

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]



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COMMUNITY PARKS UP FOR SALE

By David Burgess, Total Environment Centre

Council mergers across Sydney have taken place with the transition chaotic and having big ramifications for the liveability of our city. The final act of Bankstown City Council before being merged to become the City of Canterbury Bankstown was to sign off on four Local Area Plans incorporating rezoning, high-rise development and beautification in preparation for an anticipated 35,000 extra residents by 2031. The also contained plans to sell-off 16 public reserves to developers.

A Council spokesperson described this green space as “under-utilised”, with the Interim General Manager Matthew Stewart elaborating that the parks could be sold off as they were in areas where “there is already a high number of local and neighbourhood open space.” Some residents stood up. At the penultimate meeting of Council prior to the merger twelve Birrong locals were prevented from speaking on the plan to sell off their local park. But a week later they won their

right to speak and also won a last minute reprieve for Gascoigne Reserve. Other places weren’t so lucky, the new council and its administrator is now in place and the plans are now in the hands of the NSW Government.

That’s not all that’s happening in Bankstown. TEC was recently taken on a tour of the area by the Bankstown Bushland Society to be shown three other reserves containing libraries and a community centre that are to be rezoned for high-rise. We also visited Airport Reserve – a narrow strip of Crown Land adjoining the airport and identified by Environment Australia and Bankstown Bushland Society as potentially being a Transition Forest with Cumberland Plain Woodland. That too is under threat with a proposal to sell of the reserve for a huge freight storage facility currently before the NSW Government. Bush regenerators have put thousands of hours of love and care into the site for many years with the assistance of government grants.

Final stop on our tour was the privately owned Riverlands Golf Course, now unused but which has fallen into the hands of a developer. The whole site contains hundreds of hollow-bearing trees which attract a wealth of bird life, numerous indigenous scar trees and an endangered ecological community. The area was rezoned by Bankstown Council early this year but the rezoning is yet to be approved by the Minister. If it is approved the trees will be replaced by a housing development with the application containing a proposal to remove 100% of the trees.

What’s happening in your suburb? TEC will conduct these tours across Sydney in the coming months as part of our campaign to protect what is left of our precious green spaces.

To arrange one contact David Burgess at daveb@tec.org.au

SUBMISSION to the FEDERAL DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENT re IMPACTS on AIRPORT RESERVE, MILPERRA, PROPOSED by LEDA CORPORATION

Prepared by C. Gibson (Part 2, continued from Bulletin No. 79)

Alternative Access Points

Access to the site is available via Tower Road off Henry Lawson Drive, as well as by the link road intended to connect from the major intersection on Milperra Road at Bunnings. It is this road that has always been intended to service commercial developments on the Airport Precinct. Plans to connect the Bunnings intersection with the LEDA site should be expedited.

During our onsite discussions with LEDA representatives we were told that originally they wanted the main access to the development site to be via Murray Jones Drive, but that Sydney Metro Airports had said that this was not possible due to the presence of a navigational instrument called a Non Directional Beacon on an adjoining part of the Airport, which has a restricted development set back around it. The NDB is only light infrastructure, and could, without great expense, either be relocated, or replaced with modern technology, in which case the Murray Jones Drive intersection could be upgraded for access into the Airport Precinct, obviating the proponent's requirement for a completely new major access point only 250 metres west of Murray Jones Drive.

Given the scale of the development, and the huge financial benefits it will return both LEDA and Sydney Metro Airports, surely the repositioning of the NDB, so as not to throw damaging impacts onto recognised Endangered Ecological Communities on adjacent Crown Land, should be regarded as a priority for the development. The negative impacts of the slip lane and bus bay on sensitive bushland would then be averted.

NSW Crown Lands Act

“Crown land should not be used as a means of access to freehold land. Such access should be via public road or right-of-way over other land. Site-specific impacts should be contained within the proposed development site. Proposed

development should not need to rely on adjoining Crown land for services or amenity. Proposed development should not adversely affect Crown land, its management and its enjoyment by the community in general, now and in the future.” extract from “Development and Crown Land”, Land and Property Management Authority www.lpma.nsw.gov.au

The Crown Lands Act does not permit public lands to be used for the purposes of private profit. To allow this to proceed would be a breach of the public's trust. Airport Reserve already has a legitimate land use, that of conservation of endangered species and habitats. It does not need a system of roads and a bus stop on top. We believe that access to the development site should not go through Airport Reserve but via the existing multi-lane entry point at Bunnings on Milperra Rd, which was built specifically to give access to developments of this kind, and also by way of Murray Jones Drive.

