, in 1987, removed the Local Government representation altogether.

When in 1991 the state government finally moved to reinstate the Georges River parklands as a National Park, it was at the cost of winding down of the Trust altogether and imposing the uniform NPWS management regime onto the parks. There was to be no more local voice, however flawed it may have been, in the

management of these parks. The renewed designation of national park was widely welcomed as being more protective, but it meant the imposition of a very different management approach onto the Georges River parklands, much of which seemed more about raising revenue than about caring for the environment.⁶⁵ Local response was again rapid and bitter. Labor Party parliamentarians and councillors reported that they were being inundated by public complaints from across what remained a strongly working-class population.⁶⁶ Pat Rogan, State Labor MP for East Hills, summarised those he was receiving:

At the same time the park was established, the developers already had their eyes on this beautiful waterfront land. Having won the battle to keep this land in public ownership, the public is now being denied access to this scenic area by the increased charges.⁶⁷

The shift in 1991 was depicted by opponents as a shift from a human-centred to an ecology-centred approach to park management and, in a betrayal of the people who had fought for the park, from a more 'local' to a more distanced, state-centred orientation.⁶⁸

Conclusions

There are important themes in this case study. Firstly, it was the local groups, and particularly those made up of people who lived on or experienced the river personally in the PPRA, which were essential in maximising the amount of foreshore which could remain public green space. The state-level planning instruments, and notably the County of Cumberland Plan, were unstable at local level and open to the intense pressures of high population growth and the demand for related infrastructure, pressures which led, for example, to the county council agreeing that a major electricity substation be placed on the Lewis Gordon estate. Neither state nor local government could be relied on in the Georges River area during the period of most rapid subdivision and suburbanisation. The Georges River and its parklands served the wider working-class community in the area, but it was the river-based PPRA and later the Georges River National Park Trust which sustained the lobbying and pressure which allowed the retention and extension of public green space along the river.

Secondly, these local groups held a very different concept of what constituted a 'national' park than that encompassed by official definitions even then, and certainly today. During the 1950s and 60s, the local groups wanted a national park *for* the people of the nation, to be used and inhabited. But at the same time they placed a high value on the 'native' quality of the riverbank parks they were trying to save. The convergence of ideas about parks, health, juvenile futures and the significance of local communities held by the ALP and the CPA, both of which had local and community active memberships, meant there was a strong consensus in these working-class river suburbs about the close identification of local people and local landscapes with 'the nation'. This meant, for them, that native, living environments were entangled with working-class identities. This was a period with no formal 'national parks' policy or statutory authority: there were few such parks and the meaning and status of 'national park' was still contested. The difference between the PPRA concept and

the better recognised Dunphy 'wilderness park' concept reflected a key debate over the meaning of the public and the nation in a society which in the 1950s still saw itself as divided along class lines.

Thirdly, the local community organisations were under no illusion that the environment of the river and its parks was pristine or stable, despite their conviction that it represented 'the native' landscape. They were acutely aware of the recent and rapidly escalating changes which were occurring and understood that at least some of the causes lay very directly with settlement and modern development. So the PPRA and other local groups were not seeking to freeze and preserve the current situation as if it were 'natural'. Instead their desire to 'save the foreshores' as bushland was consistent with their belief in the urgent need and responsibility to intervene in the damage being done and restore the more 'natural' conditions, for example the open shorelines free of invasive mangroves, which many of them could remember having existed only decades before.

Finally, when the National Parks and Wildlife Service assumed full control of the parklands in 1991, reinstating their national park status but dissolving the local Trust, this confronted not some entrenched and self-serving local power elite but instead the deeply held convictions of many people in the community that the parks had been their creation and their responsibility. At the time, this district was undergoing a severe impact from the economic downturn which occurred in the early 1990s. Those particularly badly affected by unemployment were young people, the very group for whom the original PPRA had hoped to secure the most benefit from the parks. This made the district's population even more vulnerable in a time of rapid change in the community's class and ethnic composition. A rising sense of social and economic instability and, for some, extreme vulnerability generated a concerted protest which was invariably expressed in terms of class and local entitlement.

