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| **Neighbourhood Forum 5**  **Wollongong’s Heartland** | Nike | Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount St Thomas, North Wollongong, West Wollongong, Wollongong City. |

# Agenda for meeting at 7.00 pm Wed. 3rd July 2019 in the Town Hall Ocean Room

1 Presentation Joe Woodward, past CEO of the NSW Environmental Protection Authority, on the History of Pollution in the Illawarra.

2 Apologies

3 Minutes of meeting of 6th June 2019 and matters arising.

4 Comments from residents, Councillors and/or Council staff.

5 Responses Green Travel Plans see p.6

Wollongong Bike Plan: see p.6

Forest in the City: see p.6

Delivery Program and Operational Plan: see pp.6,7

6 Reports draft Economic Development Plan: see **rec p.8**

Environmental Sustainability Strategy & Policy: see p.8 **rec p.9**

City Centre Markets: see p.9

Trees Under Power Lines: see **rec p.9 &attachment p.17**

Climate Change: see **rec p.10**

Wollongong Harbour Master Plan: see p.11

draft Heritage Strategy; see p.11

Neighbourhood Forums: see p. 11

University Liaison: see p.12

7 Activities Keiraville/Gwynneville Access Study: see p.12 **rec p. 13**

South Wollongong: see p.13

Neighbourhood Forums Alliance: see p.13

8 Planning DAs: **see recs pp 13-15**

9 General Business: see p.15

10 Snippets see p. 16

**Next Meeting**: **7.00 pm on Wed. 7th August 2019, Town Hall Ocean Room.**

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| Current active membership of Neighbourhood Forum 5 : 390 households |

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| **Neighbourhood Forum 5**  **Wollongong’s Heartland** | Nike | Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount St Thomas, North Wollongong, West Wollongong, Wollongong City. |

# Minutes of meeting at 7.00 pm Wed 5 June 2019 in the Town Hall Ocean Room

Present: 14 members & Cllr Tania Brown

1 Presentations Mike Dowd was thanked for his well prepared presentation on Agenda items 6.1, 6.5, 7.1, 7.3, 7,5-7.8 and for responding to questions, which helped in developing the recommendations.

2 Apologies were accepted.

3 Minutes of meeting of 1 May 2019 were adopted with no matters arising.

4 Comments were made during Mike Dowd’s presentation.

5 Responses **5.1 Parking at North Wollongong Station:** noted.

**5.2 Crown Street Markets**

It was agreed that Council be requested to advise:

1 how management has been improved, because our feedback from stallholders is that it is not working satisfactorily?;

2 whilst support for locally authentic new products and new start-ups or home based businesses are clearly desirable, how has this affected long-term traditional stallholders?;

3 what " wide variety of entertainment and activities in association with the market" have been provided and/or are proposed?;

4 what performance measures are in place, for example - number of people in the Mall on market days; and the numbers, stability and satisfaction survey of stall holders?;

5 given the apparent decline in providers and customers, what steps is Council taking to retrieve the situation?

6 Reports **6.1 Forest in the City**

It was agreed to congratulate Council on the initiative of tree planting in the retention basin and flood area at Nyrang Park detention basin, and request Council to advise whether/how it is intended to use this method for other suitable areas in the LGA.

**6.2 Boarding Houses**

It was agreed that Council be requested to advise if/when it proposes to use the clear definition of a Boarding House in legislation for development assessment purposes, particularly in the Keiraville/Gwynneville area.

**6.3 Development Register**

It was agreed that Council be requested to ensure that all documentation relating to a development application is posted on their web site from the time of first notification, and not removed during the assessment period.

6.4 **Definition of Stories**

It was agreed that Council be requested to advise their interpretation of the definition of a storey when assessing development proposals.

**6.5** **Wollongong Harbour**

It was agreed to advise Crown Lands the Forum supports their draft Master Plan for Wollongong Harbour, which is a welcome contrast to their 2010 plans, and requests reconsideration of the proposed future boardwalk across the end of the pier and associated beach which could be restrictive for water craft.

7 Activities **7.1** **Keiraville/Gwynneville Access Study**

It was noted that Council are inviting attendees at previous workshops to a presentation on Wed 12 June at 4pm on level 10 committee room 2 re strategies and actions to be included in the final document, and the study will be reported to Council recommending a public exhibition period.

