

Growing popular opposition to Turrella development

The Department of Water and Energy (which administers the Rivers and Foreshores Act) did not grant the required approval to the development at 13 Henderson St, Turrella in its original form (see last Update). Officers of Rockdale City Council also raised a large number of concerns with the development, many of a pretty technical nature.

The developer then lodged a revised Development Application with Rockdale City Council. Key good points of this are:

- The building fronting the creek would have its roller doors etc., on the far side from the creek (not facing it as we had understood from our limited inspection of the original plans).
- The roadway along the front of the building has been eliminated and the parking it provided would now be underground below the front building.
- The extent of re-vegetation has been increased accordingly.

The Society has held meetings:

- With the developer (who has some interest in good environmental outcomes, but not enough to protect the riparian zone as we would wish).
- With senior people running other factories in Henderson St, who have major concerns about the impact of increased traffic in the street and its impact on their businesses. There was also an interest in preserving Wolli's green corridor.
- On-site with local residents and users of the reserve and those politicians and candidates who responded to our invitation (Linda Burney, Robert Furolo, Michael Nagi, Lesa de Leau, Linda Eisler, Bernie Sharah).

We have now submitted a revised objection to the DA to RCC. The development is still unacceptable in its revised form and is highly misleading. We have written follow-up letters to both Frank Sartor (then Planning) and Nathan Rees (then Water and Energy), conveying our continued objection. Neither had a response ready - the issue is still under consideration.



Above: some of the objectors oppose the development site, with the bundle of 320 objection letters in hand. (Photo: Deb Little)



Left: Peter Stevens of the Wolli Creek Preservation Society showing a detail of the plan to Councillor Michael Nagi (Rockdale), Mayor Robert Furolo (Canterbury), and Rockdale candidate Bernie Sharah. Victoria Feitscher of the Society at left (Photo: Voren O'Brien).

Over 300 signed objection letters have been collected and the number would clearly go much higher if we had more resources and more time; there was a strong public response once people were made aware. These letters were delivered to RCC on 1 September, the closing date for objections, and lists of the signatories were attached to further letters to the two State Ministers and others.

Given the local elections on 13/9, nothing is likely to come before Council until at least October. Very few Councillors took up our offer to attend one of two site meetings, and those were one Green (de Leau), and one independent (Nagi). Independent candidate Bernie Sharah also came along, as did the mayor of Canterbury (Furolo), mayoral candidate, Linda Eisler, and Canterbury MP, Linda Burney.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Wednesday 29 October at the Community Development Organisation at 11-15 Hartill-Law Ave, Bardwell Park at 7pm. The meeting will receive and consider the Annual Report (enclosed with this Update) and the Society's audited accounts. We have a number of committee vacancies to fill and urgently need some members to serve for a couple of years. As a wholly volunteer Society, we can't survive without more people willing to take on a committee role. It's a good way of making a contribution to running the Society while learning more about the workings of it. Nominations for the committee must be with us a fortnight ahead of the AGM so now is a good time to call up and offer to join the committee and to find out what it would involve - it's less than many people think and the more people willing to take on a role, the less each individual has to do! Contact Peter on 9554 3176.



Turrella changes

THE plantings alongside Wolli Creek were completed in July, with the setting out of some saltmarsh plants as a final item. Unfortunately, owing to a combination of adverse factors we have had a very high loss rate from the last third of the plantings and will need to do some supplementary planting there. The other sections are growing well and we will soon need to organise occasional working bees to keep down weed growth until the natives can do that job for themselves.

Meanwhile, the modified Phase 2 of the planting project is getting underway around the old dipping well. Already the weed trees (Coral Trees, Willows) have been removed, the banks re-shaped and aquatic weeds in the pond much reduced. A new interpretation sign (inset) has been installed explaining the project and planting is to begin in early September. We have greatly appreciated the major support for this work provided by National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, and the volunteer labour forthcoming from Westpac staff.

