

## **WEPA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT**

March 2017 – March 2018

*Administration:*

### **Meetings & Representation**

- Business meetings were held bi-monthly during the year.
- Every second month public meetings were held with speakers including Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre; Nell Schofield from the Stop Adani campaign; Dr Peter Davies from Macquarie University on our Urban Ecology; plus screenings of *Understorey* about the SE Forest Campaigns and *Chasing Coral* which followed the dramatic changes impacting our oceans.
- Several members spoke to Council last year in support of voluntary community committees which are under review

### **Stalls**

- The only stall held this year was a successful outing at the Castlecrag Fair where our faithful friends and supporters cleaned us out of native plants well before the end of the day.
- We are looking to return with a slightly different WEPA native plant stall during the WCC Spring Fair in September 2018. We shall have the usual native tube stock but will also be looking at what we might sell to those who have smaller gardens, townhouses and apartments.
- The Willoughby Fauna Fair will not be held in 2018 but will return to Currey Park, Chatswood in 2019. We will look at the line-up then to see if it will be worthwhile to run a stall of some sort.

### **WEPA Online**

WEPA's latest news was circulated on the weekend – look out for it in your email folder. If you have items for inclusion send them to Meredith Foley (wepa@wepa.org.au) Many thanks to Kathryn Foley who helps us with the news, our WEPA facebook site and the wepa website. We have close to 300

following us on Facebook now – don't forget to 'like' and 'follow' us. Executive has received training in use of these sites.

*Issues and Advocacy:*

### LAND CLEARING

- Participated in campaign opposing changes to land clearing and biodiversity regulations affecting urban and rural areas. Attended campaign meetings organised by the TEC. Meredith Foley (WEPA) and John and Diana Pryde (Wilderness Society Sydney North) met with Premier to discuss in July.
- WEPA submission made on land clearing in July (can be seen on WEPA website)
- WEPA has increased its funds to the NCC NSW, the EDO and the TEC. All of which have run hard campaigns to deal with deforestation, land clearing and biodiversity changes by the State Government. Most recently those changes were found to be illegal by the court – as they had not been signed off by the Minister for the Environment. The Government has responded by voting them back through parliament.

### PROTECTING GREEN SPACES

- Attended the SOS Green Spaces Forum which helped highlight publicly the loss of tree canopy in Willoughby and other local areas. Joined SOS Green Spaces Network (online sharing network)
- Discussed clearance of bushland at Chatswood High School and introduction of artificial turf with WCC
- Wrote submission on WEPA's behalf to WCC about late night use of the Northbridge Bowling Club. The bushland corridor next to the club and the parks in this area would be greatly impacted by light and noise pollution and traffic if the late night use was to go ahead.

- Attended last site visit with Councillors in Northbridge which had good outcome in agreement for way forward and introduction of bushland management plan. See WEPA News for outline of new planning process;
- Attended WCC Workshop on 'Building Our Future' (17 March)

### WILDLIFE CITIZEN SCIENCE FORUM

Last month WEPA joined forces with Willoughby, Lane Cove and Mosman Councils to hold a Wildlife Citizen Science Forum at the Royal Botanic Gardens. WEPA was successful in seeking a NSW Land Resources grant of \$1,500 to assist in holding the day. The Forum was a sell-out, with around 50 members of the public and 72 bushland officers/environmental educators attending. The next citizen science forum is likely to be held in the western suburbs of Sydney. WEPA involvement was useful in terms of encouraging further citizen science activity along the North Shore, extending WEPA's networks with other organisations and north shore councils; and hopefully building good-will with our hard-working WCC bushland staff.

### PLANNING AND GSC

On Sunday (18 March) the Greater Sydney Commission released *A Metropolis of Three Cities* – the Greater Sydney Region Plan. This plan, along with Transport for NSW's Future Transport 2056 and Infrastructure NSW's State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-38 are to inform land use, transport and infrastructure plans. WEPA will be examining these reports carefully to determine their impact for our area.

WEPA has found it useful to be a member of the Better Planning Network. We are also looking closely at the new Sydney Alliance which is proposed to be launched in April 2018 (see details in WEPA News).

### Northern Beaches Tunnel

Material has been leaked about the impact of the Western and Northern Beaches Tunnels on the Willoughby area. More information is available in the most recent WEPA News with impacts including the take-over of the base-ball

diamond next to Flat Rock park as a construction site and the need to ensure against toxic plumes in middle harbour from tunnel activities. Our Mayor is currently seeking discussion on these impacts with the NSW Premier.

### COAL AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

- Apart from holding a Stop Adani event, WEPA continues to provide donations and publicity for its campaigns
- Petition circulating re 'Battle for Berrima' to stop coal mining in Sydney catchment
- The Nature Conservation Council of NSW and others have joined forces to organise a massive *Time2Choose Rally* on Saturday March 24 to demand that NSW be saved from unconventional gas and coal exploration. WEPA members will meet corner of Macquarie and Hunter Street

### WEPA FOCUS 2018

Development, planning, tree and bushland removal and the protection of parks are likely to be a major focus for WEPA in the months to come. At the local level we want to see:

- development balanced by an expansion of green and biodiverse places
- a raising of public consciousness of the need to protect green spaces and biodiversity in our area
- increase our coordination with like-minded bodies on the lower north shore
- tree protections strengthened if possible
- further tree and other plantings made to address the heat island effect
- consideration being given to the further use of artificial turf due to its heat island and environmental impacts
- the use of dead or dying trees for artificial hollows

*Gay Spies*

*President, WEPA*

*March 2018*