**7.2** **Climate Change Group:**  noted

**7.3** **South Wollongong Flooding**

1 It was noted that residents raised major concerns at the 1 June information session for the City Flood Study and

2 it was agreed that Council be requested to include NF5 representatives on a review committee to investigate and assess possible solutions to flooding experienced in the South Wollongong area.

**7.4** **Neighbourhood Forums Alliance**: noted

**7.5** **Re-opening Cliff/Bourke Intersection:** noted

**7.6** **Continental Pool Access**

It was noted that a meeting with NF5 representatives will be held at Council on Wed 19 June at 9.30am to further discuss restoring access at the pool for people with disability.

**7.7 Foreshore Parking Strategy**

It was noted that Council are progressing with development of a Foreshore Parking Strategy. Information has not yet been provided on the review of the Blue Mile Master Plan due in 2018/19.

**7.8 Denison St Shared Path**

It was noted that Council proposes a 2 way shared path on the eastern footpath of busy Denison St between Throsby Drive and Crown St for pedestrians and cyclists. Its effectiveness will be assessed in due course.

**7.9 Crown Land Plans of Management**

1 It was agreed that Council’s General Manager be requested to arrange a meeting with representatives of NF5 to develop an effective Community Engagement process for development of Plans of Management for regionally significant Crown Reserves, such as for Stuart Park, to ensure the PoMs will comply with the requirements of the Crown Land Management Act 2016, and

2 It was agreed to authorise the Executive to discuss with the proponent of a secondary motion and resolve.

**7.10 Council Policies:** noted

8 Planning **8.1 DA-2019/388 Dual Occupancy 55 Mt Keira Rd West Wollongong**

It was agreed that the submission of objection be endorsed.

**8.2 DA-2019/428 Dual Occupancy 26 Foley Street Gwynneville**

It was agreed that NF5 advise the assessing officer that, following representations from affected residents, NF5 supports objections, including re non-compliances, scale, bulk, overdevelopment, site suitability, loss of privacy and sun, and effects of on street parking.

**8.3** **DA-2019/447 Museum 143 Gipps Road, Keiraville**

It was agreed that the submission of support be endorsed.

**8.4 DA-2019/469 Dual Occupancy 55 Grey St Keiraville**

It was agreed that the submission of support be endorsed in general, but that assessing officer/s be requested to take into account concerns about the effects of garage doors which do not comply in width.

**8.5 DA-2019/416 Dual Occupancy105 Walang Ave Figtree**

It was agreed that the submission of support be endorsed.

**8.6 DA-2018/473 Commercial & Residential 49-51 Denison St Wgong**

It was noted that WLPP deferred this for changes and resubmission.

**8.7 DA-2018/1231 North Wollongong Surf Club major alterations**

It was noted that NF5 submission included concerns re heritage and impacts of sea level rises. On 22 May WLPP considered representations on heritage issues, deferred the DA for changes, and delegated determination to Council’s relevant Manager.

**8.8 Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code**

It was agreed that Council be advised that NF5 supports preferably exclusion or further deferral of implementing the Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code.

**8.9 DA2018/1484 Residential Flats 21-23 Mercury & 57 Bligh Wgong**

It was noted that on 29 May WLPP deferred the DA for changes, and delegated determination to Council’s relevant Manager.

9 General /

Late Business **9.1 Appointment of WCC General Manager**

It was agreed that Council be advised NF5 welcome the appointment of Greg Doyle as Wollongong’s General Manager and we look forward to working collaboratively with Greg and staff.

**9.2 Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Policy**

]t was noted that Council’s website includes that a process recently started to revise the existing Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Policy, that are on public exhibition. Submissions close 24 June.

**9.3 Coniston Beach Dunes - bitou bush spraying late June**

It was noted that Illawarra District Weeds Authority (ph 4233 1129) have advised they propose aerial spraying of bitou bush at Coniston Beach in late June, conditions permitting. Safety measure will be in place and low toxicity Brush-Off (no relation to glyphosate) will be used, which has proven selective to bitou elsewhere. This is the first stage, to be followed by hand spraying/removal and planting native species.

10 Snippets **10.1 Place Quality:**  noted

**10.2 Street Art Crown Street West?** noted

**Next Meeting**: **7.00 pm on Wed. 3rd July 2019, Town Hall Ocean Room.**

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| --- |
| Current active membership of Neighbourhood Forum 5 : 392 households |

**5 Responses Green Travel Plans**

"The suggestion for Green Travel Plans will be considered as part of the draft City Centre DCP which will be reported to Council in the coming months.  How people move around the City, will also be considered as part of the City Centre Access and Movement Strategy which is in preparation." Land Use Planning Manager

**Wollongong Bike Plan**

"Traffic Unit will take the forums feedback into consideration during the review process, and will consult with the forum during the ongoing review.

