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BUSH RANGER

Newsletter of the
Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc



This will be our Christmas bash!
Join us to celebrate another year of survival -
NO! ... ACHIEVEMENTS!
We are still LANE COVE — OUR BUSH IS BLOOMING - thanks to your help
and encouragement.

Join us at Lane Cove Tennis Club, Blaxlands Corner, Kenneth Street and River Road.

Members, if possible, can you please bring a plate of food to share. To ensure a variety of food, please share your ideas with Helen Fisher at : hfisher@ihug.com.au or 9418 3474.

What we have done

December 2016

Amendments to Lane Cove LEP 2009

We strongly supported Council's proposals to:

- add an Environmental Protection ruling to the sites in Dettmann Ave and Stuart St over and above the E2 zoning now applying to the sites. This will add protection to the area fronting the mangrove vegetation below high water level.
- introduce an Environmental Protection condition to the area of 14 Gay Street. This site extends right down to the creek, the area is already included as Riparian Land and the public walking track traverses the site. This protection will accord with Council's policy of maintaining bushland on private land that adjoins public reserves.

Draft North District Plan

Margaret Bergomi and Sue Ingham report on the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) community group briefing at Parramatta on 21 November.

The GSC has been set up by Government to 'make Greater Sydney more productive, sustainable and liveable' as it expands by more than 1.6 million people over the next twenty years. This growth will be centred on a concept of three 'cities', Eastern (Sydney), Central (Parramatta) and Western (with the new airport at Badgery's Creek as a focus). Within these 'cities' there will be six planning districts, including the North District, in which Lane Cove is situated.

Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

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A Draft North District Plan, which includes Lane Cove, is on public exhibition up until end of March 2017. It provides for an anticipated growth of population in Lane Cove of almost 15,000 people between 2016-2036.

Councils will need to respond to 'Liveability Actions' which call for increased diversity in housing and increased housing capacity. The plan calls for the following actions from Lane Cove Council:

- monitor and support the delivery of Lane Cove's five-year housing target of 1,900 dwellings recognising significant growth in the precinct adjacent to St Leonards
- progress the priority precinct investigations at St Leonards/Crows Nest with Department of Planning and Environment
- work with the Commission and Transport for NSW to identify urban renewal opportunities that connect to Sydney Metro
- investigate local opportunities to address demand and diversity in and around local centres and infill areas.'

This means a new LEP process. 'Planning proposals' (rezonings) will be considered by Council and will need GSC support before they proceed. Planning Panels have already been set up to consider planning proposals. There are many unanswered questions about how the large growth targets will be met while retaining (and improving) the liveability and environmental quality of the North District as the Draft Plan aims.

All members are urged to visit the Greater Sydney Commission website for details of the Draft North District Plan.
(<http://www.greater.sydney/north-district>).

Note that the Plan includes open space for recreation but has little emphasis on *bushland* and *biodiversity*.

The Society will carefully review the Draft Plan over the coming months. We have already provided some input into the plan through the Forum convened by the Society last August and a site inspection of parts of Lane Cove with the Commissioner for the North District, Dr Deborah Dearing.

Submissions on the Draft Plan will be accepted up until the close of the formal public exhibition at the end of March 2017. We will provide further information to the Society prior to making a submission.

Sue Ingham's summary of issues that arose from the GSC Forum:

Infrastructure, Transport, Schools, Hospitals mentioned but should include sewerage and water as an issue.

Re zoning procedure needs clarification. If the District Planning Panels are in operation as of now, are they proceeding with DAs requiring rezoning immediately?

What say will the community have in complying medium density housing and DAs?

What controls will there be over inappropriate high rise?

The 6 districts overlap the 3 designated city centres. How will this be co ordinated - under which council's jurisdiction and which District Planning Panel?

The '30 minute city' i.e., 30 minutes from where you live to your work, was mentioned more than once. Nice ideal but denies the possibility of people moving or changing jobs.

"Zero carbon emissions by 2050" cannot be supported by any reliable data as there are too many variables. Classic example of GSC 'wish list'.

"All layers of government and services working together" is a mantra that has been expressed for decades without seeing a solution. "Co-creation not just collaboration with Transport NSW" – what does this mean specifically?

Questioned why 5% is the target for affordable housing, not more as in South Australia and overseas. Answer was not satisfactory: "starting off lower base", "can't endanger supply outcomes" (what does that mean? Must not alienate developers?) The question: 'Will the insertion of Council Administrators affect the District Plans?' was answered by saying they will await the outcome of the September 2017 elections, but did not answer the issue of radical changes in council structures meanwhile and their effect.

Need answer to the question of the relationship between GSC goals and current strategic

planning such as Priority Precincts. Will GSC continue with these plans? It was indicated that the final arbiter of planning proposals and re zonings would be the District Planning Panels, not the Department of Planning or the PAC. Need to confirm?

