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BUSHRANGER

Newsletter of the
Lane Cove Bushland & Conservation Society Inc

Meeting 14 April 7.30pm

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

April 2015

The election result

The previous government has been returned to power. What does this mean for the issues that concern us?

10/50 Code and legislation

So far no changes have been announced that go beyond the current review of the code and its application. 10/50 did not appear in any of the policy announcements made by the Coalition and the Labor Party before the election. The "Stop The Chop" campaign goes from strength to strength but must continue until the code is withdrawn and the legislation repealed.

We know that the legislation was introduced in response to the Blue Mountains bushfires of 2013, however the Blue Mountains Council is very concerned about the misuse of the code. The following extract from the Blue Mountains Council Mayoral Minute of 24 March 2015 shows the poor basis of the legislation.

"In workshops in October last year RFS acknowledged that they were not in a position to state that application of [the] 10/50 clearing would substantially reduce bushfire risks faced by landowners and that they could not verify that had 10/50 been in place prior to the October 2013 bushfires, there would have been a material difference in the property loss suffered by our community."

Amalgamations

The previous government's position of no forced amalgamations may still prevail, however nothing is guaranteed. Some form of joint organisation has been proposed. Lane Cove Council will be holding another public consultation session on Thursday 7 May and will be running an online survey.

A Mayoral Minute from the February 15 Council meeting referred to a joint organisation as follows: "There are various options for a Joint Organisation which will retain Council's autonomy but allow greater scale and capacity through joint planning, projects and service provision with other councils."

The existing Northern Sydney Regional Organisation Of Councillors, NSROC, functions primarily as a lobby group but has some joint procurement roles and is planning more, perhaps in response to the threat of amalgamation!!

This joint activity may still not be seen to be able to improve Lane Cove's "strategic capability", however at this stage any council promoted joint organisation would not be planned to reduce council's autonomy. However, we should monitor whatever public information comes our way.

We suspect that the most effective preventative to the amalgamation of Lane Cove with surrounding councils is their representation by Liberal party members, including ministers, with very strong majorities.

Coal seam gas

As a result of Our Land Our Water Our Future campaigns the previous government cancelled or bought back exploration licences in the Sydney area. However the incoming government has not promised a general moratorium and significant areas, for example the Pilliga forest and the Liverpool Plains, remain at risk.

Native Vegetation Laws

The government appears to be intent on implementing many of the recommendations of the review of these laws, which the conservation movement regards as a major threat to native vegetation, including a greater risk of land clearing.

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What we have done

10/50 Stop the Chop

A publicity campaign involved attending 'meet the candidates' forums to ask questions about code 10/50. Of note was the Manly Daily Forum where Gaye White spoke with the Premier, Mike Baird which has led to meetings with the Mayor for the Blue Mountains. The other forums included Pittwater, Warringah, Mosman, and Epping.

Another outcome of the Manly 'meet the candidate' forum was an on-line election issues poll organised by the Daily Telegraph. The current tally shows code 10/50 as the number one issue ahead of TAFE funding and Coal Seam Gas.

The TEC-produced video overview of code 10/50 called "Tree Massacre" has now been finished and issued. It has been well received. This is available to watch on the Society's Facebook page and is recommended viewing. Thanks to all who supported it.

The 10/50 sub-committee have obtained a spreadsheet of all the code 10/50 submissions. Initial analysis shows that 97% were asking for a moratorium or for the bill to be repealed.

Lane Cove, Our Land Our Water Our Future update

Headline news – As part of the NSW Gas Plan, Minister Roberts is starting to buy-back petroleum Exploration Licences. (CSG).

There have been several announcements in the media about this. It should be noted that the next stage of the plan is to release areas for exploration, which the government has deemed suitable. No details on how this will be determined have been released.

Once licences have been bought back the land can still potentially be released for coal seam gas exploration. The only way to take away this uncertainty is for a total ban.

February update – Successful publicity was generated for the campaign from two rallies outside Anthony Roberts' office in Gladesville. The first involved the Knitting Nannas accompanied by the Lane Cove OLOWOF group. The second was a welcoming committee for the "Walk for Water" team who stopped off to deliver a letter to Anthony Roberts. Both received coverage by local papers. These were followed up with letters to the papers. The other activity for February was a poster blitz.