In general, the bike plan is an overarching strategic document and indicative routes in the plan are subject to change during investigation. Efforts will be made to show what these indicative routes could look like if implemented at the strategic level and their priority for construction/investigation noted as part of the review process, including how project priority would be ranked."   
 Senior Traffic Engineer

**Forest in the City**

"Thank you for the positive feedback regarding tree planting in Nyrang Park, much of which is the result of dedicated volunteers and in particular Mr Reece Flagherty. In general, Council aims to retain as much vegetation as possible when undertaking such works, by continuing to maintain remnant native vegetation and supplement with revegetation as appropriate for the site and stormwater management objectives. Nyrang Park is a great example of a multipurpose space that can be replicated across a lot of our stormwater basins and natural areas.

  "One means of achieving this objective is to prepare vegetation management plans which are compatible with engineering construction plans and look to incorporate walking tracks/passive recreation opportunities, if that is a desire of the local community following consultation.  Council’s ongoing Urban Greening Program provides a further opportunity for tree planting in appropriate open spaces and streetscapes."

Manager, Environment + Conservation

**Delivery Program and Operational Plan**

Council have adopted this and listed responses to our submissions. We have not done very well, although some issues have been responded to separately.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Issue** | **Response** | **Comment** |
| 1 | Botanic Garden Funding | Plans amended to reflect Masterplan | Good, but not specific |
| 2 | Input to studies | Engagement varies between projects | See how they go |
| 3 | DAs to show robust building rating | Next review of the DCP | Not urgent |
| 4 | Support Works Program | Thanks |  |
| 5 | Master Plan for McCabe Park | Not a priority | Another blow to the City Centre heart |
| 6 | Flooding in  JJ Kelly Park | Investigations due for completion 30th June | Good |
| 7 | Provide Local open space in high density residential areas | In City Centre Planning review but unlikely | Wait and see |
| 8 | Planning Proposal for Keiraville/Gwynneville | No | Forums'Alliance may cover it |
| 9 | DCP Chapter for UoW Campus | No, not required |  |
| 10 | Improve Future Character Statements | Ignored |  |
| 11 | Signpost visitor parking for customers | No, can't be policed. |  |
| 12 | Prefer Deep Soil Zones at the front | Ignored |  |
| 13 | Require roof-top solar panels on buildings over 4 storeys | Ignored |  |
| 14 | Clarify housing on battleaxe lots | Ignored |  |
| 15 | Change some City Centre Planning requirements | To be in City Centre Planning review | Wait and see |
| 16 | Review CBD rate inequities | No | Missed the point again |
| 17 | Increase Neighbourhood Forum support and resources | No, uses other engagement opportunities | Wow! |
| 18 | Harness community resources and expertise better | Happy to receive suggestions for improvement | Good |
| 19 | Include specific reference to Forums in the Council Goals | No, uses other engagement opportunities | Wow again! |

**6 Reports draft Economic Development Strategy** 28th June

Council’s Community Strategic Plan 2028 has six Goals, one of which is to have an innovative and sustainable economy.  Council’s draft Economic Development Strategy 2019-2029 (2019 EDS) is a very comprehensive document with an excellent 2 page Executive Summary.  It includes an Action Plan and is a significant improvement on the current EDS 2013-2023.  It is considered that the 2019 EDS should be strengthened by taking a quadruple bottom-line approach to provide a vision for economic development in the future that aligns with the community’s stated environmental, social and cultural wants and needs around building sustainable livelihoods. Also a numerical analysis of the growth of various economic sectors and the Wollongong’s current situation within these sectors could be added, and mention that one the most attractive benefits for locating in Wollongong is low staff turnover.

Given that Council is a major employer in the LGA it is suggested that an eighth Council Policy Lever and an associated actions could be added, ie Council Employment. The 2013 EDS refers to Key Future Industry Drivers of Clean Technologies, Education & Research, Health, Aged Care and Community Services, but it is not clear if these are, or should be, included in the 2019 EDS.  A key factor is for Council to increase the priority and allocation of resources to enable effective implementation of the 2019 EDS and its Action Plan.