And of course our four regular bush regeneration groups continue to meet and do great work in some interesting areas of Wolli bushland. If you want to come along and learn on the job with any of the above projects, please contact Peter on 9554 3176 or via info@wollicreek.org.au.

The Jackson Triangle

THE Society and the City of Canterbury are supporting local residents who want to 'adopt a patch' at the junction of Highcliff Road and Jackson Place, Undercliffe. Strong sandstone ledges underlie a very weedy patch of Council land here, just above the Wolli Creek Regional Park and alongside the Two Valley Trail. Removal of these weeds, the installation of natives and clearing the ledges will reduce weed spread into the Park and improve the appearance of the site. To join in this project contact Judy at 9559 2821 or via judy@imageoz.net.

Grey-headed Flying-foxes travel far, live long

Wolli's Grey-headed Flying-fox camp remains empty after the exodus of 7,600 bats in May. But where have they all gone and when will they be back?

PhD candidate Billie Roberts, whose data we are contributing to with our counts (and non-counts!) recently presented some of her findings at a Flying Fox Conservation and Information Network conference, and they give us some clues. They are moving in response to flowering, and early, rich flowering in SE Queensland in winter 2008 has seen a large migration north from NSW (in contrast to 2007, when a lack of winter flowering saw large numbers of flying foxes staying put). Some are moving very long distances (hundreds of kms), over short periods. • **Deb Little**



Gone north for the winter? (Photo: Andrew Smith)

Turrella Reserve: pond-to-wetland project

The market gardens seen from Hairygoat Hill in the 1940s. Turrella Reserve area in the foreground.

- Originally a storage pond dug for water pumped from this creek for market gardens.
- These were abandoned as uneconomic in the 1950s due to increased flooding.

Pond surrounds in May 2007

- The pond became dominated by large Coral Trees and Willows, serious weeds of watercourses, with few native species.
- Mid-2008: weed trees removed; pond edges reshaped for safety.
- Spring 2008 on: Thousands of native seedlings planted around the eastern edges to provide shelter and food for birds and other wildlife using the new wetland.
- Watch this space as native life returns!

FUNDING This project is funded by the Australian Government with support from the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment and Climate Change, City of Canterbury, Wolli Creek Preservation Society (WCPs) and Green Web Sydney.

PROJECT CO-ORDINATION National Parks and Wildlife Service in consultation with WCPs, and with the support of the City of Canterbury.

PLANTING Volunteers from WCPs, the local community, and Landcare Australia partners. Weeds and Price Waterhouse Coopers. Additional volunteers welcomed, please contact WCPs.

DAMAGE or DUMPING If you see any, please report to 1800 353 910

For further information contact:
WCPs PO Box 270 Earlwood 2206;
info@wollicreek.org.au.

Banding with bands from the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes has been the major method of understanding the movement and longevity of individual flying-fox at various sites on the eastern coast of Australia. Banding information is important for the management of Flying-fox.

To date 6135 Grey-headed Flying-fox have been banded with 358 of the banded flying-fox (5.83 per cent) being recaptured, either alive or dead. A large percentage of the deaths are caused through collision with masts, poles etc. or by electrocution.

Banding results record an average movement of 23 km with a maximum movement of 978 km from Lismore, NSW to Bombala, in southern NSW.

Recently a report was received of a first year male flying-fox being banded at Booyong, NSW on the 4 March 1994 and recovered at Lismore Race Course, NSW over 14 years 5 months after banding, 16 km from the banding site. Unfortunately the flying-fox was injured and later died.

Banding records for all species of Australasian birds and bats may be obtained from the searchable species database of the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes at: environment.gov.au/biodiversity/science/abbbs/. • **Alan Leishman**

Member survey: a volunteer for analysis please!

The President's apologies go to all those who completed the member survey we circulated at the beginning of the year. Analysing the responses has been pushed aside by the Henderson St campaign and other projects pressing on us. He would welcome a volunteer to take on just this specific task.

Why I live where I live (in the Wollie Valley)

Member Deryn Griffiths recently had this item broadcast on 702's Australia All Over program and we liked it!