Posters saying "Protect Sydney's Water" have been put up in shops around the Lane Cove Electorate. The aim was to find locations where they were likely to stay put for a while. Around 50 posters have been put up. The posters invite people to join the Lane Cove group. The group has also been asking questions about coal and gas mining at meet the candidates forums.

Instant information

Things can happen quickly and the best way of keeping abreast of events and announcement is to check Facebook and Twitter. The Facebook and Twitter feeds on 10/50 are now linked so that all posts appear simultaneously on both sites. Posts continue to show a broad cross section of views on code 10/50 and coal and gas mining. Society event notices, newsletters, and updates of note are all posted on both sites. This includes the plant stall. The plant stall notice was also posted on the "In the Cove" Facebook page. www.facebook.com/chopstoppers
Twitter: @chopstoppers



Thanks to the Plant Stall Helpers

Thank you so much for your help in making the March plant stall a success. We sold \$490 worth of plants, so once our costs are taken out I expect that we will have raised about \$250 for the Society. In terms of selling plants this stall was not as successful as others but we did have an excellent opportunity to engage in discussions with all the political candidates on the morning, as well as several local councillors.

A date for your diaries: Saturday 12 September next Plant Stall.



The program of activities for April is now being developed. Keep in touch with the Bush Kids program on its website or Facebook.

In other news

Rosenthal Development

There is still no direct information on how this development will be financed. Council's 2015/16 budget papers only include an amount of one million dollars for the cost of progressing planning and design for new public domain, retail space and car parking on the Rosenthal Avenue Car Park site.

However, The NSROC Regional Priorities Booklet 2014-2016 (p.18) contains some information that we already know, such as:

"...Lane Cove Council is redeveloping the 5,500 square metre-176 space car park into a new 500 space underground car park, with one layer of below ground retail (supermarkets) and a park on top which will complement the Lane Cove Plaza...."

However, the new information is that its capital value will be \$45 million. This is much greater than Council's existing reserves, so where will it come from?

Budget for Bushland

The Council's Budget Papers are available on its website and comment is invited. Projected expenditure on Bushland is about a million dollars per annum, which is consistent with past expenditure. If you'd like to know what your bit of bushland is getting, the amount is in the papers. Consultation is now open and runs from Friday 20 March to 5pm Friday 1 May.

Overview.

The 2015 - 2016 Budget has been formulated in the context of continuing to deliver an unprecedented range of facilities providing long term benefits for existing and new residents, within an ongoing tight economic environment. This combined with ongoing cost increases in utilities, the pressure local government generally is under from a variety of

sources, has once again made the development of this budget difficult.

Council is currently undertaking consultation to determine the community's views on the proposed plans and actions for the next 2 years. The full range of documents include:-

Draft Budget 2015-2016

Draft Fees & Charges 2015-16

Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2015-2017

Background Council Report - 16 March 2015

Council Resolution - 16 March 2015

Unit development in Lane Cove since the introduction of the LEP in 2009

We have seen an unprecedented number of new units in the LGA due to the rezoning of areas for high density that happened in the LEP 2009.

The figures are:- 2643 units already constructed, under construction or approved waiting construction, comprised of 9 buildings already constructed, 16 under construction and a number of others approved for construction.

There are also Development Applications for another 1056 units with Council awaiting approval, including a development on Pacific Highway at St Leonards comprising 570 units in two towers.

This brings our total to 3700. The Sydney North Strategic Plan asked Lane Cove to provide 3900 units by 2030, with 60% (2340) by 2020. We are already far exceeding this.

The Focus on Development Forum

Meeting the Candidates, 5 March 2015

This was extremely well attended (140 people - standing room only!) and contained a robust discussion with the candidates and local residents about planning issues concerning the community. MC was Genia McCaffery, former Mayor of North Sydney. The session was hosted by 12 local community groups from Lane Cove, Hunters Hill and Gladesville within the Lane Cove Electorate.

Special thanks to Doug Stuart for all the work he put in on behalf of the society as part of the organising committee and also to our Society members who helped out in other ways and on the night. This is an edited version of a report by Guy Hallows as a follow up to attendees to the forum.

Our members were well represented in assisting before and on the night - especially Helen Jordan and Ann Proudfoot for supper, Frances Vissel and Norma Stuart on the door and others throughout the evening in various ways.

