

# THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN<sup>©</sup>

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[www.bankstownbushlandsociety.org](http://www.bankstownbushlandsociety.org)

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## Riverlands to have its Day in Court

The owner of Riverlands Golf Course and adjacent lands, Statewide Planning, has commenced proceedings in the Land and Environment Court against Canterbury Bankstown Council for the rejection of its Development Application in June last. The developer seeks to have refusal of its DA overturned.

Council's decision was based on recommendations made by the Local Planning Panel which found major flaws in the DA in

breach of the Bankstown Local Environmental and Development Control Plans. The LPP's concerns included the proponents proposal for covering three quarters of the site with fill, the destruction of all native trees and unjustifiable alterations to local drainage conditions.

Clearly, the DA, if approved, would cause the destruction of all natural features on the old golf course, and Council and the LPP are to be commended for their

actions. The developer, however, seems determined to brush aside all environmental considerations to reap as much havoc on the site in quest of maximum profit.

The Society fully supports Council's stand and has presented a submission to this effect. For more on Riverlands see the following article and letter from Professor Don White of the Nature Conservation Council.



## “Developments” at Riverlands

by Col Gibson

In October 2016 the Minister for Planning and Environment rejected Council’s application from October 2015 for Environmental zoning for Riverlands, the government instead imposing Residential on the site. This we followed up in 2017 with the Nature Conservation Council, which, on 1-3-2018, wrote to Council requesting that it challenge the state government’s decision. BBS, of course, also urged that the newly merged Canterbury-Bankstown Council challenge, and on 10<sup>th</sup> March, with local residents, we held a rally attended by over 100 people outside the entrance to the golf course. All local politicians were invited but only Linda Eisler and David Shoebridge of the Greens attended.

Council initially rejected the requests to challenge the zoning, claiming it was “*not in a position to do this*” (letter, Mayor to Don White of NCC, 26-3-2018), but the following day (27<sup>th</sup>) at the Council meeting Clr. Linda Eisler put a resolution forward that Council should approach State MP for East Hills, Glenn Brookes, and Federal MP for Banks, David Coleman, to ask the State Government to purchase Riverlands. This was amended by Clr. Linda Downey to Council asking Messrs. Brookes and Coleman to ask the government to change the zoning from R2 Residential to E3 Environmental Protection. This was passed, although is not in David Coleman’s electorate so there was not much point in that. Having handed the ball on, the

situation changed when the Canterbury Bankstown Local Planning Panel (the body responsible for assessing the Riverlands Development Application lodged on 25-7-2017) at its meeting on 4-6-2018 resolved to recommend that the DA be rejected in total, largely on the grounds of disastrous environmental problems the development would cause if approved. Council formally rejected the application three days later. Then, on 22-6-2018 the developer initiated proceedings in the Land and Environment Court to appeal Council’s rejection of the DA.

Committed to defending its position, at its meeting on 26-6-2018 Council resolved (moved by Clr. Linda Downey): “*That Council approach the Minister for Planning and the NSW Government to reconsider the R2 zoning... to make the zoning E3 as initially proposed*”. An official letter by the General Manager, Matthew Stewart, to this effect, dated 10-7-2018, was sent to the Hon. Anthony Roberts, Minister for Planning.

We have not heard of any response from the Minister Council’s letter, but a Conciliation Conference as a prelude to the actual court hearings is to be held on 1-2-2019. BBS has been asked by Council’s legal representatives, Marsdens Law Group, to apply to speak at the Conciliation Conference, which we intend to do. This is a crucial time for Riverlands Forest.

**Letter from Professor Don White, Chairperson of the Nature Conservation Council, to Mayor Khal Asfour of Canterbury Bankstown Council, 1-3-2018:**

*“The Nature Conservation Council of NSW is the peak environment organisation in NSW. We work closely with 150 member groups, local communities, government and business to ensure a positive future for our environment. At our recent Annual Conference at the end of 2017, the Nature Conservation Council resolved to call for:*

- a) Canterbury-Bankstown Council to reject the plan for residential housing on Riverlands Golf Course;*
- b) the State Government to reverse its refusal of Canterbury-Bankstown Council’s application for Environmental zoning.*

