

Saving Wollie Creek – the complete documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R7W9_6FFVs

The Wollie Creek Valley might have been an 8-lane freeway, but it was saved by Sydney's longest conservation fight. The valley is inner south-west Sydney's environmental gem – a tranquil haven in a busy city, preserving an irreplaceable remnant of the pre-European landscape.

For 40 years a struggle over Sydney's future has been fought out here, a struggle that isn't yet over. It's been a battle between freeways and public transport; between open space and over-development; between urban sprawl and consolidation; between high-carbon and sustainable futures.

Part 1: From Benito Mussolini to the County of Cumberland Plan

Traces the secret history of the freeway paradigm, how freeways came to Sydney, how Sydney's tramways system was dismantled to favour the car and how the 1948 attempt by urban planners to create a compact city with open space for all was subverted.

Part 2: From the Fig Street confrontation to the Kirby Inquiry

Looks at the successful 1974 inner-city revolt against the NSW Department of Main Roads' plan for the Los Angelisation of Sydney and the department's subsequent plan for an 8-lane freeway down the Wollie Creek Valley. Features footage of the violent September 1974 confrontations at Fig Street Pymont.

Part 3: The Greiner Government's cruel and cynical hoax

Takes the story from the formation of the Wollie Creek Preservation Society, through the 1988 state elections, in which the Liberals, led by Nick Greiner, promised to remove the freeway reservation through the valley, to the subsequent cynical manoeuvre by which the proposed freeway was returned to the valley and the proposal's defeat in the 1989 environmental impact process.

Part 4: A tale of two tunnels

How the fight against a surface freeway through the valley led to the construction of the Airport Rail Line and eventually pushed this section of the M5 East into a tunnel that avoided the valley's open space east of Bexley Road.

Part 5: Looking back, looking forward

Looks back on the dystopian vision of the early 20th Century freeway advocates, examines the forces that have made Sydney the tollway capital of the world, and looks to the final struggle against the freeway paradigm.