

WEPA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MARCH 2016 – MARCH 2017

Meetings

- Business meetings were held bi-monthly during the year.
- Every second month public meetings were held with speakers including Steve Austin on the use of canines for conservation; Andy Burton on local birds; Dr Andrew Huggett on surveying fauna in the WCC area.
- We are in the process of confirming this year's calendar so if anyone has any suggestions about speakers they would like to hear or issues addressed please let us know.

Stalls

- A WEPA stall to provide information and collect petition signatures was included at the WCC Fauna Fair in March 2016.
- We also had a WEPA native plant stall during the WCC Spring Fair in September last year.
- WEPA information will be distributed this Sunday (26 March) at the Willoughby Fauna Fair in Currey Park by the Wildlife Willoughby stall.

Harold Spies resignation

The Executive noted with regret the resignation from the WEPA Executive of long-time member Harold Spies due to ill-health

Land Clearing

- Earlier in the year WEPA members participated in meetings, demonstrations, petition writing and other forms of activism in opposition to the State Government's Biodiversity Conservation package.
- We added our voice to the close to 5,500 submissions which challenged the legislation.

Crown Land

- Concerns were raised in July about proposed changes to Crown Land management and fears that reforms would open up Crown Land (which includes over 70 packages such as parks and reserves in Willoughby) to sale and/or commercialisation.
- A WEPA submission was lodged in July to the NSW Parliamentary inquiry urging recognition of Crown Lands as vitally important to the ecological and social health of our neighbourhoods.

Greater Sydney Commission

- In July WEPA collaborated with the Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society in seeking better community engagement with the GSC prior to the release of the draft District Plans in November.
- WEPA committee members have since participated in a range of workshops and information sessions on the district plans.
- We are currently preparing a final response to the Northern District Plan which is due by 31 March.

Channel 9 Development

WEPA made a submission in August opposing any increase in the building storey height and apartment numbers on the proposed redevelopment of the Channel 9 site (6-30 Artarmon Road, Willoughby) above the 8 story and 400 apartment limits that were set by the Land & Environment Court and Planning Assessment Commission after extensive community consultation.

Gore Hill submission

- WEPA made a submission in August on the Draft Plan of Management and Landscape for the proposed Gore Hill redevelopment stressing the need to maintain mature trees where possible and utilising native plants in landscaping.
- **Outcome?**

Medium Density Housing submission

- December – commented on the draft Medium Density Housing Code which proposed the expansion of code-complying development for medium density housing (eg town-houses, two up/down) across all residential areas.
- **Latest**

Willoughby Planning submission

- Most recently, WEPA provided WCC with comments on the *Council Planning Strategy 2016-2036* and *Willoughby Housing Position Statement*.
- We stressed the need for Council to fully investigate the basis for the number of new dwellings proposed by the Government and to consider more fully the existing environmental qualities of the area in question and the number and size of the proposed new open spaces.
- Also commented on preservation of heritage conservation areas, the lack of cycleway infrastructure and the needs of the disabled and elderly.

SOS Green Spaces Meeting

- Campaign concerned with the impact on local environments of a number of State Government legislative changes
- WEPA members attended various SOS Green Spaces meetings during the year and circulated information about this campaign to members.

Planning reforms

- Mid-year WEPA joined Better Planning Network.
- NSW Government is proposing a number of significant changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.
- Some changes of process are welcome but the Government has included proposals that will override environmental protections, limit local planning powers and reduce transparency in decision making.
- WEPA is preparing submission on the proposed planning reforms which is due by 31 March.

Council mergers

The uncertainty surrounding the proposed merger of Willoughby, North Sydney and Mosman councils is making it difficult to envisage long term strategies. We will need to wait until the current legal action is finished and new elections held.

Haven Amphitheatre

WEPA Online communication

- **WEPA News** and **Bulletins** now sent via email. Savings on postage being used in other campaigns. Hope that members are enjoying new format and way of conveying information. News is going out every four - six weeks (last News sent 7 March and Bulletin last week). If you don't believe you are receiving these emails please see Meredith after the meeting and she can check we have your up-to-date email. Please consider sending in contributions or comments for inclusion. Many thanks to Kathryn Foley who designed the news and bulletin and is instrumental in getting each issue out to you.
- WEPA also launched its **new Facebook site** last week. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/wepa.org.au/> The Facebook site is designed to circulate material we think will be of interest to WEPA members and also to reach a wider group within the WCC area. It provides you with an opportunity to comment directly and make input on policy issues. If you are on Facebook please 'Like' and follow the site and also invite your FB friends to share and like. We

already have 56 people following the page. If you are not on Facebook, it is a relatively simple matter to join.

- WEPA is also reworking its **web site** to provide more information and online functions to members. We will let you know shortly when it is fully online and would welcome your comments.

Northern Beaches Tunnel

- The Premier has announced a tunnel to relieve congestion from the Northern Beaches (and open it up to further development).
 - At this stage, the mapping released suggests the tunnel will go under Northbridge and Artarmon.
 - There will be extensive tunnelling and stacks potentially placed on our green spaces. There are concerns that the plans as seen will permanently absorb Artarmon Park and a significant part of Artarmon Reserve.
 - WEPA in touch with progress associations and others to gather further information.
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