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BUSHRANGER

Newsletter of the
Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

March 2016

Meeting 8 March 7.30pm
Lane Cove Tennis Club, Blaxlands Corner,
Kenneth St & River Rd.

*This newsletter is a bit late because
we are all suffering from submission fatigue.*

Plant Stall Saturday 12 March

In the Lane Cove Plaza. We are looking for volunteers to sell plants and promote the work of the Society. Please let Ruth Neumann (0409 609 940) know if you are available for either or both of these roles. Posters have been produced to promote it and will be distributed to local noticeboards and via social media.

What we have done

Revision to LCBCS Constitution.

At the February 9 meeting, the constitution was revised to allow three committee members other than the executive positions, to bring the total number of Executive committee members to 8. The new committee member is Matthew Fisher.

Submissions we have made: -

- on the Council Boundary Review (aka Mergers)
- The full submission is on our website. Key points made were: -

Loss of Influence

Lane Cove presently has 9 councillors which would be reduced to 2 in a merged council.

Rates are likely to go up

A reduction in cost of services and administration as the result of amalgamation is unproven and unlikely, given experience interstate.

The unique quality of LC would be endangered

Lane Cove's distinctive bushland, so close to the city centre, is an important green space tended by many volunteers. One measure of the importance attached to bushland is LCC's funding for bushland. LCC spends about \$1 343 000 per annum of which about \$130 000 is from grants. The \$1 200 000 of ratepayers' expenditure is about \$35 per head of population or \$92 per residential ratepayer, whereas Ryde and Hunters Hill spend about a third of these amounts. Ryde will be the dominant part of the amalgamation and its relatively low spend reflects a much lower value placed on bushland, even though Ryde has 205 hectares and Lane Cove 93 hectares, which will probably result in less being spent in Lane Cove.

This could result in the undoing of years of dedicated bush regeneration and maintenance.

We suggest that the merged council will put a lower value on bushland and that it would be very difficult for the two councillors from Lane Cove to maintain the current level of commitment.

It is liable to come under further pressure for development from an amalgamated council. Existing Local Environment Plans would be overridden.

There's no evidence for merger benefits

IPART claims that Lane Cove does not have the scale and capacity to carry out its role, but offers only general statements without evidence.

There is a large body of empirical evidence to show that there is no correlation between council size and efficiency. The process is ideologically driven by the belief that "bigger is better" and the numbers used are arbitrary.

Government's drive for large infrastructure projects, which they believe will be assisted by fewer local councils, will ride roughshod over the local community, as we have seen in the Mowbray Road developments, the Meriton development at the end of the Lane Cove tunnel and at St Leonards.

Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

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We said the numbers were arbitrary.

The latest news confirms this, as reported in the North Shore Times of 2nd March. To begin at the beginning, we have: -

Merger no 1: Lane Cove, Hunters Hill, North Sydney, Willoughby, Mosman & part of Ryde.

Merger no 2: (done for no stated reason): Warringah, Pittwater, and Mosman. We gather that this drove many members of the local Liberal party branch to resign which obviously worried their local member, Brad Hazzard who must have spoken to his colleagues!

Merger no 3: (supported by the Premier who happens to be the member for Manly): Warringah, Manly and Pittwater, which left Mosman standing alone which has always been their preference.

However, Local Government Minister Paul Toole who obviously can't cope with the idea of a small stand-alone council, personally endorsed:

Merger no 4: of Willoughby, North Sydney and Mosman. **What politically-driven nonsense!**



LCC's latest action

At a special meeting on 22nd Feb, LCC reaffirmed its commitment to stand alone. It endorsed its Fit for the Future merger proposal to be forwarded to the Council Boundary Enquiry Delegate. **It also requested that Anthony Roberts endorse Council's submission. Will he break his twelve-months' silence!**

Complying Development Code & certification

The Society is opposed to introducing this. Medium density housing in all its forms should only be allowed in R3 or higher zoning categories. We request that the proposal for Expanding Complying Development to Medium Density Housing be withdrawn and that a better system be investigated in consultation with ALL stakeholders and not just the planning and development lobby. Attempts to provide 'one size fits all' system of approval do not take into account variation in topography, character or location or variations within Local Government areas and their historical connection to the community. **Allowing medium density in all R2 residential areas does not protect the traditional amenity of the single house on a single site. The full submission is on our website**

In other News

BMAC reports:

Study needed. With ever increasing development and hard surfaces, storm water is having a corresponding impact on our creeks and reserves. This is particularly evident in the Bushland Park and Batten Reserve. BMAC is seeking an hydrology study of both reserves.

10/50 code. The consultant's report presents a case for several of the reserves to go into a category in which the 10/50 code would no longer apply for the surrounding area - saving a lot of trees. It will be submitted to the Rural Fire Service who will decide.

A cause for celebration

AGL has withdrawn from the coal seam gas project in the Gloucester Valley. We received a message from Julie Lyford – spokesperson for Groundswell Gloucester - thanking the people and organizations for supporting the campaign over the past five years. Here is Julie's message: "We won because truth, research, science and a grave sense of injustice were in our sling. We celebrate with great gratitude to the wider network of non-government agencies and groups who supported us. On behalf of the Groundswell Gloucester team we would like to say that it has been a privilege to work with a movement of such moral integrity and passion for the truth. Each and every contribution has played a part in this wonderful result." We congratulated Groundswell Gloucester and Sally Kennedy and her dedicated local team for their continuing campaigning against coal seam gas.

February Guest Speaker Valerie Close, Bush Kids coordinator, gave us a summary of her teaching approach followed by a lively hands-on example of the Bush Kids classes. Valerie made very clear her love of nature and strong desire to teach children the importance of conserving and connecting with nature. – the best way, getting them out into the bush on a journey of discovery. She demonstrated her creativity and enthusiasm for the subject when she gave us a taste of the "Butterfly Walk" using props to represent each life stage of the caterpillar, using colourful butterfly puppets and costumes.

Council Amalgamation meeting

The Council Boundary Review held two public hearings at Hunters Hill Sailing Club on Tuesday 2 February. Several members of our society spoke against amalgamation, as did most of the speakers at both hearings. Most speakers were from Lane Cove.

We thanked Sue Ingham for driving a campaign to heighten awareness among Lane Cove residents and LC community, cultural and sporting groups. The Society participated, but it is not a Society campaign.

Biodiversity Review – the War on Trees continues

The new Biodiversity Conservation Act will apply to both urban and rural areas of NSW and will repeal the Threatened Species Conservation Act and Native Vegetation Act. This new legislation is expected to be highly detrimental to biodiversity and Society members are asked to sign and send off a form letter to Mike Baird asking him to reconsider many elements of the legislation.