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# BUSHRANGER

Newsletter of the  
Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

**Next Meeting**  
**Tuesday 8 Dec**  
**7:30pm**

**Please join us for Xmas drinks and nibbles (and some business!)**

Lane Cove Tennis Club, Blaxlands Corner,  
Kenneth St & River Rd

## **What we have done**

**At our AGM, invited speakers gave talks on the top-listed issues for our society and the environment of Lane Cove. Much was about threats, pressure and stresses on bushland and those who work to preserve and enhance it. But we remain optimistic and with your help will continue to work for the bush we love.**

**Doug Stuart spoke on the plans for increasing high density planned for St Leonards (est. extra 7,000 people) and other areas.**

Council has adopted a strategic plan & is developing LEP controls for south area up to 19 storeys at Pacific Hwy. Threat to bushland of Smoothie Park as sewerage line there. Other unit developments in Birdwood and Finlayson St, Central Ave, Pacific Hwy (Longueville Rd), RMS site, Orion Rd, Council sites: 314 Burns Bay Rd, 266 Longueville Rd (retirement living). Basic threats come from service providers and contractors so LCBCS members should alert Kerry Heatley if concerns are sighted. Also

## **December 2015**

from increased population density as overuse or misuse may possibly degrade the bushland reserves.

**Guy Hallows spoke on unit development in Mowbray Precinct & Shell site on Epping Rd (estimated at 4,000) and the threats to the Batten Reserve.**

Threats – Services: Jemena (gas) wants to cut down 40 trees in Batten Reserve and Sydney Water also previously had plans in the reserve. Department of Housing want \$7 million for the sale of houses for a proposed new Pinaroo (Rd) Park. Threats from the increases in population to the Batten Reserve will be with traffic in the event of fires, visual pollution, light spill from units into the reserve on native animals & lack of new recreational parkland & shops or services. Northern branch of Stringybark Creek has stopped flowing. His map (see page 5) graphically illustrates the extensive already-built and proposed developments in the Mowbray Precinct.

**Maralyn Lawson spoke of bushland management in Lane Cove, Ryde and Hunters Hill and Willoughby Council, as these could be amalgamated with Lane Cove.** LC has 92 hectares of bushland, and over \$1million spent on bushland per year, the majority spent on contractors. \$316, 804 gained in grants by the dedicated LCC Bushcare managers. Developer contributions from unit developments are influencing Councils to cooperate with the

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'population growth' agenda of the State govt.  
Species count in LC is increasing.

Threats: Why is the Rural Fire Service mandating bushland policy in our suburbs & reserves (Code 10/50)? Drainage and siltation- money for drainage (should come from 'Infrastructure' fund) and siltation due to runoff. Complacency is a threat. Graham Holland said Ku-ring-gai & Ryde have same problem of dwindling numbers in environmental groups, with a lack of youth participation.

Maralyn noted the progress in the health of the local bushland since the 1970-80's as bush was used to dump rubbish in, but pessimistic as proposed Council amalgamations will remove care for the environment at a time of State & Federal unravelling of environmental protection.

Suggestion is for a combined action group of local suburban environmental groups (eg. WEPA) as early warning and action is vital. And for Aboriginal heritage sites to be well recorded. Education process needed so residents value the bushland of Lane Cove. Also a 'Friends of LC Bushland' (like Neighbourhood watch) so when residents see threats in bushland, they could be reported to a specific number. Look at Mosman Council website as good for drainage.

**Graham Holland reminded us that amalgamations have always been supported by the major parties.** Population projected under amalgamation: now 286,000 people - 376,000. The Independent Review Panel (IPART) did not have criteria or outline what an ideal 'scale and capacity' for a Council was and no empirical evidence for larger councils was given. IPART was given role of reporting. The Labor Party, Greens, Fred Nile and Shooters & Fishers are all opposed to forced amalgamations, so it is unlikely that parliament would legislate amalgamations.