In other news

Biodiversity Update

The NSW government's Crown Lands Management Bill and the Biodiversity Conservation Bill (aka land clearing legislation) passed both Houses of Parliament in early November. Listen for the bulldozers!

Maintaining and Enhancing our Urban Forests

Essentially there is a conflict between the need to accommodate the expectation of continuing high population growth and the desire to maintain a desirable city to live in. The high population growth is totally undesirable but we have had plenty to say about that before.

Now turning to the ideal of having liveable cities, one of the major elements is adequate tree cover. This is not impossible to achieve if there is the political will to get the planning right. Given the attitudes of the current NSW government to trees, residents will need to make it loud and clear that they will not accept a continuation of current policies.

In North Sydney Council's Urban Forest Strategy document 2011, urban forest is defined as:

... the totality of trees and shrubs on all public and private land in and around urban areas and is measured as a canopy cover percentage of the total area. The canopy cover may vary in density depending on the vegetation type (eg almost solid cover under rainforest vegetation to more open cover under woodland or eucalypt forests) however the canopy cover percentage for urban forest measurement purely measures the percentage of land that has tree or shrub vegetation (over 3m tall) above it, regardless of density.

Benefits of Urban Forests

Reduction in the Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect
Heat from the atmosphere is used in vegetation transpiration processes which convert water from leaves to water vapour. This has a cooling effect similar to that when humans perspire. Trees can transpire significant volumes of water and it has been estimated that a mature tree can transpire up to 150 L/day. In a hot dry location this produces a cooling effect similar to that of two air conditioners running for 20 hrs. Much of the urban landscape is paved and devoid of vegetation. This means that there is usually little water available for evaporation, so most available natural energy is used to warm surfaces. Construction materials are dense, and many – particularly dark-coloured surfaces like asphalt – are good at absorbing and storing solar radiation.

Trees are a very effective means of blocking the sun's radiation and, depending on the species and its maturity, up to 95% of the incoming radiation can be blocked. Trees can reduce a building's temperature by directly blocking radiation through windows and cooling the surrounding air, and can also keep the soil cool thus providing a sink for heat from the building. These effects have been quantified as reducing air temperatures in builtup areas by 1-5 degrees.

Reduction in Energy Demand

A typical adaptation response to the lack of external cooling is reliance on air conditioning, which generates waste heat and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Studies in the US have indicated that 5 to 10% of electricity demand in cities is from air conditioners used to compensate urban heat island effects. Increases in peak energy demand drive up infrastructure costs and increase the risk of power cuts during heatwaves. Air conditioner use amounts to nearly one-third of the power consumed in Perth on the hottest days in February /March.

Other Benefits:

- Reduction in run-off and erosion during storms
- Improvement in water quality as the slowing of water run-off allows particulate matter to precipitate out and not pollute waterways

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- Wind mitigation
- Improvement in air quality by absorbing gaseous pollutants and trapping particulate matter on their leaves
- Storage of carbon
- Reduction in noise pollution
- Shade for parked cars and outdoor pursuits
- Visual amenity and privacy
- Improved property values
- Attraction of birds and habitat for other wildlife

Recommended Canopy Cover

There have been many international studies of recommended canopy cover targets for urban forest. For example, according to the North Sydney report, for this climatic zone the recommended percentages for specific land-use areas are:

- o 15% cover in central business districts
- o 25% cover in medium and high density residential areas
- o 50% cover in low density residential areas

Stumbling Blocks

There are many barriers to achieving and maintaining urban forest. Generally the larger the trees the more effective are the benefits listed above. However there is a cost with managing larger trees. Trees ultimately need to be replaced when they reach their useful life expectancy. In an urban environment one cannot allow trees to reach the age where they become dangerous. There is also the need to achieve access for solar panels.

Developers will argue that the land is worth much more if it is built on. As we have seen all too often in Sydney, house blocks that had room for gardens, now have high and medium density housing with minimal, if any, tree cover remaining.

SEPP65, the planning policy for apartments covering all of NSW, now has a minimum deep soil requirement of only 7% of site area (Apartment Design Guide, p61). This is totally inadequate for a high rainfall area such as the North Shore where the native trees can reach heights of 30m or more. Ku-ring-gai Council requires a minimum 50% site area for deep soil landscaping on sites over 1800sq m. This should be maintained and not over-ridden by SEPP65 Apartment Design Guide requirements.

Tiny backyards in new fringe areas and boundary-to-boundary development of new houses in existing suburbs often eliminate private land's potential contribution to the urban forest. This puts incredible pressure on the public realm to provide the urban forest on top of needing to meet demands for infrastructure.

Compact city land-use policies and urban forest policies need to work together to ensure that cities have high-quality built environments and extensive tree cover. These policies must set the overall goals and outline strategies to deliver on them for both public and private land.

(thanks to STEP for permission to use this article)



Bush-craft in Hands Quarry Reserve.

“Stringybark and Greenhide - that will never fail ya, Stringybark and Greenhide - the mainstay of Austraya.”