I live in Sydney because of my job. Within Sydney, I chose my house in Earlwood the modern way by using Google Earth to look for somewhere with a train line and good bushland, and not too far from the city.

After moving in I was delighted to find out how active community groups are in maintaining, repairing and protecting the bushland along the Wollie Creek, a tributary of the Cooks River, which runs into Botany Bay. The Wollie Valley is a significant patch of Sydney Sandstone - the only one in the inner west - and hosts a huge range of birds, a colony of flying foxes, and many reptiles, insects, spiders etc. My morning walk takes me over the ridge behind my house, along the Cooks River and back along the Wollie Valley. This is part of the 13km Two Valley Trail, which was opened officially on Sunday 1 June. Anyone wanting to walk the Trail can find information at www.tvt.org.au. I have only been in Earlwood for 9 months, and have been amazed to see the improvements in that time with all the weeding, planting and improving of walking tracks going on.

The flying-fox camp grew to 7000 over the last several months, and then in the past few days they have all moved. Has anyone seen a few extra thousand flying foxes in the last week? We are watching to see if/when they return to the Wollie Valley.

Anyway, what I love about where I live is that I can get to work in half an hour without using my car and I get to walk through the bush each day. I have met many neighbours who also use the park to walk their dogs, or are part of the community effort to maintain the corridor of bush along Wollie Creek.



Wollie Creek supporters march in the 1990 World Environment Day march through Sydney (photo: Gavin Gatenby).

History comes alive at WCPS Annual Dinner 2008

Justice David Kirby of the Supreme Court of NSW will be our speaker at this year's Annual Dinner of the Wollie Creek Preservation Society. He is a particularly appropriate guest for this occasion, as you can read below, and we hope that as many members as possible will come along and bring their friends.

The dinner is on Friday October 24 and will cost \$40 a head. Bookings can be made on the form enclosed with this Update, or downloaded from the website.

It is 25 years since the Society was formed to fight the destruction of the Wollie Valley bushland. A key event in the whole process triggering the formation of the Society was the 1981 inquiry into establishing a road link between Kyeemagh and Chullora for the movement of containers from Port Botany, which examined the possibility of the Wollie Valley as a route.

That inquiry was chaired by Commissioner David Kirby, as he then was, and marked one of the earliest authoritative acknowledgements of the value of the Wollie Valley's bushland. We have invited Justice Kirby to reflect on the lively community participation in the Inquiry, on the processes involved in planning decisions at the time, and to offer any salient reminiscences that he might like to share about the specifics of the Inquiry and its aftermath.

We urge you to come along and learn some of the history of the early battles surrounding our local bushland and enjoy all the fun of our annual get-together for members and supporters. Scrapbooks and Updates from the early period of the Society 25 years ago will be on hand to view.



This cartoon by Les Robinson from the front page of the the first Wollie Creek Update in March 1987 expresses the feisty spirit of resistance that saved the valley from the M5 freeway.

Two Valley Trail – new website and bookmark

THE new Two Valley Trail website went live late in August and is expected to grow but already looks really good. Pay it a visit at www.tvt.org.au. We are also now distributing a new bookmark promoting the Trail and the website. This should increase still more the number of people walking the Wollie section of the Two Valley Trail, which has seen a quantum leap, with many

regional walking groups excited to find a new walk to do! We will be adding to those numbers as part of the Great Australian Bushwalk Day (Sunday September 14 – see Calendar for details) when we want to get lots of folk walking the whole Trail from Bexley North to Campsie (with refreshment stops along the way). School visits are also dramatically rising. Not least

because, as reported elsewhere, there are new educational resources available for teachers to use in association with the Trail, accessible via the website.

From worrying about not enough people knowing about Wollie to ensure its protection by the community, we can now look forward to the luxury of worrying about its possible overuse!

Wolli – the outdoor classroom

SCHOOLS & CHILDREN

In 2008, to the end of August, there were 124 walks organized by the Society for school groups. This is a big increase in interest using the Wolli and Cooks River Valleys for important outdoor learning experiences. More is to come!

