

ECCO Orange Inc.

Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange

President's Report to the Annual General Meeting, 22 August, 2007.

I have pleasure in presenting the President's Report to the first Annual General Meeting of ECCO Orange Inc.

ECCO Orange was launched at a Public Forum on the 5 April, 2006 by Mr Gary Styles, General Manager of Orange City Council. The formation of ECCO Orange was in response to widespread community concern over the environment, at a time when many natural resources and areas were under threat, and the city of Orange was experiencing significant residential expansion and commercial development.

At the first General Meeting held on the 3 May, 2006, an executive and committee was elected consisting of Neil Jones (President), Stephen Nugent (Vice-President), Nick King (Secretary), Phil Stevenson, (Treasurer), Publicity Officer (Tony Smith), Margaret Weaver, Yvonne Cunningham, Colin Young, Susan Sanders, Col Foster (Committee), and Nick King was appointed the Public Officer.

ECCO adopted a set of aims which included;

- to act as an environmental watchdog and a peak environmental lobby group for the community of Orange
- to create awareness of environmental issues affecting Orange and its surrounding area
- to facilitate cooperation and exchange of information and resources between existing conservation, landcare and similar groups
- to liaise with regional, state and national environment and conservation bodies
- to influence and assist Orange City Council with respect to its environmental and sustainability policies and plans
- to be an independent advocate for the environment, and sustainable development in Orange.

ECCO has attempted to achieve these aims during 2006 / 2007 with regular committee and general meetings, public forums with guest speakers, media releases, on-site inspections, consultations with and submissions to Orange City Council, and representation at Council planning meetings. A website, www.ecco-orange.com was established, and email group lists of members and supporters were set up to ensure dissemination of ECCO news.

ECCO facilitated widespread community debate with meetings and guest speakers on a range of important local issues including;

- The HUB Regional Resource Reprocessing Facility (Guest speaker, Christine McIntosh, HUB spokesperson)
- Cadia East Mine Project (Greg Morris, Environmental Manager, Cadia Valley Operations)
- Tree removal and power line construction (Chas McPhail, Regional Manager, Country Energy)

- Orange Greenways Project, and Significant Landscape Features Project (Nigel Hobden, Manager City Presentation, Orange City Council)

ECCO prepared submissions to Orange City Council or contributed to workshops and discussions on the following matters;

- Council Management Plan, 2006-2009
- Ploughmans Valley Plan of Management
- Amendments to Orange Development Control Plan 2004 – Subdivision in Ploughmans Valley
- Supply and sale of water to Cadia Valley Operations
- Proposed North Orange Neighbourhood Retail Centre
- Survey of Significant Landscape Features
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Orange Local Environment Plan
- Northern Distributor / Southern Distributor Road issues

ECCO made a submission to the Department of Lands, Draft Land Assessment of Bloomfield Crown Land, with ECCO's suggestions being incorporated in the recently released final report.

ECCO members have participated in working bees associated with;

- Clean Up Australia Day, at Gosling Creek and Bloomfield Park
- Planet Ark National Tree Day plantings at Hinton Reserve
- Daroo Orange Urban Landcare Group, native vegetation restoration at Wentworth Reserve
- ELF Community Garden
- Parks Alive tree plantings in Ploughmans Valley and Ammerdown

ECCO has been a strong advocate for the development of a Climate Change Policy by Orange City Council, and the creation of community awareness of the problems associated with global warming. A highly successful premiere screening of the Al Gore movie, "An Inconvenient Truth" was organised by ECCO, with funds raised going towards the establishment of local environment awards.

ECCO is currently working towards the introduction of "ECCO Environment Awards", which will be launched in the very near future, and is working with Orange Rotary Club in the planning of a major Eco Living Expo in 2008, which would also host the presentation of the ECCO Environment Awards.

ECCO's achievements have been made possible through the commitment and efforts of its dedicated members, and hardworking committee, and support from the wider Orange community and local media, and I take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who have been part of this exciting new group.

The year ahead will provide many local issues and challenges for ECCO to deal with, and I believe ECCO can play a very important role in ensuring that the interests of the environment and the community continue to be protected, while at the same time enhancing a broader appreciation of our natural environment and the need for sustainable living practices.

Neil Jones
President.
22 August, 2007