The development actions outlined are not permissible under the provisions of the Crown Lands Act. These impacts, should they be allowed, will destroy the ecological integrity of the bushland. For them to proceed, the Crown Land status will have to be annihilated by the NSW Government: yet more local open space lost to the public. This is unacceptable. We do not oppose the LEDA plan for the airport development site itself, but believe that no part of Airport Reserve should be made to accommodate aspects of the development.

If the precedent for the destruction of Crown Land bushland is set here, then there is nothing stopping similar devastation impacts being proposed on Crown Land in the area, such as on the opposite side of Milperra Road at Ashford Reserve, where the community, also with State Government financial support, has been busily engaged in bush regeneration projects since the early 1990's.

Conclusion

The proponent's justification for the destruction of everything in the way of the access road, the slip lane and the bus stop, along with everything in their lines of sight, is that a tree planting exercise on degraded land will result in there being “no overall negative impact on viable, natural occurrences of Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest that occur in the subject area.” This is an exercise in denial, the purpose of which is to con the department into thinking that “concurrence with the Director General of the Office of Environment and Heritage is not required, nor is it necessary to prepare a Species Impact Statement in relation to the proposal.” To say that the development “would not potentially result in an overall loss of this ecological community from the local area” defies logic.

The proponent's application takes no special account of the existing conservation and biological values of the site; values that have justified the award of grants to Bankstown Bushland Society from the NSW State Government, specifically for the enhancement of these values. The proponent simply sees that this recognised work can be obliterated and conveniently replaced by planting on an adjacent area. We call for the Development Application to be rejected, and for all access and utilisation of Airport Reserve Crown Land Open Space to be omitted from future applications.

STOP PRESS

Since this was written LEDA has cancelled its plan for the 40 ha Business Park as result of an out of court settlement in the NSW Supreme Court over a contractual dispute with BAL and receivers BAC Devco. The pressure is off Airport Reserve for the time being, but plans for a fire sale of Crown Lands loom next year. BBS will continue to advocate for protection of this important bushland remnant.

The Society's appeal to the Hon. Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning, to support Environmental Zoning for Riverlands Golf Course

The Society appeals to you not to re-zone Riverlands Golf Course to Residential. Environmental zoning is the carefully considered outcome of 30 years of community concern regarding the fate of important local and regional ecological values on this part of the Georges River floodplain that includes many indigenous trees and many other species of native flora and wildlife habitat. To impose Residential zoning would be a negation of these values, and would be a lost opportunity for an outcome that respects the ecological values of the site.

The golf course and surrounding lands are crucial parts of the Georges River open space corridor. This is an area high in natural values. The golf course itself is home to over 1,300 indigenous trees as well as endangered river-flat forest, wetlands, Cumberland Plain Woodland and the native wildlife associated with them. A range of locally and regional rare native plants occur on the site.

The Riverlands environs possess a wide range of ecological attributes, including a succession of habitats from Holocene estuarine swamp forest, to Pleistocene coastal river-flat forest and wetland, as well as woodland on Tertiary sandy loam and remnant open forest on the Wianamatta shale rise, all of which are Endangered Ecological Communities deemed worthy of biodiversity significance in the Planning Proposal. No better example of this transition exists in Bankstown.

The Georges River is already under pressure from the effects of urbanisation resulting in the loss of natural habitat, biodiversity, and pollution of the waterway. Bankstown's open space corridor along the river was intended to mitigate against these pressures, as well as to provide the city's residents with a healthy environment for passive recreational opportunities. The rezoning of the golf course and surrounding areas can only be seen as a reversal of this sound environmental policy.

Zoning for E2 Environmental Conservation would be a win/win result for development and for conservation

values. It is the only way to guarantee the best outcomes and to protect as many of the indigenous trees and habitat hollows as possible. Many of these trees have special intrinsic, historic and ecological values. They cannot be replaced.

Many trees at Riverlands are of sufficient age to possess nesting hollows for birds and other wildlife. It can take well in excess of 100 years for a tree to form hollows that might be suitable for native animals. Riverlands Golf Course possess scores of these, all site indigenous trees left in place during golf course construction by the Smith brothers in the 1930's and 40's. These trees provide habitat opportunities for a wide range of native wildlife, vertebrate and invertebrate.