Recommendation

that the submission be endorsed congratulating Council on their draft Economic Development Strategy 2019-2029 which the Forum fully supports, and request Council to provide adequate resources to ensure progress, monitoring and achievements in accordance with the Action Plan. John Riggall

**Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Policy.**  24th June

This is a review of Council's existing Strategy. What must have been misssed before is that their spectrum of the twelve elements of Environmental Sustainability does not include land use planning. Whilst it has a significant section on "Improving our Urban Environment" it does not include that feature which we have consistently raised of taking urgent action to amend the Local Environmental Plan to encourage medium density near centres and discourage it in more remote areas.

This would promote environmental, economic and social sustainability and it is reprehensible that Council does not include it in their sustainability strategy and has taken no action to remediate the situation. It is understood that Council is opposing State initiatives to make the situation much worse, which is to be welcomed, but a more proactive stance is required.

Worriedly the Strategy identifies key areas for increased density as being around existing transport centres. Whilst this might help, especially in major cities, it is far more critical and effective in a provincial/suburban situation, for increasing densities near services and major employment centres. That reduces not only the journey to work but also the more numerous journeys to shop, entertain, recreate, do business, consult specialists and socialise.

Recommendation

That the submission supporting the Strategy but with the reservations set out in the report be endorsed.

**City Centre Markets**

A meeting with the Manager concerned indicated that the reduction in stalls may not be real as the new "sculptures" had resulted in the need to thin things out and move some stalls westwards. Their problem is that, to date, no verifiable information has been provided directly by stallholders to Council re ‘culture of the markets’ only rumour.

It would seem that the key attractors to the markets are locals patronising produce and everyday needs who then incidentally purchase trinkets and fabric items.

It was agreed that they would check variations in the number of stalls over the past few years and their composition including, if possible, those that are likely to service people's weekly needs and those serving their impulse or special purchases. Then see if there is any noticeable differences and try and establish a reason.

Meanwhile if any members have specific information on why a particular stallholder left, Council would love to know.

**Trees Under Powerlines**

See Attachment at page for the report.

Recommendations

1 request Council and our local MPs to meet with Endeavour Energy management to discuss how they can:

i review their current practice of tree mutilation which we find unacceptable and totally at variance with that of many other Authorities who are far more sympathetic to the streetscape and sensitivities of residents;

ii set out in detail their proposals to replace trees to be removed and the selection of plants to replace them both under powerlines and elsewhere;

iii set out the consequences for residents who seek to "opt out" of their tree mutilation service;

iv introduce a bundled cable program to obviate the need to prune trees excessively;

v institute negotiations with the State Government to fund a program to eliminate overhead power lines in urban areas as is done in most civilized societies;

2 request our local MPs to approach Matt Kean, Minister for Energy and Environment, to institute an examination of overhead power lines in terms of their social, political, environmental and economic impacts to determine whether or not New South Wales should keep up with most of the western world by eliminating them;

3 request Council to challenge the pruning clearances; formally support the initiatives set out in 1 above, or similar initiatives, and promote them through the Local Government Association.

**Climate Change**

The Climate Change Group has prepared an Action Policy and seeks Council to prepare a robust Climate Change Policy and Action Plan as a priority, in collaboration with the community, in particular involving the younger generation, that sets key actions on climate change ensuring such a policy and plan is integrated across all functions of Council as well as implementation of community initiatives for climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

Recommendation

In relation to climate change that the Forum adopt as policy and Council be requested to commit to the following actions:

1 Develop strategies to build community resilience and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 which incorporates the staged implementation of 100% renewable energy, including heating, cooling and transport, by 2050;

2 Develop a Wollongong City Council Energy and Emission Reduction policy to manage energy needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across Council operations including waste management, energy management and plant and fleet and built form;

3 Join over 100 other Councils across Australia in signing up to the Cities Power Partnership, a free national local government program that focusses on supporting the emission reduction successes of local councils in Australia. and like Sydney City Council sign up to the Global Climate Action Summit;

4 Immediately elevate climate change issues and risks (environmental, economic and social) in Council decision-making processes;

5 Invest in more climate-resilient infrastructure;

6 Promote mitigation initiatives such as uptake of renewable energy and continue on the adaptation pathway to build local and regional climate resilience;

7 Advancing towards zero waste by meeting, or preferably exceeding, targets in the NSW Government's Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-2021 and comply with the requirements of the Government's 20 year Waste Strategy after it is released - due in early 2020 ;

8 Work with large local industrial players like BHP to achieve sustainable technologies and organisations like Green Connect as well as local farmers to establish local farmers markets;

9 consideration of other strategies such as ensuring new buildings are net zero carbon and achieving an equitable low carbon transformation.

