"Not all wisdom and knowledge resides in government and its authorities. There is a monumental body of intelligence, knowledge and expertise and concern for our natural and built environment in the community. This should be harnessed - not fought or ignored - to make projects better and to identify less damaging alternatives. We need to imbue the ethic of community involvement in project managers and to furnish them with the necessary skills. The time and cost of the process should be built in at the front end of projects, instead of suffering the delay, cost and loss of goodwill involved in fighting rearguard actions.

"Those who don't want to change, who resent community involvement in projects, who regard the public as an impediment...will claim these proposals are utopian. However, unless they address the community's concerns, they will continue to be distrusted and treated as the enemy, and to suffer the frustrations of activism."

(Quotations are from Michael Clarke in his article "What went wrong at the Con?", SMH, Tuesday, July 14, 'Opinion', p. 15. Clarke is the former chief engineer of the Department of Public Works)

Joseph Davis

FIVE HERITAGE HEROES

The real frontline for heritage in Wollongong seems to have become that splendid group of souls who make up the Illawarra Escarpment Coalition.

This organization is dedicated to protecting the city's landscape heritage and recognizes that the escarpment foothills are crucial to ensuring that we have an escarpment worth protecting.

There are a whole series of flashpoints where developers are trying to get through inappropriate development on slip-prone, environmentally sensitive land, and the Coalition
has been calling since last year for a moratorium on all such development until a Commission of Inquiry is held to determine appropriate levels of development in such areas.

Wollongong Council publicly supports such an Inquiry but appears to be adopting delaying tactics by trying to narrow the terms of reference as much as possible. As a consequence the paperwork necessary to ensure the Inquiry takes place has been sitting on the Minister's desk awaiting Council's reply.

If they wait long enough all sorts of very environmentally unga development will have got the nod from Council and their will be little development land in the foothills worth trying to get a moratorium on.

The immediate flashpoint has proved to be Goyong Avenue at Keiraville.

To avoid the heat, BHP has sold the land to a private developer who has already brought the bulldozers in.

As a consequence five members of the Escarpment Coalition have been arrested.

I am not going to retail their names in this Bulletin for they should never have been charged in the first place and deserve to have their good names honoured and not demeaned by publication.

Few things annoy me more than developers calling in the police against acts of harmless civil disobedience. I'm sure the police aren't pleased about having to participate in such time-wasting activity.

A demonstration was held on site on Saturday, 15th August and I was sad to see no members of the IHS I could recognize.

It is at demonstrations like this that the real battle for Illawarra's Heritage is being
fought. It's clearly a waste of time attending heritage meetings or writing articles. The Escarpment Committee needs people to help on the picket line roster. The most crucial time is from about 7.30 am to 8.30 a.m when the scab workman arrive to cross the Labour Council endorsed picket. Just drive to the end of Gooyong Road, Keiraville (at the end of the culd-de-sac next to Keiraville Pre-school) if you can help.

It's not just for the young. Indeed, it's an activity ideally suited to our ageing membership. One of those arrested at the site was in his eighties! And you can always plead that you were simply enjoying a morning stroll in the bush.

The Illawarra Escarpment Coalition's postal address is PO box 912, Wollongong East 2500 and phone contact can be made on 42285971.

And if the recent flooding in the Keiraville foothills hasn't convinced planners that perhaps they need to adjust their approval calculations, I don't know what will.

AN ILLAWARRA WORLD LEADER

We don't produce many of these. Nonetheless, we now have one current world leader.

John Samuel Hales (born Thirroul 1922, son of the local bank manager) is now world leader of the Exclusive Brethren.

I only discovered this by accident while searching the net. The address is: http://www.cloudnet.com/-dwymann/jsh.html. It's the best site related to Brethren I've encountered. It's usually impossible to find out anything at all, but this little essay by Dick Wyman is full of all sorts of arcane detail. We are not talking "global village" when it comes to religious Brethren and their standard policy seems to be, "Don't mix with the ungodly and don't release any information if it can at all be helped."

Joseph Davis