In its advice to Council, dated 6-9-2006, The Department of Environment and Conservation noted that, "*hollows are an important but limited ecological resource. They are essential for breeding and refuge for a large range of birds and mammals including threatened species and take decades to form.*" (see Clements, Appendix 6a, p. 5). Council has gone to considerable expense over recent years to establish wildlife nesting boxes in trees in many parks and reserves, with mixed results. Some of these boxes can today be found fallen from the trees, whilst those still in place are not all utilised by native animals. There are no better habitat opportunities than are provided by the several hundred hollows in the indigenous trees at Riverlands.

To make way for urban infilling in the suburbs, the site indigenous remnant trees, including those with hollows, or with the potential of forming hollows, are routinely being removed. The populations of site indigenous remnant trees in the built up parts of Bankstown have crashed in recent years. Several of these species are facing local extinction within their original range. Only at places like Riverlands does the opportunity occur to protect and preserve significant numbers of these.

The most diverse assemblage of native canopy tree species, however, occurs within the existing golf course itself, lining the various fairways. These include Forest Red Gum, Red Mahogany, White Stringybark, Grey Box, Scribbly Gum, Ironbark and Thin-leaved Stringybark. The ecologist, Anne Clements noted that 42 of the 49 tree groups lining the golf course fairways are of "*class A – High local conservation significance*", with several regionally significant species among them (Clements p. 69), recommending that all of the class A tree groups should be retained, where practicable (Clements p. 86). Residential zoning will guarantee the destruction of the vast majority of these trees.

The diversity of remnant canopy species, along with the abundance of hollows frequented by parrots and other birds, demonstrates that the golf course itself is an area of high local and regional biodiversity. The Bushland Society contends that the fairways at Riverlands, where representatives of all the indigenous canopy tree species of Milperra can be found, are as much, if not more worthy of Biodiversity Protection as are many of the locations depicted on the Biodiversity Protection Map in the Planning Proposal.

The Bushland Society reflects the concerns of the Department of Environment & Climate Change, when it wrote to Council on 28-9-2007: "*The DECC raises concern regarding the rezoning approach of adding a major redevelopment of the area as an additional use in the LEP. The proposed LEP amendment makes no reference to the protection and conservation of the natural values within the site in the 'aims of this plan' or in the provisions and requirements to be inserted into Schedule 2 and 9 of the LEP. In addition, the proposed approach provides significant flexibility to amend the proposal and therefore uncertainty with regard to the long term protection and enhancement of the conservation areas.*" (see Clements, 6(b), p. 8). Residential zoning would be to fly in the face of this advice and would, therefore, be irresponsible. (cont. on p. 5)

The Very Uncertain Future of RAY McCORMACK RESERVE, REVESBY

Recently we wrote to Interim General Manager of Canterbury-Bankstown City Council, Matthew Stewart, about the future of Ray McCormack Reserve in Revesby. Council seems to have a two-faced policy towards this reserve: in its own internal advice (the Development Control Plan) it is recommended not only that the reserve be maintained, but that there is the potential to remove or alter surrounding buildings so that the reserve can be enlarged. The General Manager has a very different plan, read on...

20-7-2016

Dear Matthew,

I write on behalf of the Society to express its objection to the proposed rezoning of Ray McCormack Reserve at Revesby to permit six storey developments on the site. The reserve in its present setting is much appreciated by local residents, many of whom have contacted the Society to voice their concerns.

I draw the following statement from the Bankstown Development Control Plan 2015-Part A1 March 2015 (Amended

January 2016) to your attention:

“The desired character specific to precinct 4B is to have Ray McCormack Reserve function as a public open space for residents in precincts south of the railway line, should be enhanced. Its function of providing passive recreation opportunities should be retained.

In the long term, there is potential for relocating the activities associated with the existing community building and possibly removal of the building, but only with further community consultation. The relocation of the community hall would allow a significant physical extension to the Reserve enhancing informal active play opportunities. In this regard the Reserve should consist of open grassed areas with tree planting limited to the periphery. Pathways to, and through, the reserve should be well lit and suitable for use by people of all ages and people with disabilities.”

How do you reconcile this statement with the Local Area Plan that you put before Council to approve, and which

was approved, which earmarks Ray McCormack Reserve for potential six storey development?

Much is made in the Bankstown City Council review of its Tree Preservation Policy in 2015 of the importance and desirability of protecting remnant indigenous trees. At Ray McCormack is to be found one of the last remaining stands of Woollybutt (*Eucalyptus longifolia*), Grey Box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) and Whitefeather Honey Myrtle (*Melaleuca decora*) in any park in Revesby. These endemic species give the park its special character, and are irreplaceable links with the history and heritage of the area. The LAP ignored this aspect of the park completely. If development is permitted on the reserve, it will be in disregard of the revised Tree Preservation Policy.