A boundary adjustment could be used, or councils could be dismissed &

administrators put in. Empirical evidence from QLD & Victoria shows there are no benefits from amalgamations.

Threats for bushland of amalgamations: loss of identity for local volunteer bush regenerators;

BMAC could disappear; bushland could be turned into open space (recreation parks) or sold for housing development; greater scope for competition for funds; reduced capacity to educate councillors on bushland.

The value of bushland is expressed in council budgets (as well as intangible values). LC budget; \$54 per ratepayer (not per person.). Mosman spends about half of what LC spends on bushland. Willoughby (approx 300 hectares) has a bigger budget.

More equal distribution of funds over an amalgamated area could see Lane Cove with less spent on its bushland.

**Andrew Little (from STEP) sees the primary threat to bushland as being from high population growth.**

A significant shortfall for infrastructure, esp. in bushland management. Priorities are being assessed poorly by random surveys where the questions can influence outcome, and so stop lobby groups having influence. Council bushland now zoned E2 to protect biodiversity in areas of high ecological values, so recategorisation can occur, as happened in Ku-ring-gai.

**Actions:** Database on existing Bushcare sites must not be lost (Sydney Catchment website no longer shows this). Bushcare groups should not be partisan, but promote its good work, as is more positive in communication with politicians.

**Main goals should be:**

- 1) Vigilance: Pre-emptive action needed in identifying threats from new development to high quality bushland.**
- 2) Meeting other related community groups.**

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## In other News

### Fox movements and prey in Greater Sydney – You can help

The collection of fox scats is important for assessing fox prey preferences across the urban-to-natural gradient from the Sydney CBD to Royal National Park and the Blue Mountains. There is a straightforward protocol to collect fox scats. This is a commonsense activity, much like members of the community picking up their dogs' scats.

Contact **Dr John Martin**, Wildlife Ecologist if you are able to help in your local area.

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[www.lanecovebushkids.com.au](http://www.lanecovebushkids.com.au) and follow on Facebook at [facebook.com/lanecovebushkids](https://facebook.com/lanecovebushkids)

**If you want to find a Rock (3 - 5 yrs)** Thurs 3 Dec 10 - 11.30 Have you found a hiding rock, a wishing rock or a climbing rock? Maybe it doesn't have a name yet? And that might be the best rock of all. Rock story, walk and craft. Location TBA

### Christmas Party

Hello Bush Kids! This is a quick reminder for our upcoming Christmas party & get-together.

Come and join us for our annual Christmas party in the bush! This year we will have party games, carol singing and enjoy a picnic brunch.

(Please bring a plate to share, BYO plates, cups and cutlery; drinks are provided)

Date: Sunday the 6th of December, 11 am - 1 pm. At Tambourine Bay Reserve, Riverview.

The LCBK Facebook Page is steadily growing. Please help expand our network by liking us and sharing our page with your friends!

### Amalgamations

What follows are extracts from the agenda of Council's meeting on 16 November on its

response to IPART's assessment that Lane Cove is **NOT FIT FOR THE FUTURE!**

In responding to IPART's report on mergers, Council expended significant time, effort and funds on developing a superior alternative model, a Joint Regional Authority (JRA), in partnership with Hunters Hill and Ryde City Councils to the merger proposal put forward by the ILGRP. However, the NSW State Government in releasing the IPART assessment report has not supported the JRA proposal and has requested councils respond to the Government by 18 November 2015 with up to three (3) merger proposals supported by a **maximum of only 50 words.**

In response to this latest call for mergers by the Government, Council hosted a further public meeting on 9 November 2015 and there was almost unanimous support from those in attendance for Council to stand alone and continue to call for the Government to allow the JRA option.

Given that these results are consistent with all previous results, Council, as a democratically elected body whose role it is to represent the will of our community should respond accordingly. Our community does not want to merge and any change should be the community's decision

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council: -

1. Following community consultation and strong community support to remain an independent council that works collaboratively with neighbouring councils on regional issues and joint service delivery, not pursue a merger with any other council;
2. Reaffirms its opposition to the forced amalgamation of councils;
3. Reaffirms its detailed independent analysis that the Lane Cove Community is best served in financial, social, and environmental terms by the current Council structure;
4. Reaffirms its previously resolved commitment to and participation in a Joint Regional Authority (JRA) model whilst maintaining our independence as a Council.