Felix Bronneberg

**Wollongong Harbour draft Master Plan**

Council has resolved to endorse the draft Wollongong Harbour Master Plan and seek advice from the Minister on the proposed funding model. On 5 June NF5 agreed to welcome and generally support the Plan. It incorporates an Action Plan, which lists activities within the harbour and proposed projects in surrounding areas. Two projects proposed to be funded by WCC are:

1 Brighton Beach Toilets. New Toilet block required to replace the current facility in the Short Term 1-5 years

2 Endeavour Drive Loop.  Option of a one-way loop with a combination of angle and parallel parking in the Short Term 1- 5 years.

Recommendation

Council be requested to include adequate funding in its budgets to enable completion within the next 5 years of new toilets at Brighton Beach and for a one way loop in Endeavour Drive with improved parking, in accordance with the Wollongong Harbour draft Master Plan. John Riggall

**draft Heritage Strategy** 5th August

This has been adopted by Council to go on exhibition. It has laudable Objectives and Strategies Council has been successful in implementing some of them. A fuller report will be presented to the August Forum meeting.

**Neighbourhood Forums**

Council has initiated bi-annual meetings of all the Neighbourhood Forum Conveners and executives. It met on 25th July and had a broad ranging discussion. Council have taken a number of initiatives including:

1 preparing a Community Engagement broadsheet for children;

2 producing a 4 page pamphlet on "Understanding DAs" which unfortunately is directed at people putting in DAs rather than those wishing to make a submission to one on exhibition;

3 developing an Aboriginal Engagement Framework.

**University Liaison**

A successful meeting with the University was given a presentation on the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and precinct. Located at Campus East the complex will include aged care and self living accommodation linked to health care and a diverse range of other facilities. It seeks to integrate both physical and mental wellbeing, complement other services in the region and deliver world class health and medical research.

In on-Campus housing there is a program to counter stress, this being examination time, and it seems both the car share and bike share programs are going well. A wayfinding program is about to start together with improved pedestrian paths and consideration of shared zones in some places.

**7 Activities Keiraville/Gwynneville Access Study**

After the culminating ineffective workshop and the later successful one in September, NF 5 representatives and the University were briefed by Council staff on the "draft Keiraville/Gwynneville Access and Movement Study" claimed to be a "high level strategic document". In fact it seemed to be "Draft Actions in response to Community Comments".

In point of fact there was no data to justify the choice of actions nor listing of actions rejected; no discussion of the criteria used to rationalise and prioritise; little description of what the actions would actually be; and nothing on relative costs.

Moreover, it included areas outside the Keiraville/Gwynneville Community Plan area, excluded areas within it and had nothing to say about the surrounding main road network, not even the University interchange. Several proposals have already been actioned and others which were rated highly by the community have been omitted including quite few elements included in our 2015 KeG Access and Parking Strategy.

It seems little progress has been made in the last nine months beyond listing the obvious, much of which is welcome, although some of that was wrong.   A community engagement program is being developed but it is uncertain what is to be presented nor outcomes expected.

However, a response to this assessment by the Manager concerned indicated that there were different perception as what the meeting was about, that there has been a lot more work, despite staff shortage woes, and that a strategy which includes the components set out in the recommendations below, will be developed and exhibited.

Recommendations:

1 Council be advised of support for a community engagement program on the draft Keiraville/Gwynneville Access and Movement Strategy provided it is comprehensive including:

i a vision with goals and objectives;

ii data collected including traffic, cycle and pedestrian movements, parking etc. together with future projections;

iii clear statements of how actions are to be prioritised and phased;

iv explicit information on the nature of the draft actions (for example: intersection improvements; traffic calming; safety round schools; or ranger patrols).

2 Council be requested to set up a working group comprising Council, NF 5, the University and the RMS to review progress on implementing the Strategy.