Surely, the scale of rezoning for medium and high density buildings in the Revesby CBD does not require the sacrifice of Ray McCormack Reserve and its indigenous trees. The statements in the DCP quoted above are a clear reflection of the community's expectations regarding the future of this



(Continued from page 4)

much loved reserve. Why have they not been taken into account in the Local Area Plan?

Colin Gibson,
Secretary BBS

Matthew was kind enough to respond accordingly:

2-8-2016

Dear Mr. Gibson,

Thank you for your recent letter in relation to Ray McCormack Reserve.

Based on extensive research and consultation with the community, the vision for the Revesby Village Centre in the South East Local Area Plan is to transform the heart of the centre through the renewal of public and private land on the northern and southern sides of Revesby railway Station.

Council proposes to create a new central plaza in the heart of the village centre at Marco Avenue that will connect to Abel Reserve. In the south, Council proposes to transform Ray McCormack Reserve, and adjacent land, into a modern community facility and successful civic space that strengthens the local identity of the centre.

The Plan sets out the high level vision which would then be implemented through a more detailed design process. Council acknowledges your concerns and advises that opportunities to retain significant trees, as part of the civic space, will be considered in the detailed design phase.

I trust the above information is of assistance,

Matthew Stewart
Interim General Manager.

Editor's thoughts on the GMs response are as follows:

"extensive research and consultation with the community" – I would have thought that that would have been done in the first place in formulation of the Development Control Plan. It is the DCP which reflects community views re Ray McCormack, not Matthew's *"high level vision"* to *"transform"* the reserve

that is perfect the way it is. I am yet to meet anyone in the Revesby Community who thinks replacing Ray McCormack Reserve with six-storey buildings will strengthen the local identity of the area. Really, who has Council been consulting with?

That the GM cannot give a firm undertaking to put the community's fears over the looming destruction of this most cherished reserve — the only piece of grassy open space in the south Revesby CBD — is very disappointing, to say the least. The design process could take years, and all the time we must know that the park and its trees may face the chop at the end of it. This is hardly reassuring. That the fate of the trees and the park will be considered almost as an afterthought in the design phase shows how little valued they presently are by Council.

We don't want Ray McCormack Reserve to be sacrificed for a *"a modern community facility"* – it is modern enough already and fully satisfies the community's need for a park right where it is. They can build whatever they want around it, but Council needs to realise how much valued this reserve is the way it is and keep the developers hands off it; better still, increase its size as per its own internal recommendations.

(Continued from page 3)

Recent unauthorised clearing of over 400 trees on the same property highlights the complete lack of environmental safeguards in this part of the river corridor. This was done in an area that is supposed to be set aside as a protected riparian zone along the Georges River. Clearly, the owner of the property has no interest in respecting this. Without Environmental zoning, irresponsible actions of this kind are likely to continue indefinitely, making the area an open wound of environmental abuses for years to come. We urge you to act now to prevent this from happening.

The rezoning to Residential is incompatible with the stated conservation values of the site. Riverlands Golf Course has for decades been part of the open space green belt along Bankstown's Georges River corridor. This green belt has protected the environmental quality of the river as well as the quality of life in adjoining urban areas.

To sacrifice such an environmentally significant area to intensive urban development would be a backward step for the environment of Bankstown. Bankstown Bushland Society urges the Minister not to proceed with Residential zoning but E2 Environmental Conservation. In this way the protection of the integrity of the Georges River green space corridor can be maintained.



Melangyna viridiceps Common Hover Fly Carysfield Reserve

The Bankstown Bushland Society go on a Grey Box Hunt

by Christopher Brogan

In the spirit of embracing the opportunities presented by the newly amalgamated City of Canterbury Bankstown, the Society went to explore remnant bushland trees at Wiley Park. Our small but enthusiastic group consisted of Paul Angel (Bush Care Co-ordinator Bankstown Council – council has seen it not a priority to appoint a Bushland Officer), Shane Barrie and Sebastian Van der Eyk (Horticulturists Strathfield Council) led by Tour Guide Christopher Brogan (Bankstown Bushland Society). Like many I had often driven down King Georges Road and promised myself that one day when I had the time I would explore the botanical possibilities of this park. Earlier this year after a morning spent examining bathroom fittings at Harvey Norman I spotted the biggest Grey Box (*Eucalyptus moluccana*) I had seen. Galvanised, I set a date and on Friday 5th August our little band braved the rain and went for a bushwalk in one of the most urbanised parts of Sydney.