Accordingly, the JRA partners of City of Ryde, Hunter's Hill and Lane Cove Councils have all

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responded to the State Government (in 54 words!) along the following lines:  
**(City of Ryde/ Hunter's Hill Council / Lane Cove Council)** is financially fit and sustainable, and has capacity and size for effective local government. It supports the JRA model for regional cooperation, as endorsed by the NSW Legislative Council. Council has the strong support of its local community and rejects the need to merge with any council.



### **The people speak - Hands off our councils**

In Martin Place on Wednesday 18 Nov a sea of yellow hands and banners held by the 800 or so protesters organised by Save our Councils told the NSW government to take its "hands off our councils".

They came from far and wide, and of all political persuasions, including many from safe Liberal seats. All joined in the rousing choruses. A variety of speakers included Alan Jones who urged the crowd on in his own inimitable way, which you can watch on [www.facebook.com/saveourcouncils/](http://www.facebook.com/saveourcouncils/).

Unfortunately this did not attract the media coverage it deserved, being overshadowed by events in Paris.

### **What you can do:**

**Anthony Roberts** has been silent on this issue. Please contact him. The primary responsibility of the member for Lane Cove, Anthony Roberts, is to his constituents. They have shown clearly that they wish their councils to remain unmerged and that they support the joint organisation proposed by Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Ryde councils.

Therefore we expect him to oppose any forced amalgamations, or any amalgamation at all and to vote accordingly.

We urge you to write, email, phone and tell him so, and copy it to the Premier and Minister for Local Government.

### **Conserving Western Sydney's Urban Bushland**

The NCC is rightly concerned with major conservation issues right across the state. At its annual conference, on 25 October it adopted a motion supporting the conservation of significant urban bushland in western Sydney.

The Cumberland Conservation Corridor in western Sydney has long been advocated by key community environment and conservation groups. It has also been supported by successive Commonwealth Governments, commencing in 2007. Important achievements so far include the protection of Commonwealth Lands and the acquisition of some private lands.

Much of the remaining potential land parcels for the Cumberland Conservation Corridor have been identified by the NSW Government as target sites for conservation to achieve the Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan and Priority Conservation Lands for funding by the Growth Centres Conservation Fund.

However, the NSW Government is failing to pursue conservation of these lands, even to the extent of permitting rezoning of Priority Conservation Lands for development.

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Scientific studies have demonstrated the importance of the Corridor to conserve high conservation value bushland in Western Sydney. The proposed corridor has been mapped and lands having high priority for acquisition have been identified. The current pressure of major urban development across the entire district is of such magnitude though, that urgent action is required to protect these lands in a connected corridor and identify surrounding linkages in accordance with best practice for the achievement of long term conservation goals. A well managed and connected corridor is the preferred means to demonstrate NSW and Australia's commitment to the conservation of unique and threatened flora and fauna.

The following motion was adopted:

**That the Nature Conservation Council of NSW make urgent representations to the NSW Minister for Planning and Environment, requesting that the Department of Planning and Environment include the Cumberland Conservation Corridor in the District Plan for Western Sydney, now in preparation.**

### **Did you miss it?**

**At the Movies...** "This Changes Everything" about the impacts of climate change. This film has been widely promoted by community organisations around NSW. Look out for it.

### **STOP PRESS**

We have written in response to the Council's Draft Sustainability Action Plan, noting the lack of any specifics on 'sustainability' – '[these] could be a vision & mission for any plan'.

Also the plan lumps together bushland, kiddie-parks and sports fields as undifferentiated "green space", giving no consideration to the special needs of critically endangered ecological communities.

