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BUSHRANGER

Newsletter of the
Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

July 2016

Meeting 12 July 7.30pm
Lane Cove Tennis Club, Blaxlands Corner,
Kenneth St & River Rd

What is coming up

4th July Special Gas Watch meeting at Lane Cove Library 6.30 – 8.30pm with highly recommended guest speaker: Peter Martin from Coal Free Southern Highlands who will talk about their recent win in the land and environment court, their ground water studies which refute the claims of the miners and the economic modelling work they are doing with the Planning Department to demonstrate upfront that mining projects make no sense financially, socially or environmentally to local communities or NSW as a whole. See part of a talk Peter gave at Sydney University <http://sydney.edu.au/environment-institute/videos/peter-martin-southern-highlands-coal-action-group-2/>. Info from Sally Kennedy.

What we have done

... Raised the issue of Number 1 Sirius Rd

Previously known as Elcom site, this is a large property in Lane Cove West with environmental protection zones. It has recently been totally cleared by the landowner. We have written to Council to raise awareness of the situation and to ask if follow up action will be taken.

... **Submitted a response to Council's Draft Open Space Policy.** Prepared by Norma Suart and Francis Vissel. Council should consider:

Continuing to protect bushland through planning policies and Management Plan for Bushland.

Controlling foreign weeds and feral animals as well as domestic animals. Residents should be made aware of their responsibility on this issue. Better monitoring would help.

There should be no extra tracks in Bushland except if an existing track is closed and a new track is better located or to complete a link to existing tracks. Upgrading of tracks should be high priority.

We feel that the Backyard Habitat program should be given a higher priority as well as the various education programs currently run by Council. These have been very successful and greatly contribute to community understanding and support.

There must be no loss of Open Space. Once lost, it cannot be replaced.

Note that female sport is not catered for in the plan and every effort should be made to rectify this with a survey of trends in this area. For example, Lane Cove does not have a netball court.

Large scale unit development needs sufficient open recreational space as these are not generally provided in the units. These areas should consist of well thought out landscape plans for recreational and peaceful green surroundings similar to the park in Helen Street and which Council is endeavouring to address in Pinaroo Place.

... Made a submission re Simplifying Land Management (NSW GVT doc)

What follows is based on the online document: "Submission Guide: Simplifying Land Management", and in particular, section 4: "Native vegetation clearing in urban and other areas".

Excluded land on the Native Vegetation Regulatory Map

The information about the excluded land is not clear. It is stated that: "clearing associated with the development that is permitted without consent, such

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as extensive agriculture, will be regulated by a SEPP and Development Control Plan... (and) will replace the current Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)". However, it also refers to urban zones E2, E3 and E4 and R5. Most TPOs cover all land and zonings and rightly so.

Effectively these changes mean that local Councils will no longer be able to make Tree Management Policies, currently done under section 26 of the EPA Act, with the control being transferred to the State Government through the SEPP. Although Councils will still be able to create DCPs appropriate to the locality, they can be overridden by the SEPP.

The SEPP has not been published and it appears that its content may not be available until the proposed legislation has been enacted. Consultation at that point is largely meaningless. See:

<https://www.landmanagement.nsw.gov.au/simplifying-land-management/>

We ask that:

1 the control over the clearing of native vegetation on public and private land currently administered by local Councils remain with those Councils through TPOs.

2 the proposed SEPP be released with a reasonable period for consultation before any legislation is enacted.

3 the responsibility for control of and compliance with the SEPP be clarified.

Thanks to Graham Holland.

... Made a Submission on the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Bill and Local Land Services Amendment Bill

The campaign is gathering positive momentum with support emerging from many organisations and groups including The Royal Zoological Society, NSW National Trust, Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, farmers, landholders, the NSW EDO and Landcare.. Grass roots activism is having an impact through letter writing, wood drops to MP's, visits to MPs, public forums.

The Society's response

The Society strongly opposes the NSW Government's proposed new land clearing laws and supports stronger protection for bushland and wildlife. We are concerned that the proposed changes will increase land clearing and carbon pollution, push wildlife closer to the brink of extinction and undermine the sustainability of our farmland.

The Society is particularly concerned that repealing the Native Vegetation Act 2003 and Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and replacing them with a new Biodiversity Conservation Bill and Local Land Services Amendment Bill might seem a good idea (reducing green tape!), however the content of what is proposed shows clearly that it is likely to lead to a significant increase in land clearing and habitat loss, which would (or should) not occur under the existing Acts.

Specific concerns include:

Removing the requirement to 'maintain or improve biodiversity values', leading to a decline in environmental outcomes, soil health, water quality and salinity;

Limiting important safeguards, such as 'red flag' areas for environmentally sensitive areas;

Reducing the role of the Environment Minister in important biodiversity decisions, with the primary regulatory role for land clearing being with the Local Land Services and Minister for Primary Industries;

Increasing the scope for Ministerial discretion, including in relation to the application of offsets;

Expanding the use of 'self-assessable' codes, allowing landholders to clear trees with little oversight; The increasing use of biodiversity offsets, with variations to 'like for like' offsetting and allowing proponents to clear trees in exchange for paying money into a fund and;

Relying on Government funding to achieve biodiversity gains, which are not guaranteed in legislation and are subject to change at the whim of Government.