**South Wollongong:** nothing more.

**Neighbourhood Forums Alliance:** Now meeting 8th July.

**8 Planning** **DA/2019/481 22 O'Briens Road Figtree re-subdivision**

19th June

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a proposal to adjust the boundary of a lot (red on plan) which currently bisects a house near the top of O'Briens Road. The plans are very unclear as to the changes but appear to create a house lot which will overlook the house to the south and give access to the large lot (zoned Residential R2) at the rear which might then be subdivided. A number of trees are potentially affected. As it stands it complies with our Figtree Locality Plan but future development may not be acceptable.. |  |

Recommendation

That the submission be endorsed which objects to the proposal unless Council is confident that:

1 a house can be developed on the new lot without overlooking the house to the south;

2 access to the second battleaxe lot to the rear lot is satisfactory;

3 a house can be built on the large rear lot without affecting trees;

4 supplementary plans have been provided clarifying exactly what is proposed and which trees might be affected;

5 a boundary adjustment which creates an extra lot is legal.

**DA/2019/518 Dual Occupancy 71 O'Briens Road Figtree**

13th June

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a proposal for a dual occupancy by building a second house on a corner allotment. It does not comply with front or rear setbacks nor with the width of garages. It does not comply with our Locality Plan for Figtree. | O'Briens Road Dual occ.jpg |

Recommendation

That the submission of objection be endorsed.

**DA/2019/506 Boarding House, 12 Dallas St Keiraville**

26th June

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a colossal proposal for a 19 room boarding house and tree removal is totally out of character with street and area. It does not comply with State Policy, front or rear setback number of storeys nor proper parking. It does not comply with our Locality Plan for Keiraville. |  |

Recommendation

That the submission of objection be endorsed.

**DA/2019/556 Dual Occupancy, 13 Sheppard St West Wollongong**

25th June

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a proposal for an attached dual occupancy in a quiet cul-de-sac where houses are only disturbed by the similar development next door. It complies with all Council requirements save, possibly, the streetscape . It does not comply with our Locality Plan for Keiraville. | Sheppard St Dual Occ.jpg |

Recommendation

That the submission of objection be endorsed.

**DA/2019/547 Dual Occupancy, 4 Allan Street Wollongong**

26th June

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a proposal for a second dwelling behind an existing one in an area which ought to be re-zoned at least R3 Medium Density. It complies with all Council requirements save a minor variation in the width of the deep planting area. It complies with our Locality Plan for Mangerton. |  |

Recommendation

That the submission of support be endorsed.

**DA/2019/571- Dual Occupancy, 51 Hillcrest Street, Wollongong**

5th July

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a proposal for a dual occupancy on a lot with a width marginally less than required and with one stacked parking spot. It is close to Crown Street and the hospitals and abuts the Transition Area in our Fairy Creek Locality Plan | Hillcrest St DO.jpg |

Recommendation

That a submission of support be submitted.

**DA/2019/620- Dual Occupancy, 23 Figtree Crescent, Figtree**

10th July

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This is a proposal for a dual occupancy which seems to comply with all Council requirements and our Figtree Locality Plan |  |

Recommendation

That a submission of support be submitted.

**9 General**

**Business**

**10 Snippets** **Communes in France**

The regional government re-organisation proposals recommend that communes should have at least 1,500 people – and this potentially spells curtains for thousands of small village administrations across France. The commune has a special place in the hearts of the French, especially the rural French, and it is difficult to see many councillors on small administrations falling on their swords. My neighbours and I like to be able to pop in to our mairie, where the one paid official can fix most things, and Fabrice and David, our two versatile manual workers, are always around to fix anything in the public realm, and more besides. They know their patch and steward it well. But our village is a commune of only 300 residents and so in a kind of ‘duty to co-operate’ it has moved swiftly to join up with over 30 neighbouring small communes to create a communauté des communes

.

Already this group operates a combined waste disposal operation. For planning, our commune has adopted its own cadastral or local plan, following advice from the technical officers at Carcassonne, and planning applications are forwarded to that bureau for recommendations before decisions are taken locally. So the technical aspects of planning are seen as simply another back-office function that can be ‘bought in’ from a higher tier. And residents seem quite content with the arrangement, as they know they are too small to justify a whole range of functions which can be supplied by the neighbouring hôtel de ville.

Graeme Bell

**Street Art**



ATTACHMENT

**Trees under Powerlines**

A number of members have responded to the letter from Endeavour Energy which indicated they were no longer going to prune trees but simply fell them, which was sent out with the May minutes. This proposal, seemingly already underway without any public notice, is based on several weaknesses, all revealing the poor approach of Endeavour Energy both to the community and the environment.