There are no doubt important roles to play for park management authorities like national parks services and local government in widening social representation in environmental decision-making beyond the narrow social and cultural limitations of these early local committees. However, removing the local, social responsibility for and ownership over public green space which they had generated will only undermine urban environmental sustainability. A more constructive approach would be to recognise the highly valuable working-class community commitment to saving and conserving and maximising access to green space. Such a commitment should be celebrated and embraced as a base on which to build a more representative and diverse management structure and a process which appreciates active local custodianship.

Heather Goodall is Professor of History at UTS, teaching in environmental studies, Aboriginal histories and Indian Ocean colonial studies.

<Heather.Goodall@uts.edu.au>

Allison Cadzow is a consultant historian of environment, gender and Aboriginal history. She has been researching the environmental history of the parklands of the Georges River, which flows through densely settled, working-class and multicultural south-western Sydney.

<allison.cadzow@gmail.com>

Endnotes

- * After a long gestation in discussions with residents along today's Georges River, the paper's content has been further strengthened by the contributions of participants in the *Red, Green and In-Between* conference, in Brisbane in February 2010, some of whom remembered the National Park from their childhood. Dr Denis Byrne of the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has been a generous and sustained discussant as this work has developed. Two anonymous referees for this journal have offered important suggestions. Above all, we want to acknowledge the generous contributions of the Jacobsen family, Alf and Eileen Still and the other river campaigners who were interviewed for this research.
1. Libby Robin, Libby, *Defending the Little Desert: The Rise of Ecological Consciousness in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1998; Martin Mulligan and Stuart Hill, *Ecological Pioneers: A Social History of Australian Ecological Thought and Action*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
 2. R. White, 'Place and nation: how "national" were the first national parks?', paper delivered at the Australian Historical Association Conference, Melbourne, July 2008.
 3. Karen R. Jones and John Wills, *The Invention of the Park*, Cambridge, Polity, 2005; Kalamandeen, Michelle and Lindsey Gillson, 'Demything "wilderness": implications for protected area designation and management', *Biodiversity Conservation*, 2007, 16, pp. 165-82; NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, *Georges River National Park Plan of Management*, Sydney, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 1994.
 4. Lois Gibbs, 'Citizens' Activism for Environmental Health: The Growth of a Powerful New Grassroots Health Movement', in Sylvia Hood Washington, Paul C. Rosier and Heather Goodall (eds), *Echoes from the Poisoned Well: Global Memories of Environmental Injustice*, Lexington, Lanham, 2006, pp. 3-16; Stephen Darley, 'But the Working Class Don't Care about the Environment ... Do They?', *Social Alternatives*, vol. 13, no. 2, July 1994, pp. 37-41.
 5. Meredith Burgmann and Verity Burgmann, *Green bans, red union: environmental activism and the New South Wales Builders Labourers Federation*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1998.
 6. This close focus is consistent with Stephen Darley's argument ('But the Working Class Don't Care', p. 37) that working-class populations take environmental action because their everyday lives allow opportunities for close observation and 'active monitoring' of environmental change. This is just as true of natural environments as it is of levels of contamination and environmental health damage.
 7. NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water website, accessed April 2010, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkHeritage.aspx?id=N0080>. The site describes the previous management briefly but disparagingly: 'Prior to [1992], it was a state recreation area under the management of a trust. During this period, the trust licensed sand mining along the shores of the reserve and used the proceeds to develop the park. Grassed flats were created over former mangrove swamps, and facilities and seawalls were installed'.
 8. Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow, *Rivers and Resilience: Aboriginal people on Sydney's Georges River*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009.
 9. See, for example, Joe Anderson, recorded on *Cinesound News Review*, no. 100, 1933, discussed in Goodall and Cadzow, *Rivers*, pp. 135-65.
 10. *Ibid.*
 11. Glennys Barhnam, *Riverside Reflections: memories of Lugarno*, self published, Sydney, 2003; Sue Rosen, *Bankstown: A Sense of Identity*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1996; Andrew Molloy, *The History of Padstow*, Australian Media, Sydney, 2004; Andrew Molloy, *The History of Panania, Picnic Point and East Hills*, University Publishing Services, University of Sydney, 2006; Beverly Earnshaw, *The Land Between Two Rivers*, Kogarah Historical Society, Kogarah, 2001, ch. 6; Lynne McLoughlin, *The Middle Lane Cove River: A History and a Future*, Centre for Environmental and Urban Studies Macquarie University, Sydney, 1985.
 12. Jaqueline Davies, Dorothy Mulholland and Nora Pipe, *West of the River Road*, Towrang Publications, Sydney, 1979; Robert J. Haworth, 'Bush tracks and bush blocks: the aerial photographic record from south-west Sydney, 1930-1950,' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Person-Environment Studies*, no. 49, 1995, 32-42, pp. 37-38.
 13. J.J. Cahill, Premier, NSW Parliamentary Papers, Votes & Proceedings, (hereafter NSW V&P) 28 August 1957, vol. 21, pp. 166-67.
 14. Winston, Denis, *Sydney's Great Experiment: The Progress of the Cumberland County Plan*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1957.
 15. R.J. Kelly, NSW V&P, 31 May 1956, vol. 16, p. 230.
 16. President's Report, Padstow Park Progress Association, 1957, cited in M. Garside, *Padstow Park Progress Association, 1913-2001*, The Padstow Park Progress Association, Padstow, p. 26.
 17. Dan Huon Coward, *Out of Sight: Sydney's Environmental History 1851-1981*, Department of Economic History, Australian National University, Canberra, 1988, pp. 240-42.
 18. N.G. Butlin, (ed.), *Sydney's Environmental Amenity, 1970-1975*. Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1976, p. 133.
 19. Coward, *Out of Sight*, pp. 245-52; Butlin (ed.) *Sydney's Environmental Amenity*, pp. 140-49 and 176-183 demonstrates both the disproportionate historical pressure on the Georges River and that it had continued until this survey in the early 1970s.