Although the submission date for this legislation has passed, the campaign continues. See: www.edonsw.org.au/biodiversity_legislation_review

The Society urges the Government to withdraw the Draft Biodiversity Conservation Act and Local Land Services Amendment Act. Thanks G. Holland.

The full text of the above submissions is on our website.

In other news

News from BMAC

The Ventemans Reach Walking Track Upgrade towards Saltmarsh Surprise is nearing completion. Council received a grant of \$19,895 for the Preliminary Site Assessment (PSA) of the

contaminated area east of the degraded mangrove boardwalk in Ventemans Reach.

LCC received a grant of \$15,000 from the Estuary Management Program for the improvement of stormwater feeding into Bushland Park from Ronald Avenue.

Council's Bush interpretation events

The "Extraordinary Life of Bats" was attended by 30 people, and "Living with Big Trees" attracted 23, with excellent feedback from participants.

Bushcare

The Bush Team improved access to Gore Creek and Stringybark Creek Bushcare Sites. A bush regeneration contractor supported work at Dorritt St Bushcare and Bush Friends sites, including areas requiring rope access and waders – targeting Madeira Vine, Trad and Privet and erecting Bushcare bollards at all current Bushcare sites. Contractors are carrying out large planting at Gore Creek Reserve.

Gas Watch

This group continues to be active. It has met with Anthony Roberts the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy and have collected over 300 signatures in Lane Cove for the #water4life campaign. In addition a dedicated coal and gas watch page has been added to the Society's website.

Amalgamations, the Fight Continues.

In summary, nine councils including Lane Cove are proceeding with court actions. The cases are being held in the Land and Environment Court and focus on two issues: procedural issues and financial information.

Of particular note is information obtained through a FOI request that KPMG, who prepared the independent financial case for amalgamation were not independent but in fact worked in partnership with the government to achieve the government's objectives.

If the whole merger process is found to be invalid on the basis that the KPMG report was not independent and the estimated costs and benefits are therefore unreliable, this would affect all council mergers.

Look out for emails and facebook posts for updates as they occur. Thanks to Sue Ingham.

Smart Cities Program – At the last meeting, the representative from STEP raised the subject of the Smart Cities Program which is being promoted by the Federal Government and The Planning Institute. The program sets out to tie Federal grants to State Government planning outcomes which will deliver revenue stream to cover the development costs. Watch this space should the Liberal Party be elected on July 2!

GSC Greater Sydney Commission

A report from the BPN special event on June 1:

The keynote speaker was Sarah Hill, CEO of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). GSC is tasked with co-creating a vision for Sydney as a great place to live, by making it more productive, sustainable and livable.

GSC intend to consult widely with all stakeholders, Government, business and the community to make things happen. They already have Dept of Health and Education at infrastructure meetings. **They do not make final Planning decisions – these are made by the Dept of Planning and PACs They will work closely with councils to ensure that their priorities are met.**

Their brief is based on the Plan for Growing Sydney. Their immediate Timeline is:

Listening Mar- April; Community and Council staff.

Active discussion May – Aug; web chats, talk bus, website, mini summit, reference panels, competition, E newsletter, luncheons.

Develop Plans Aug – Oct; feedback, draft plans, ongoing development. Nov; Draft plans on exhibition – closing at the end of Jan 2017.

The first question for the CEO was "We have lost trust in planning, how can you restore it?"

Her answer was by engagement and good planning principles as set out in the Objectives of the GSC.

Fuller details of the role and direction priorities for the GSC can be found on their website. although it takes some searching to find the Ministers Statement of Priorities. Thanks to Doug Stuart for his report.

We have asked the GSC's Environment Commissioner Rod Simpson to meet with us at our August 9th meeting. This is to be confirmed.

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A Walk in Warraroon Reserve – photo courtesy of Robyn and Allen Woolley.

Bush Kids. Fully booked out on a lovely sunny winters day the Bush Kids set off on their latest adventure at Tambourine Bay. Shapes and colours in nature began with some enormous Emu eggs being passed around before heading into the bush with a sheet of shapes to match up with ones found in nature. We also made a circle out of sticks and bark before spotting different colours in the bush (some easier to find than others!), then heading back to the mat for craft time. *Thanks to Alyson Hayes for this report.*



Term 3 program for 2 – 5yr olds now out. Bookings essential – call Council 9911 3583 nsw.gov.au/lanecovebushkids.com.au Keep in touch with [facebook.com/lanecovebushkids](https://www.facebook.com/lanecovebushkids) LCBCS members attend free. Non-members \$5 per child.

Roo's Clues - Thursday 21 July at Tambourine Bay Reserve - meet near Tambourine Bay Rd car park 9:45am - 11am. Meet Roo and her bushland friends.

Magical Stones - Tuesday 2 August at Tambourine Bay Reserve - meet near Tambourine Bay Rd car park 9:45 - 11am Bring your pet rock and join us for a magical journey.

Bush Treasures - Wednesday 17 August at Tambourine Bay Reserve - meet near Tambourine Bay Rd car park - 9:45 - 11am. Join us to discover and explore bush treasures.

Rally for the environment



photo courtesy of Ann Proudfoot.

In front of Mike Baird's office, Manly, on Friday 24th, some 300 people protested the Premier's poor record of protecting the NSW environment, and the changes proposed in the draft Biodiversity Conservation Act. Particularly worrying is the effect on wildlife and the soil of free-for-all tree clearing.