*As you would know, in 2016, the Department of Planning and Environment rejected your Council’s application for rezoning the Riverlands Golf Course site at Milperra from open space to E3 Environment Protection, instead rezoning it as Residential. In addition, the Nature Conservation Council is aware that The Development Application (DA) has already gone through a period of public comment and we are very pleased to hear that another period of public comment has been announced.*

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Riverlands Wetlands

(Prof. White's letter to CBC, continued from previous page)

However, as there was no elected Council at the time to properly consider and respond to the Minister's overruling of your application for E3 zoning, **the Nature Conservation Council believes you have good grounds for appeal on this basis alone and strongly supports your doing so.**

#### **Some history:**

The recommendation for E2 and E3 Environmental Protection (Conservation) zoning for areas of high natural value at Riverlands was first put to the then Bankstown City Council by the Department of Environment and Conservation in September 2006, and again in September 2007. Areas and features of high conservation value were subsequently identified in a 2012 Flora Assessment. These included High Local Conservation ratings for 42 of

the 49 tree groups identified on the site, many of which are known to possess mature hollow-bearing habitat trees.

We are advised that other significant areas had been identified in Council's Local Environment Study which proposed "that these areas be maintained as natural reserves." With regard to these, DEC took the view "that the conservation areas should be afforded the highest level of protection possible under the LEP and [DEC] is therefore of the view that the conservation areas should be zoned for environmental protection purposes. This zoning would also provide the best prospect for long term conservation and management of the natural values." (DEC to BCC 28 September 2007, see Riverlands Technical Studies Part 1).

It was on the basis of these internal and State Government recommendations that Council proceeded with the application

for Environmental Protection zoning for Riverlands. The question must be asked: Why, despite the acknowledged presence of areas of high environmental significance at Riverlands, and with instruments available for their protection, did the Minister disregard DEC's advice and Council's application? Why did the Minister choose instead to rezone these areas R2 Residential?

In a communication dated 7 November 2016 with the Bankstown Bushland Society (one of our members), the Department of Planning and Environment claimed that its decision was based in part on submissions from the Office of Environment and Heritage (formerly DEC), however, we believe that the fundamental advice of that department was ignored.

Residential development at Riverlands will destroy hundreds of significant trees and habitat hollows recommended for retention, and cause the destruction and/or fragmentation of Endangered Ecological Communities. These negative impacts, along with the lack of provision for accessible open space, renders the DA unsuitable for an area of such high conservation values. To sacrifice such an environmentally significant area to intensive urban development would be a backward step for the environment of Canterbury-Bankstown.

We look forward to your response."

## Extract from the Greater Sydney Commission's "Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivering Green grid connections"

Tree-lined streets, urban bushland and tree cover on private land form the urban tree canopy. The urban tree canopy is a form of green infrastructure that mitigates the urban heat island effect, with a 10 per cent increase in tree canopy cover reducing the land surface temperature by 1.13 degrees Celsius<sup>21</sup>. The urban tree canopy also supports cleaner air and water and provides local habitat. Trees remove fine particles from the air and help insulate against urban noise pollution, particularly along busy roads.

The urban tree canopy can also help make communities more resilient, by reducing the impact of heat waves and extreme heat.

In 2011, the Urban Area of the Central City District had 19 per cent tree canopy cover. The Hills Shire enjoys extensive urban tree canopy cover and maintains its image as a garden shire with an extensive network of parks, open spaces and rural lands. Blacktown, parts of Parramatta and Cumberland local government areas generally have less tree canopy cover.

The NSW Government has set a target to increase tree canopy cover across Greater Sydney to 40 per cent. Trees are valued by residents and contribute to the streetscapes, character and amenity of the District. As the District continues to grow and change existing urban tree canopy will come under pressure. This means that expanding the urban tree canopy in public places will become even more important for supporting sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods.

The urban tree canopy may be formed by a mix of native and exotic, deciduous or evergreen trees, which provide shade in summer while allowing sunlight into homes and onto roofs for solar power, particularly in winter. Urban renewal and transformation projects in the District, including Parramatta Road, GPOP and the Sydney Metro Northwest Urban Renewal Corridor provide opportunities to improve the public domain. A critical part of this will be increasing urban tree canopy cover. This can be complemented by other green cover, including rain gardens, green roofs and green walls.

Green cover can help slow and store stormwater and improve water quality, filtering pollution before it reaches the District's waterways.

