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## Sydney Water trashes precious urban bushland

To gain access to a sewer access shaft, D4C (Delivering for Customers) workers recently cleared a 3m swathe of bushland for 40m from Johnston St, Earlwood to the shaft and cleared an area of 10m x 8m around it. (D4C is the private consortium contracted by Sydney Water to manage the construction and maintenance of Sydney Water assets in its whole Southern Region.)

The bushland affected is part of the Wolli Creek Regional Park lands and has been patiently managed and regenerated with native plants over two decades by community volunteers from the Wolli Creek Preservation Society (WCPS).

WCPS President Peter Stevens complains that the clearing done was over double that specified in the slipshod Review of Environmental Factors provided, after the event, to NPWS as Park managers. And no consultation, or even forewarning, was undertaken with WCPS to enable impacts on regenerated bushland to be minimised.

“This is an act of environmental vandalism,” said Peter Stevens. “It has destroyed a significant area with native trees (including Blackbutt, Angophora, Blueberry Ash, Casuarina), shrubs (including Native Olive, Breynia, Kunzea, Leucopogons), and ground covers (notable among them, Greenhood Orchids and many native grasses) all indiscriminately cut down or crushed.”

“To add injury to injury, the vegetation cut down has simply been dumped on top of other regenerating areas, further extending the damage to restoration work. No mention was made of, and no visible care taken with, stone walls adjacent to the area, remnants of the historic Bowen’s Camp.”

“And, long-term, there will be still further damage caused by their swathe cutting through a weedy area near the road and opening up the sensitive restoration work to weed invasion and access by dogs and humans, being wide enough to attract rubbish-dumping and even car-dumping.”

“Almost all Sydney urban bushland has sewer lines through it, so if this is the standard of work undertaken by D4C, we are going to see much degradation of this now precious resource.”

“Sydney Water deserves to be shamed for this action by their outsourced workers and needs to sanction those involved on the ground and in the decision chain of command.” President Stevens said.

“But none of that, while utterly necessary, will restore the cleared vegetation, or undo the impact of dumping cut trunk, limbs and branches on regenerating natives, or deal with the weeds that will now invade the cleared area.”

“We call on Sydney Water to fund major amounts of bush restoration work by professionals in the Johnston St bushland as some small recompense for the destruction they have allowed and for the consequent volunteer demoralisation caused by their agents.”

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