Speaking at the session were:

- Rod Simpson, University of Sydney, Architecture - *The importance of public participation*
- Kylie Bryden-Smith, Lane Cove resident - *Community experience of the Mowbray Precinct*

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- Graeme Cordiner, Gladesville resident –
Community experience of development in Gladesville

Candidates:

- Pierre Massey, Greens Candidate
- Jim Sanderson, Independent Candidate
- Andrew Zbik, Labor Candidate

Anthony Roberts, Liberal candidate and sitting member sent his apologies but asked for a message to be read out.

Summary of key issues raised

- General angst amongst the community and loss of faith in the planning system. There is a lot of uncertainty and insecurity right throughout the electorate (Lane Cove, Gladesville, Hunters Hill, Greenwich), resulting from local experiences – particularly from the Mowbray Precinct, Gladesville and St Leonards developments.

- There is general disappointment and frustration at the current Government's failure to bring to realisation their election promise of 2011 to fix the planning system and give planning powers back to the community. There was discussion about why the attempt to fix the planning system failed, and concerns were raised that the Government has not attempted to inform the community about any planning policies or how they plan to fix this situation. Where to from here?

- Need for a Sydney-wide plan - there was general acknowledgement that ad-hoc planning in local municipalities is causing major issues. The St Leonards development experience was raised several times by community members – in particular, how within 2km there are three different Councils (North Sydney, Lane Cove and Willoughby), applying three different planning controls and three different strategies for development. The local residents feel like they are the real ones who are losing out.

Rod Simpson discussed the need for a more strategic approach to planning in Sydney stating:

- here is a widening acceptance for higher density housing within communities but what is causing concern and rejection is the ad-hoc approach of the planning process

- There needs to be a plan to accommodate higher density housing and the community needs to be involved genuinely in the process around this

- More money needs to be invested into 'planning' – Rod highlighted the fact the Department of Planning is under-resourced to undertake proper community consultation and needs better funding

- 8% of all Australia's economic development occurs in Sydney's CBD

Kylie Bryden-Smith spoke about the Mowbray Precinct as a local example of what happens when the planning system is broken. She described how the refusal by the State Government to put development applications on hold while planning studies were completed for the area, resulted in inappropriate planning outcomes. She outlined the ongoing impacts of the poor planning outcomes including the lack of promised open space,

traffic issues, bushfire risks, sewer issues, overcrowding of local schools, impacts on the local bushland and ongoing health and well-being issues of residents living through the development in that area.

Other issues raised in the discussion session

- 10/50 legislation – unintended consequences of this legislation in urban Sydney. Concerns that the Government refuses a moratorium and treats every area with the same bushfire risk eg. Lane Cove is treated the same as the Blue Mountains.

- Issues with current planning instruments – Voluntary Planning Agreements, LEP gateway procedures, SEPPs

- Council amalgamations – all candidates at the forum supported the notion of no forced amalgamations of Councils (note: Anthony Roberts was not at session and could not answer this)

- Roads - concerns with Westconnex and tunnel filtration

- Developer contributions

- Investment in cycle ways

- Coal seam gas mining

Better Planning Network

Sue Ingram of BPN presented the Community Charter For Good Planning in NSW – 'Planning for the People'.

All attendees were invited to sign the Community Charter. It was noted that all candidates have signed and endorsed this Charter except Anthony Roberts.

Report on the NCC Environment Forum

The NCC was overwhelmed with great suggestions on a wide range of environmental issues.

Given that there was only an hour and a half to hear from the panellists, not all your questions could be put, but a set of questions were put together that reflected the wide ranging concerns of our members and supporters across NSW, including coal and coal seam gas, biodiversity laws, marine conservation, environmental regulation, logging in native forests, impacts of climate change and urban bushland.

For those who are keen to hear how the politicians responded, a copy of the transcript from The Environment Forum is now available from our website www.nature.org.au/campaigns/parliamentary-liaison/

Upcoming events:

Screenings of Frackman the movie (Coal Seam gas documentary set in Qld) occurred in Brookvale, Cremorne and Newtown in the weeks leading up to the election. There will be more screenings in Sydney after the election. For details see frackmanthemovie.com.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition opening on 28 March at the Australian Museum.

E-waste collection Saturday 18 April

Are you short of transport, and need help to get your e-waste out to Riverview for the collection? Contact Lane Cove Sustainability Action Group (community volunteers) at info@lanecovesustainability.org