20. Peter Spearitt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1978, p. 93, citing 1954 Census.
21. Carolyn Allport, 'Castles of security: the New South Wales Housing Commission and home ownership 1941-1961', in Max Kelly (ed.) *Sydney: City of Suburbs*, UNSW Press in association with the Sydney History Group, Kensington, NSW, 1987, p. 103. Figures from *Official Year Book of NSW*, no. 58, p. 56.
22. Coward, *Out of Sight*, p. 249; Butlin (ed.) *Sydney's Environmental Amenities*, p. 139.
23. Coward, *Out of Sight*, pp. 248-52.
24. *Ibid*, p. 251. Figures drawn from NSW Statistical Register, cited in Metropolitan Water Sewage and Drainage Board, 1960.
25. *Ibid*.
26. Myles Dunphy bought a home at Oatley on the Georges River. His son Milo Dunphy, also a keen conservationist, grew up on and around the river. He recalled taking a Bren gun up the Georges River in a boat with friends shooting at trees on shore, also shooting in the Oatley Park bush and swimming. See Peter Meredith, *Myles and Milo*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999, *passim*, and pp. 149, 151; Mulligan and Hill, *Ecological Pioneers*, pp. 136-63.
27. Regarding the campaign for a national park in Blue Mountains, see Patrick Thompson (ed.), *Myles Dunphy: Selected writings*, Ballangrin and Total Environment Centre, Sydney, 1986.
28. This sketch of George's life is drawn from PPRA papers held by Alf Stills and from an interview recorded with three of George Jacobsen's children (Col Joye, and Kevin and Carol Jacobsen), 12 June 2006, conducted by Heather Goodall, Surry Hills.
29. Interviews with PPRA members, 22 March 2006, conducted by Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow, Panania. Those present included Alf and Eileen Stills, Esme Smith, Joy Cornwall, Eileen Birch and Carol Jacobsen.
30. Jacobsen family interview, 12 June 2006.
31. *Ibid*.
32. *Ibid*.
33. Spearitt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, p. 95; D.E. Rose, *A Study of Juvenile Delinquency in NSW*, Department of Labour and Industry, Government Printer, Sydney, 1942.
34. *Tribune*, 19 October 1945, 23 October 1945, 12 March 1952.
35. Interviews with PPRA members, 26 March 2006; PPRA papers, Alf Stills' collection.
36. Jacobsen family interview, 12 June 2006.
37. Karen R. Jones and John Wills, *The Invention of the Park*, Polity Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2005 pp. 64-91.
38. Davies, *West of the River Road*, p. 38.
39. Local Progress Association papers, discussed in Goodall and Cadzow, *Rivers*, pp. 152-57; Progress Associations' papers published in various local histories, including Andrew Molloy, *The History of Padstow*.
40. Both of these quotes are from the Jacobsen family interview, 12 June 2006.
41. *St George and Sutherland Leader* (hereafter *Leader*), 8 March 1962; *Propeller*, 15 March 1962. R.J. Stephens himself was an employee of the Department of Lands.
42. *Leader*, 7 August 1968.
43. Georges River Parklands Trust Annual Report no.8, 1969.
44. There are many parallels between this situation in 1950s Sydney and the popular understanding of environments that was common in the USA in the same period. See Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, (2nd edn) Cambridge University Press, NY, 1997, 1985, 1994, Part Five: 'The Morals of a Science: Ethics, Economics and Ecology', pp. 255-315.
45. Kevin Howard, *An Essay on Contemporary Change and Prospects of the Georges River*, unpublished thesis, Diploma of Environmental Studies, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1973.
46. *Leader*, 3 April 1963.
47. Davies, *West of the River Road*, p. 38.
48. Spearitt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, p. 95, pointing out that the new suburbs of the Georges River, including the Housing Commission Hostels, were widely publicised to be the origins of many young men who came before the courts as 'juvenile delinquents'.
49. Meredith, *Myles and Milo*, pp. 126-28, reflecting Myles' frustration at wider public access to 'primitive' areas he wished to reserve for only a few 'walkers'. See extensive discussion on the 1932 decisions by Myles Dunphy and the Sydney Bushwalkers Club to set severe limits on membership, based on walking ability and 'sociability', in Melissa Harper, 'The battle for the bush: bushwalking vs hiking between the wars', *Journal of Australian Studies*, June 1995, no. 45, pp. 41-52.
50. PPRA papers, including Report 1959; Alf Still interview with PPRA members, 26 March 2006.
51. Jacobsen family interview, 12 June 2006; Carol Jacobsen and Alf Still interviews with PPRA members, 26 March 2006.
52. R.J. Kelly, Member for East Hills, and J. Renshaw, Deputy Treasurer, Minister for Lands, NSW V&P, 22 February 1961, vol. 35, pp. 2555-556.
53. *Leader*, 3 April 1963; 8 May 1963.
54. *Ibid*, 29 October 1991.
55. Douglas Cross, Member for Georges River ALP, NSW PP, 26 September 1956, vol. 18, p. 2608; Douglas Cross, 15 October 1957, vol. 21, p. 1131.