(see next page for Mowbray Precinct Map, showing completed and proposed developments)

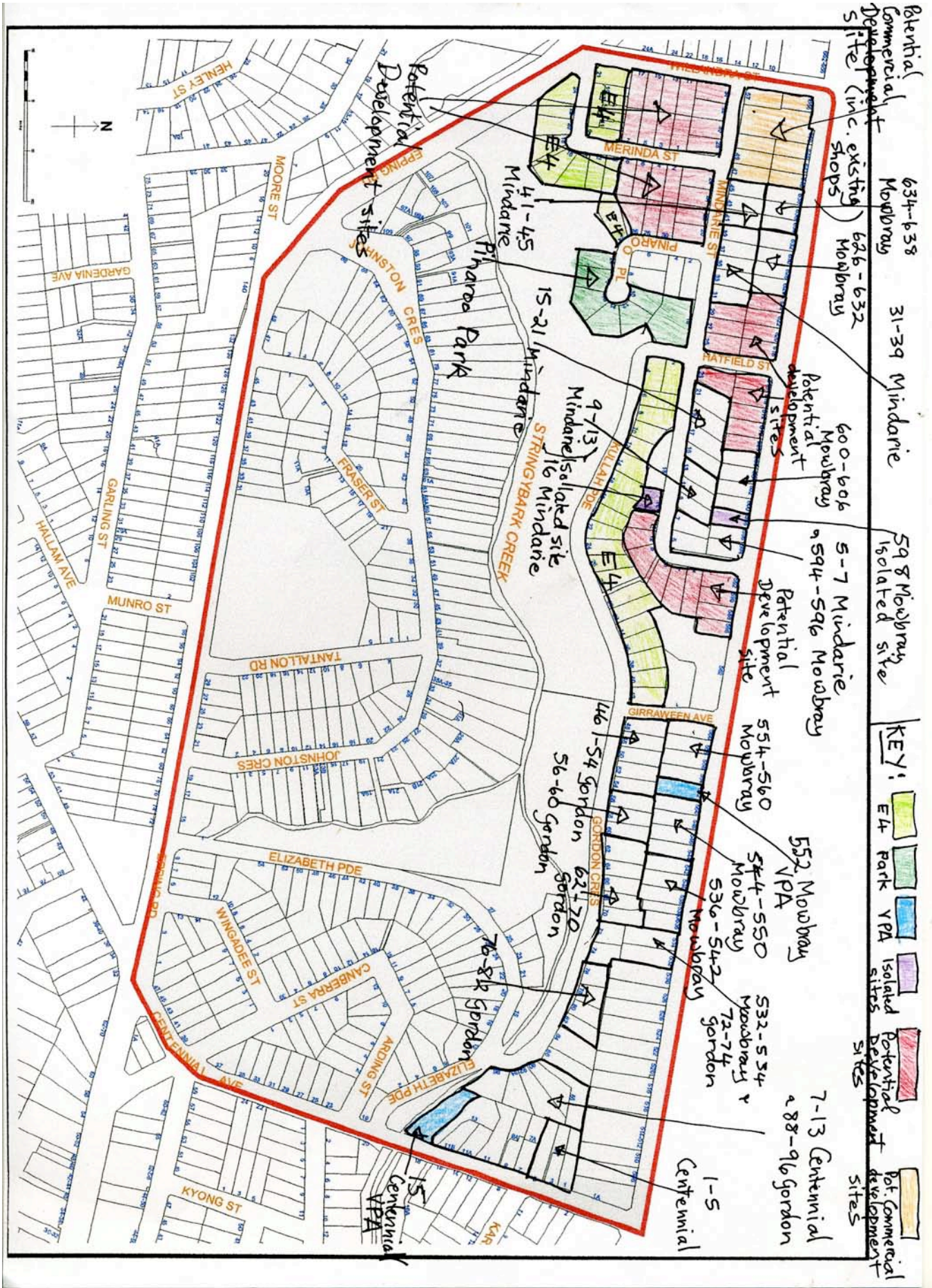
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