In addition to Grey Box we discovered a forest of Broad leaved Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus fibrosa*), a number of beautiful Narrow leaved Ironbarks (*Eucalyptus crebra*), a group of very gnarled Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*), a lone Forest Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) and much to our surprise Grey Gums (*Eucalyptus punctata*). Shane also pointed out a twisted and very old looking Prickly leaved paperbark

(*Melaleuca styphelioides*) growing near the duck pond. Some doubts were expressed about the origins of a Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*) growing in the front yard of a block of flats close to the park but while uncommon in Western Sydney I tend to think that it may be remnant. There one is a growing in the front yard of a house on Woodville Road which I think may also be remnant. No conclusion was reached concerning the provenance of a small native Cypress growing in a garden bed at the base of a Broad-leaved Ironbark. While the native shrub layer was completely absent a number of patches of the native grass *Microlaena stipoides* and herb *Dichondra repens* were observed. Large parts of Wiley Park are dominated by mown lawn we all became very excited about the potential for large scale revegetation. I later received this communication from Shane.

Shane from Strathfield Council recently sent me an email about after the walk saying they have a similar park in Strathfield called Inveresk Park. The park consists of original trees of Grey Box and Ironbarks; also in Inveresk Park there's still an original native grass layer like *Microlaena*. Shane stopped the Parks department from mowing and let the *Microlaena* grow back naturally; Council recently planted the mid story out with Indigenous plants, from Strathfield Council's native nursery. All the native plants were collected from bushland sites around Strathfield Council, which are Cox's Creek Reserve, Davidson Reserve and Rookwood cemetery sites. The maintenance is minimal with the odd hand weeding of *Ehrharta* and *Parramatta Grass* and spot spraying; basically the *Microlaena* is out competing the weeds acting almost as a mulch layer. This could be easily replicated in Wiley park.



Paul Angel, Sebastian Van der Eyk and Shane Barrie in front of the big Grey Box with the Canterbury / King Georges Rds intersection in the background



BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK

Bankstown Bushland Society is now on Facebook. Anyone who shares an interest in Bankstown's bushland is welcome to like this. Facebook will provide us opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment of our area, remnant flora and fauna as well as updates on our bush regeneration projects, nature walks and so on. Anyone interested in local bushland is welcome to become a friend.

ELECTRONIC BULLETINS

The Bushland Bulletin is available electronically to members who so desire. All you have to do is send your email address to the Bulletin editor at:

greenaissance1@gmail.com.

Members are entitled to both printed and electronic forms, but if you only want the electronic form instead of the printed please let us know.

NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7.00 pm Padstow Progress Hall 16th November 2015.

Notice is hereby given of our AGM in November. We very much need people to make up the numbers on the committee so we can continue with the work of advocating for protection and enhancement of our precious bushland. With new government legislation winding back environmental protections set to be introduced next year, it will be an important year for the fate of our bushland and parks.

We are therefore in need of people to support the committee as office bearers or ordinary committee members. With your support we can form the new committee and continue the work.

Bushland Society meetings are held at Padstow Progress Hall, Ryan Road, Padstow, on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (except December & January), in the Wal Browning Meeting Room at rear of hall.

Time: 7.00pm.

All welcome.

Further enquiries please ring Col on 97886232.

BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

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Amenia imperialis Snail Parasite Blowfly
female Lansdowne Reserve

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WHY NOT JOIN THE SOCIETY ?



The Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

We are Bankstown's only incorporated association dedicated to protecting our City's environment.

The Society's objects are:

- To protect the environment of Bankstown
- To assist other persons in the protection of the environment in Bankstown
- To foster better community awareness of environmental issues
- To lobby through Government, commercial and other persons for the maintenance of a high quality of life through the progressive improvement of the environment

Bankstown Bushland Society has lobbied effectively for the protection of bushland and the natural environment since 1988. With your support we can continue the work. By joining the Society you can make an important contribution to our local environment.



Yes, I wish to join the
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone Number: _____

Attached please find my payment of:

(\$.00)

_____ (amount in words)

Membership fees

Family/Group - \$20

Ordinary - \$15

Concession - \$10

“student/unwaged/pensioner”

Send payment to:

**The Secretary,
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

Or pay by direct transfer to

**BSB 512 170 Account Number 100087319, AND put
your name on the transfer form.**



**Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
PO Box 210
Panania NSW 2213**