56. *Leader*, 5 April 1962; decision made by Kevin Howard with H.C. Hunt, the Council's senior Municipal Health Surveyor, a role Howard later took up. Interview with Kevin Howard by Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow, 13 February 2006.
57. *Leader*, undated photocopy although internal dating indicates 1962, held in Hurstville Local Studies Collection, Hurstville City Library; *Leader*, 3 April 1963. See also Howard, *An Essay on Contemporary Change and Prospects*, p. 8, citing Don Whittington, *The Effluent Society*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1970. Howard's reference is important, considering his long-serving role as a Trustee on the Georges River Parklands Trust from 1975.
58. *Leader*, 3 April 1963.
59. Georges River National Park Annual Report, no. 5, 1966, Sutherland Shire Local Studies Collection.
60. Kelloggs Employment Officer to Mr Thompson, NPWS and GR Trust, 19 August 1982, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Archives, Georges River Trust SR, file 109/49.
61. *Leader*, 4 January 1967, 23 August 1967; *Torch*, 23 August 1967.
62. NPWS *Table of Reserves*, generated 12 October 2005, NPWS Archives.
63. *Leader*, 4 January 1967.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Torch*, 29 April 1992; *Leader*, 29 October 1991; *Express* 12 November 1991.
66. R. Buchanan to Chris Hartcher, NSW Minister for the Environment, 26 August 1992, NPWS Archives, A 1732 Correspondence, Enquiries, ministerial representations Georges River National Park; Canterbury resident W. Aitken to Pat Rogan, Member for East Hills, 10 December 1991, NPWS Archives, A 1732, Correspondence, Enquiries, ministerial representations Georges River National Park; *Torch*, 29 April 1992, 5 August 1992, 31 March 1993; *Leader*, 7 August 1968.
67. *Torch*, 29 April 1992 and 5 August 1992.
68. *Express*, 12 November 1991.