Challenges to extending the urban tree canopy in public and private areas include the lack of sufficient space within existing street corridors, and the competition with other forms of infrastructure both above and below the ground.

Opportunities to relocate power lines underground or bundle them may be explored at a local or precinct scale, particularly in areas experiencing urban renewal, to provide space for the urban tree canopy and

enhance the public domain. Extending the urban tree canopy should be balanced with the need to allow sunlight into homes and onto roofs for solar power. Along many busy roads, where there is limited space to plant new trees there may be opportunities to plant other forms of green ground cover, such as garden beds and hedges, that can help improve air quality.

Where trees are lost as a result of development, some councils have programs to plant replacement trees in the public realm. The NSW Department of Environment and Planning's Apartment Design Guide and the new Greenfield Housing Code guide the requirements for landscape areas that can support the urban tree canopy. The NSW Department of Planning and Environment is preparing an urban tree canopy manual, as part of a green infrastructure policy framework, to support the expansion of the urban tree canopy.



*Male King Parrot at a hollow of a tree in Picnic Point*



## What the economy really needs more of—trees

by Ross Gittins, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1st January 2019



*Eucalyptus siderophloia* in a Revesby street

I think the first economist must have been named Horatio. He's the one who had to be reminded there were more things in heaven and earth than dreamt of in his model. I try to keep my horizons wide by regularly consulting my second-favourite website, *The Conversation* (with academics who know a lot of interesting things about a lot of topics), to which I'm indebted for most of what follows.

We're meant to know all about photosynthesis, but did you realise it means that, "with a bit of sun, a tree uses the natural miracle of photosynthesis to combine a little water with carbon dioxide from the air to produce the building blocks for its own growth, as well as oxygen," according to Associate Professor Cris Brack, of forest measurement and management at the Australian National University? So, to oversimplify a little, we breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide,

whereas trees breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen – making them useful things to have around when we have a problem with excess carbon emissions.

But trees do far more for us than help with our greenhouse problem. For a start, they cheer us up. Academics at the universities of Melbourne and Tasmania examined 2.2 million messages on Twitter and found that tweets made from parks contained more positive content - and less negativity - than tweets coming from built-up areas. Why are people in parks likely to be happier? Because parks help them to recover from the stress and mental strain of living in cities, and provide a place to exercise, meet other people or attend special events.

The world is becoming more urbanised. There's now more than half the world's population living in cities. In Australia, two-thirds of us live in capital cities

and nine out of 10 of us live in urban environments. There are sound economic reasons why so many of us are piling into big cities, but it seems there also health and social problems. According to the experts, cities are becoming the epicentres for chronic, non-communicable physical and mental health conditions.

But there's growing recognition of the crucial role of urban green spaces in helping reduce these health problems. More than 40 years of research shows that experiences of nature are linked to a remarkable breadth of positive health outcomes, including improved physical health (such as reduced blood pressure and allergies, less death from cardio-vascular disease, and improved self-perceived general health), improved mental wellbeing (such as reduced stress and better restoration), greater social wellbeing and promotion of positive health behaviours (such as physical activity).

Our cities are getting hotter, more crowded and noisier, while climate change is bringing more heatwaves, according to environmental planners at Griffith University. The obvious answer is more air-conditioning, but this brings more carbon emissions, so a better answer is more infrastructure – "green infrastructure", otherwise known as street trees, green roofs, vegetated surfaces and green walls. In reality, however, vegetation cover in cities is declining, not increasing.

Planting trees in parks, gardens or streets has many benefits, helping to cool cities, slowing

*(continued next page)*

(Ross Gittins' article continued from previous page)

stormwater run-off, filtering air pollution, providing habitat for some animals, making people happier and encouraging walking. According to those environmental planners, shading from strategically placed street trees can lower surrounding temperatures by up to 6 degrees – or up to 20 degrees over roads. Green roofs and walls can naturally cool buildings, substantially lowering demand for air-conditioning.

By contrast, hard surfaces – including concrete, asphalt and stone – increase urban temperature by absorbing heat and radiating it back into the air. But though scientists have much evidence that trees and other greenery improve our mood and health, they know less about the actual mechanisms by which this occurs. Japanese research, however, suggests that when we walk through bushland we breathe in three substances: beneficial bacteria, plant-derived essential oils and negatively-charged ions.