The excellent educational resources for the Two Valley Trail were launched by (then local MP) Carmel Tebbutt on 1 September and will be extensively promoted from the beginning of next year. A website enabling ready access to the resources has recently gone live at www.wollicreek.org.au/tvt_schools/index. Another great resource, called The Bird's Nest, is to be launched on 16 September at Bexley North Public School.

All this activity and promotion is expected to continue the upsurge we are experiencing in the number of schools and classes looking for our assistance in conducting walks and activities in the Wolli Valley. This is great news, but to meet the demand we urgently need more volunteers to be trained to lead walks – existing volunteers can't be expected to sustain the current level of work they are doing. If you are willing and have time available during school hours we'd love to hear from you. Please contact voren@ihug.com.au as soon as possible. It's very rewarding work and we can give you the confidence to take it on.



Photo: Voren O'Brien

Events Calendar

Sunday 14 September – *The Great Australian Bushwalk* is on and we are planning a walk of the Two Valley Trail from Bexley North to Campsie, all 13 km! But there are plenty of dropping out points at train and bus stops along the way. Meet at the junction of Bexley Road and Wolli Creek at 8.45 for a 9 am prompt start and allow 4 – 4.5 hours for the full trip. Refreshment stops available along the way at Undercliffe and Ewen Park, but bring water anyway.

Tuesday 23 September 7.00 pm – *Don White of the NSW Nature Conservation Council*, (the peak body of conservation groups) will speak about the role of the NCC and what it offers to member societies. A chance to reflect on the wider context of our local activities and the kind of support that we could most benefit from. Talk is at CECAL Hall (entry in Lewins St Earlwood, opp Coles).

Sunday 28 Sept from 9-12 – *Introductory birdwatching walk* from Bardwell Park to Turrella with Alan Leishman. Pre-registration essential - contact Peter on 9554 3176 or via info@wollicreek.org.au. Free to members.

Sunday 5 October 2-4 pm – *Member Frank Olliffe is attempting to foster butterfly biodiversity* as an amateur on-going garden project, based on web and library research and personal observations over many years. Frank will share his information with interested members, with a focus on species identification, including Wolli Creek inhabitants. A tour of his urban butterfly foodplant garden will be included. Contact Frank on 9502 3998 or via frankolliffe@hotmail.com to book one of the limited places and get address details.

Friday 24 October – 6pm onwards – *Annual Dinner* – St George Rowing Club, 1 Levey Street, Wolli Creek (the suburb). \$40; main speaker: Justice David Kirby. Vegetarians and coeliacs well catered for.

Wednesday 29 October 7.00 pm – *Annual General Meeting* 11-15 Hartill-Law Avenue, Bardwell Park. More info elsewhere in the Update

Saturday 15 November, 9.00 am – *Annual kayak trip up Wolli Creek* with River Canoe Club training and WCPS commentary, with a light lunch thrown in. Cost \$40. Pre-register your interest with Peter on 9554 3176 or info@wollicreek.org.au. Already almost full!

Tuesday 18 November 7.00 pm – *Sewerage: Wolli's heritage and future*. Talk at CECAL Hall (entry in Lewins St Earlwood, opp Coles). Did you know that the Valley's heritage is closely linked to sewers? That the Wolli Track largely follows a major sewer line? That the SWOOS aqueduct at Undercliffe is heritage listed? We can't do without sewers, but overflows do occur! Come along and learn more about a fascinating, if murky, part of the Wolli Valley's context. Rod Kerr from Sydney Water will take us through the problems, some of the solutions, and the role we can play in keeping Wolli not only green, but clean!

Renew your membership now!

If a membership form is enclosed with this Update, then your current membership expires at 31/12/08. It helps us considerably if you renew now rather than later next year. And you can combine payment with your Annual Dinner payment! You can let others know that any new members joining now will have their membership valid until 31 December 2009.