

**PUBLIC MEETING RE BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL STANDARD INSTRUMENT LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN (SILEP) ORGANISED BY BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY ON SUNDAY 5 MAY 2013 AT MID MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY CENTRE, LAWSON**

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All Blue Mountains Councillors and state and federal local MPs were invited to the meeting, along with state and federal candidates for Blue Mountains and Macquarie electorates. **Councillors attending** were Mayor (& Ward 3 councillor) Daniel Myles, Deputy Mayor (& Ward 4 councillor) Mark Greenhill, Ward 1 councillor Don McGregor, Ward 2 councillors Chris Van der Kley, Romola Hollywood & Geordie Williamson, Ward 3 councillor Mick Fell and Ward 4 councillors Brendan Christie and Anton Von Schulenburg.

**Apologies** were received from Ward 1 Councillors Michael Begg and Robert Stock and Ward 3 councillor Brendan Luchetti, as well as the Member for Macquarie, Louise Markus MP, the duty Senator for Macquarie, Doug Cameron (represented instead by his advisor, Mark Andrews), the Federal Labor candidate, Susan Templeman, the Greens candidate for Macquarie, Ms Danielle Wheeler (represented by Kerry Brown, A/Co-ordinator, Greens Blue Mountains branch), the Member for Blue Mountains, Roza Sage MP, the Labor candidate for Blue Mountains, Trish Doyle, the Member for Penrith, Stuart Ayres MP, the Blue Mountains Regional Manager of NPWS (NSW Office of Environment & Heritage) and Bob Weaver from the Blackheath Chamber of Commerce.

## **COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

[transcribed from sticky notes placed on separate sheets of butchers paper with the following topic headings]

*I am concerned about....*

### *1. New development including new subdivision*

- What happens to land currently zoned for development but presently considered unsuitable?
- And especially no community input into Development Applications
- Rampant development in the lower mountains

### *2. Community consultation and involvement*

- LEP is being rushed and inflexible; particularly White Paper will impact on how development is approved; in regards to White Paper, LEPs should be more prescriptive not less
- Lack of meaningful consultation
- Need longer consultation period
- Community input is essential – there is so much expertise out here

### *3. Economic impacts on tourism, visitation and other local industries*

- “One size fits all” doesn’t equate to the Blue Mountains

### *4. Social changes including impacts on cultural heritage, scenic views and village character/identity*

- Loss of Blue Mountains’ unique identity (we aren’t Sydney); 2<sup>nd</sup> comment: and don’t want to be
- Cittaslow – ‘slow town’ unique built form, way of living, slow food – the basis of liveability, the economy/jobs
- Loss of adaptable / accessible housing provision
- Proposals support negative/destructive attitudes to natural environment
- Impact on historical buildings and impact on villages with [? unreadable] development
- Yes – no more Lawson debacles!

### *5. Environmental impacts, e.g. on bushland, World Heritage, swamps & watercourses*

- Sites of Aboriginal cultural significance (some undocumented)
- Swamps and watercourses

- Swamp protection
- Many of the existing unimproved/undeveloped plots in BMCC area are presently 'habitat' and once they are cut and cleared, will push back and (deny?) native plants and animals/birds into smaller ranges
- Very important re development, roads, etc.
- This includes lower mountains
- Development being allowed in Environment Protection zones – existing 1991/2005 clauses too damaging; could wipe out creek vegetation

6. *I am concerned about.... [no topic specified]*

- Privatization and deregulation of environmental value
- Inadequate bushfire controls and property protection
- Loss of open space (non-national park)
- Loss of big trees through over-clearing
- Keep provisions of Amendment 25 (LEP 1991) in all drafts and future LEP (esp. 20% slope rule)
- General lack of concern for environment in state planning
- Lack of flexibility in the planning process
- Need to provide for local food production areas; 2<sup>nd</sup> comment: ditto.
- Lack of detail in all state [? unreadable] policies
- More encouragement to planting native trees and plants should be made
- Maybe the White Paper needs to change
- about Council; BMCC is not declared Heritage Area *[I think this relates to World Heritage Area only including the conservation reserves]*
- Overclearing beside railway and roads; 2<sup>nd</sup> comment: but no weed removal
- No weed removal along major roads or railways
- What about Heritage areas in the lower mountains villages – housing, Aboriginal (it is all there) should be highlighted and protected
- The lack of spoken concern about the impact of the new LEP on the lower Blue Mountains and its vegetation communities that are very much under threat
- Erosion of status given by community to our natural environment

## QUESTIONS during the Q&A session

Speakers panel included Blue Mountains City Council Mayor Daniel Myles, Andy Turner (BMCC Manager, City Planning), John Merson (Executive Director, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute) & Angela Langdon (Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Landuse Officer). *NB. Respondents to questions are indicated with initials.*

Q: Special Zones – can they be used for Leura, Winmalee?

AT: These were for education facilities; will probably use them for school sites.

Q: Re waterways – Special Zones instead of Environment Protection zones?

AT: Council will be mapping waterways. Will retain their environmental buffers.

Q: Need for fire protection around swamps because of higher bushfire risk.

JM: Fire doesn't automatically destroy a swamp; it depends on the intensity. Don't know enough about individual swamps and their fire adaptive capacity.

Q: From Nigel Bell (Cittaslow Convenor & local architect) – Standard Instrument LEP (SILEP) is only step 1, White Paper says there will only be one Residential Zone. Uniqueness of Katoomba is important (for Cittaslow) and for our local economy. How much will “fall off the edge”?

AT: Heritage Conservation will be retained; provides for some localism. Issue re precinct controls (i.e. height, mass, setbacks) – there are some tools available for this in the Standard Instrument.

A lot still unknown about the White Paper outcome.

Q: World Heritage quality bushland in the lower mountains (shale cap, coachwood, etc.) – will protection continue? Concern that mapping is not complete.

AT: Council is doing threatened species mapping in LEP 1991 areas now; doubt it will ever be fully mapped, so need a policy frame as well.

Q: From John Merson (BMWHI) – problem with SILEP is mapping needs to be done upfront; no account taken of climate change and increasing vulnerability. Need maximum flexibility to protect species into the future. Buffer zone is important (C'wlth government will want this); needs to be mandated for World Heritage Areas (WHAs).

AT: A (previously proposed but not completed) draft SEPP proposed 100m buffers for WHAs but this wouldn't fit Blue Mts situation anyway.

Q: Concerned that White Paper implications not known at the time Council submitted its draft SILEP. Concerned about decline of Lawson industrial area; confusion over whether it's a Business Park, Technology Park – no definitions of what this means. Lack of employment in Blue Mts is biggest issue. Various options for zoning – but best would be Enterprise Zone. How are you anticipating the White Paper in what you're doing now?

AT: It has been anticipated for a number of months. One of Council's background studies was an Employment Lands Review.

Q: Can Council establish a discussion forum on the Blue Mountains Have Your Say website?

AT: I will talk to the General Manager about the options.

Notes transcribed by:

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Hands Off our LEPS!

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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