The first relates to the assertion that what must be removed are trees that are “badly misshapen or suffering from constant pruning.”. There are indeed in Wollongong “badly misshapen trees, but they are that way because Endeavour Energy contractors simply hack at trees, with no thought to their structure, or future growth, and frequently well beyond the required distance away from power wires.

There has been no effort whatever to shape trees around wires, or sympathetically prune them, but rather to hack away, apparently without regard that they make streets uglier and significantly reduce their beneficial climate amelioration and ecological habitat aspects.

Moreover, Endeavour Energy's current pruning clearances, which have increased over time and have resulted in progressively worse mutilation of trees and greater limitations on what if any species can be planted under powerlines. There are some good precedents for making a challenge. In particular, AusGrid has recently shifted from a 3m clearance to a 1m clearance (plus 0.5m allowance for regrowth). This makes a huge difference!  <https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/live/information-for-residents/trees/ausgrid-power-line-clearance-works> Why won't Endeavour make a similar change?

Given that Endeavour Energy has let us down badly in terms of tree-care in the last decade or more, it is difficult to trust their claims of working with Greening Australia (which appears to deal with large scale projects), much less Endeavour Energy’s claims they will replace removed trees appropriately. There are no evident criteria for appropriateness nor time frames for replacement nor how Endeavour Energy would ensure tree care of young tress for their first 2-3 years.

Moreover will they prioritise local native species to replace any felled trees? How will they ensure that their proposed actions will result in no net canopy loss (or better). Wollongong City Council has an urban greening strategy that aims to increase canopy cover across the LGA, and verge plantings are one of the key options for achieving that increase (public land is easier to plant on than private). Endeavour Energy's proposal seems to be very specific on actions to reduce canopy, and that will undermine the urban greening strategy, but quite vague on actions that will increase canopy.

Finally, it ignores the fact that Australia is one of the last places in the OECD World to distribute electricity via overhead wires strung on dead tree trunks. It is to be noted that , in a museum of communication in Germany, a painting with a power pole in it had an explanatory note for young people, that “until the 1970s, power poles were common is some parts of the country”.

Di Kelly and others

Response from Council

For many years now Council trees growing under powerlines have been pruned by Endeavour Energy often leaving them unsightly, uneven and greatly reducing their amenity value in the local landscape. Endeavour Energy have delegated powers as defined within the NSW Electricity Supply Act (1995) to undertake this work and unfortunately do not require the consent of Council. Endeavour Energy continues to undertake a style of pruning that often draws criticism from the local community, but also leaves Council in a position where they have to fund and maintain what is left of the tree.

I can advise that in late March 2019, Endeavour Energy approached Council with a proposal to enter into a discretionary tree removal program. This program recommended complete removal of trees that were considered by Endeavour as a risk to the power supply, and had previously been heavily pruned on a number of occasions. Endeavour offered to fund the entire removal of these trees with work to be completed by 30 June 2019, however tree removal (as opposed to pruning) requires Council consent.

With consideration to the ongoing conflict between trees and powerlines, Council entered into an agreement with Endeavour Energy based on the following conditions:

1 Council’s Arborists have assessed each of the 3,100 trees identified for removal by Endeavour Energy and have provided consent for the removal of approximately 1,300 trees across the entire Local Government Area.

2 Endeavour Energy will fund a replacement advanced specimen tree for every tree removed, inclusive of purchase, installation, establishment and 12 months maintenance. The species and location to be planted as directed by Council’s Arborist as close as practical to where trees were removed but outside of the power network. Tree planting is to completed within the 2019-20 financial year.

3 Endeavour Energy is responsible for all notifications to the community and have advised that residents affected by tree removals were posted notification letters advising of the proposed tree removal and were offered an ‘opt-out’ clause where Endeavour would not remove trees when requested.

As Council unfortunately has no control over the way trees are being pruned under powerlines, we regard the remove and replace approach as a better long term option with large trees planted in locations where they can grow unobstructed, as opposed to the current approach of maintaining heavily pruned and unsightly trees under power lines.

Please also be advised that this is not a blanket approach to all trees under powerlines, only trees identified as a risk to power supply, and Council will continue to work toward its Urban Greening Strategy targets and its commitment to planting new trees is in addition to the new trees funded by Endeavour Energy.

Parks and Open Space Manager

Comment

It is more than a little disturbing that Endeavour Energy propose to remove 3,000 trees and that Council have already agreed to 1,300 of them being felled with very little community consultation.