We live our lives surrounded by beneficial bacteria, breathing them in and sharing our bodies with them. Gut-dwelling bacteria break down the food we can't digest and produce substances that benefit us physically and mentally. Plants and the bacteria living on them produce essential oils that fight off harmful micro-organisms when we ingest them. And despite the nonsense talked about negative-ion generating machines, there's evidence that negative air ions may influence our mental outlook in beneficial ways.

This may sound very new and scientific to some (or pseudo-

scientific to others) but, as Hugh Mackay observes in his latest book, *Australia Reimagined*, being connected to nature is a *traditional* source of relief from anxiety: gardening, bushwalking, strolling in a park, walking the dog, climbing a tree, swimming in the sea or sailing on it, picnicking in a tranquil and beautiful setting, playing games that take you outdoors and into a natural environment. We know instinctively that “grass time” – running on it, rolling in it, throwing and catching a ball across it – is vital for the health and wellbeing of children. Particularly if they've been cooped up indoors, glued to a screen. But adults are no different, the wise man says.

### **Bankstown Airport Major Development Plan for the South West Precinct** *by Col Gibson*

The Bankstown Airport Limited development plan for the South West precinct that caused us so much concern for bushland at Airport Reserve a couple of years ago is back on the agenda. However, the good news is that

the new version does not appear to affect the reserve. We are pleased to note that access to the development site will be via an extension of Murray Jones Drive and not through Airport Reserve. The previous developer, LEDA, proposed access through the reserve, and at the time of our discussions with them and BAL we argued against this, and instead for access via Murray Jones Drive where there is an existing set of lights.

This made more sense than constructing a new intersection a couple of hundred metres further down Milperra Road. In fact, as we found out, this was LEDA's preferred option, refused by BAL because of the presence of a navigational installation known as a Non-Directional Beacon, located on BAL land close to the Murray Jones Drive access to the old Hawker de Havilland site. We assume that the NDB is no longer considered an obstacle or is to be removed. Keeping slip lanes and bus stops etc. out of Airport Reserve remains a chief concern, and so far so good with the new South West Precinct Major Development Plan.



*Ashford and Airport Reserves*



## BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY NOTICE BOARD



***Check out BANKSTOWN  
BUSHLAND SOCIETY on  
FACEBOOK***

The BBS Facebook page provides us opportunities for posting information relevant to the natural environment and flora and fauna of our bushland regeneration projects, nature walks and such. Anyone interested in the Georges River and bushland generally is welcome to join our page.

### ***ELECTRONIC BULLETINS***

The Bushland Bulletin is available electronically to members who so desire. All you have to do is email the editor at [greenaisance1@gmail.com](mailto:greenaisance1@gmail.com). Members are entitled to either print or electronic forms or both. Please let us know if you only want one or the other.

***Typhonium brownii***  
flowering at The Crest,  
January 2019.  
Picture by Peter Ridgeway.



**Notice for  
Clean Up Australia  
Day, 9 am to 12  
noon, 3rd March  
2019, at  
Ashford Reserve on  
Milperra Road.**

**This will be our fifth and probably final go at Ashford; a great achievement not to be missed. Meet in the Pentair car park opposite Murray Jones Drive (about 200 metres west of the intersection of Ashford Reserve with Milperra Road).**



**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.**

**Tea and biscuits provided.**

**All welcome  
Further enquiries please ring  
Col on 97886232 or Skye on  
0411584295**

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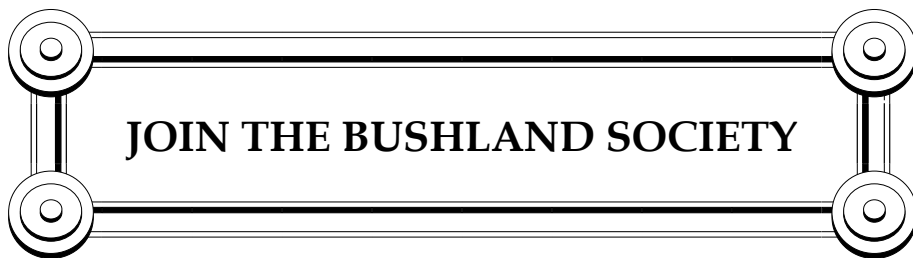
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The Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

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 <b>Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:</b>	<b>Membership fees</b>
Name: _____	Family/Group - \$20
Address: _____	Ordinary - \$15
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